

POLITICAL THOUGHT

YEAR 19, No 61, MAY, SKOPJE 2021



61

Publisher:

Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Republic of North Macedonia
Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis", Skopje

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Printing: Vincent grafika - Skopje
Design & Technical preparation: Pepi Damjanovski
Translation: Tiina Fahrni, Perica Sardzoski, Ognena Nikuljski, Barbara Dragovikj.
Macedonian Language Editor: Elena Sazdovska

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Year 19, No 61, May
Skopje 2021
ISSN 1409-9853

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Стручна научна статија
УДК: 502.14:[616.98:578.834-036.21]

Monika Zajkova
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POLICIES OVER POLITICS: PUTTING A FOCUS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

POLITICAL THOUGHT

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Introduction: Bringing the Environment to the Top of the Agenda in a Post-COVID 19 World

Everyday political discourse within the political landscape focuses on many issues. Above all, following the rise of the COVID-19 Pandemic legislators and policymakers all over the world have undoubtedly been exclusively focused on measures directly and indirectly affected by the pandemic. Usually, this has entailed wide ranging action aimed at saving lives, saving jobs and providing social peace in the biggest crises to hit our generation. The policies themselves have been different in depth, approach and scale with some nations being more successful in tackling the multi-dimensional crises than others. Yet, with a doubt, an area which seemed to have left everyday focus is the environment. A change to this dynamic was of course provided when the President of the United States of America, Joe Biden, scheduled a virtual Leader's Summit on Climate for April 22nd and 23rd. Bringing together 40 world leaders, the aim of this American lead Summit will be to put a focus on the following issues¹:

- › Galvanizing efforts by the world's major economies to reduce emissions during this critical decade to keep a limit to warming of 1.5 degree Celsius within reach.
- › Mobilizing public and private sector finance to drive the net-zero transition and to help vulnerable countries cope with climate impacts.
- › The economic benefits of climate action, with a strong emphasis on job creation, and the importance of ensuring all communities and workers benefit from the transition to a new clean energy economy.
- › Spurring transformational technologies that can help reduce emissions and adapt to climate change, while also creating enormous new economic opportunities and building the industries of the future.
- › Showcasing subnational and non-state actors that are committed to green recovery and an equitable vision for limiting warming to 1.5 degree Celsius, and are working closely with national governments to advance ambition and resilience.
- › Discussing opportunities to strengthen capacity to protect lives and livelihoods from the impacts of climate change, address the global security challenges posed by climate change and the impact on readiness, and address the role of nature-based solutions in achieving net zero by 2050 goals.

What this focus by key global leaders shows is that an obvious correlation between economic development and environmental policies will be at the forefront for many years to come. The challenge before Macedonian institutions, both legislative and executive, is the main predicament of this paper. Namely, what are the hurdles in front

¹ White House Briefing on Climate Summit. White House. 26.3.2021. <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/26/president-biden-invites-40-world-leaders-to-leaders-summit-on-climate/>>

of policymakers and legislators in departing from a political culture which cultivate a focus on day to day politics, rather than long term policies. In that sense, we will aim to establish certain key policy approaches aimed at providing a mutually acceptable solution for the issue of environmental policy, which goes outside of the framework of party politics, thus falling strictly within the concept of what can ideally be viewed as a national priority.

A National Consensus on the Environment

There are main challenges facing contemporary nation-states, as well as the global community when it comes to environmental policy. According to *Lundberg*² our planet and humankind face three unprecedented, mutually reinforcing challenges: climate change, the loss of biodiversity and the overuse of critical natural resources. Still, apart from action on a multilateral basis, and especially within the framework of the United Nations, what must first be agreed upon is that the creating a National Environmental Strategy is the first key step towards long term development in the fields of economy and healthcare. Issues such as “making energy choices that improve human health, the environment, and economic development is possible if we understand the complex interplay between systems for energy delivery and sustainable, healthy human environments”³.

The key challenges facing the Macedonian environment include:

1. Air and water pollution;
2. Deforestation;
3. Biodiversity loss;
4. Lack of long-term strategy related to sustainable energy

Of course the overlaying issue is the lack of adequate governance pertaining to these problems, including the lack of engaged expertise within the public sector, the lack of training of public sector employees related to this issue, inadequate regulatory measures aimed at big polluters, and of course the lack of a wide-scaled public debate and focus.

An in-depth study done by UNECE⁴ established that improving air quality and waste management remain two areas of pressing concern in the country. According to this study more needs to be done to:

² Lundberg, Eric. “Facing our global environmental challenges requires efficient international cooperation”. United Nations Environment Program. 4.7.2019. <<https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/editorial/facing-our-global-environmental-challenges-requires-efficient>>

³ Portier, C., Hrynkow S., Gohleke J. “Health, Economy, and Environment: Sustainable Energy Choices for a Nation”. Environmental Health Perspectives. <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2430245/>>

⁴ United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. 3.11.2019. <<https://unece.org/environment/press/north-macedonia-path-sustainable-development-must-step-efforts-air-quality-and>>

- › **Monitor population's exposure** air pollution;
- › Implementation of environmentally friendly stickers and subsidies for electric and hybrid vehicles;
- › Introduction of limited movement in protected ecological zones in the days when the pollution threshold will be exceeded in the urban areas;
- › **Address air pollution from the transport residential heating and energy production sectors;**
- › Improve waste management with the construction of regional landfills and encourage waste collectors to collect waste separately;
- › **Introducing "green taxation"** in order to stimulate taxpayers to reduce pollution-contributing activities, in the direction of reducing environmental damage in the most economical way, by encouraging behavior change to re-duce pollution. The point here is not to introduce higher taxes, but smarter taxes, which are considered to be much more effective than pollution reduction regulation and can create significant economic and environmental benefits.
- › **Encouraging the implementation and growth of green jobs**, as decent jobs that contribute to preserving or restoring the environment.
- › With proper and integrated policies, green jobs can contribute to social inclusion, gender equality and poverty reduction in a society with the sole purpose of improving the environment.
- › **Make the country's Waste Management Information System operational;**
- › Establish an effective mechanism for regular consultation and assistance by the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning to municipalities for implementing their environment-related competences;
- › Establishing an environmental protection agency;
- › Advancing the use of integrated approaches to environmental sustainability such as Strategic Environmental Assessment, Integrated Water Resources Management and Environmental Impact Assessment, including in a trans-boundary context;
- › Greening the public procurement process to support environmental protection;
- › Improving wastewater management with the construction of sewage treatment plants;
- › Completing the process of revalorization and re-proclamation of existing protected areas;
- › Implementing legally-binding renewable energy targets by tapping the country's potential for solar photovoltaic power;
- › Promoting and supporting eco-schools.

Conclusion: How Can We Work Together to Provide A Solution

The role of policymakers and legislators is to unite society behind a common cause. Bringing together legislators and policymakers on the national level, together with the business community, environmental activists and local bodies should be the primary focus in this field. There must be a clear understanding of a shared responsibility in our approach to the environment and the policies which shape it. The mutual setting of targets, which fall not only within multilateral priorities, but are rather focused on providing sustainable environmental and economic policies is a guaranteed process for providing political success, and more importantly tangible results.

What must be concluded is that the challenges are abundant, but the responsibility for political, environmental and business stakeholders is even bigger. While certain policies in the past have created the perception that government is mitigating our impact on the environment, we must all conclude that more can be done, and more must be done for our common future. The legislation solutions are in front of us, and the policies can be easily implemented. What stands before us is the challenge of proposing legislation and policies together, for a common cause: a clean and sustainable environment.

The issue of environmental welfare is an issue that affects all people equally, regardless of which party they are a member or supporter of.

In what kind of environment we will live in, depends mostly of our-selves.

Every day we witness natural disasters that occur as a result of increasing pollution around the world. We are all aware of the importance of this issue, as well as the catastrophic consequences that will follow if we do not put aside our differences and do not work together to overcome the problems that we are all well aware exist. Let's raise this issue in the public, organize public debates, seminars, workshops, conferences in order to increase the awareness of the dangers posed by pollution. Let us all unite together in the fight for environmental protection.

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SHORT BIOGRAPHIES



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Изворна научна статија
УДК: 342.53(497.7)

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REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY AND THE SYSTEM OF DIVISION OF POWER: MACEDONIAN LESSONS

POLITICAL THOUGHT

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Introduction

The legislative function, as a part of the functions operating under the branches of power in democratic systems, represents a practical expression of the sovereignty of citizens. It is exercised within the representative bodies whose members are elected in general and direct elections, for a certain mandate period.

All parliaments, notwithstanding the system of organization of state power, are endowed with a broad spectrum of competences which may be narrowed down to three key areas:

- First, the legitimate function, or respectively the function of representation;
- Second, legislative function;
- Third, oversight function.

This being said, in the light of the imminent jubilee to take place on 17th November 2021, when three decades since the adoption of the “Constitution of Republic of Macedonia” shall be marked, this analysis, through the application of quantitative parameters and their qualitative interpretations, aims to anticipate the role of the legislature in the Macedonian political system through the prism of the degree of achievement of the most important competencies of the Assembly.

Based on the data obtained, we hereof present the key considerations which shall in a more precise manner clarify the place, role, challenges and the performance of the Assembly within the system of the division of power in our country.

The conducted analysis contains information and parameters for each of the key competencies typical for representative bodies in democratic states, and for this purpose we have used all available statistical and other data contained in public documents that the Assembly of the country has at its own disposal.

1. The competencies of the assembly as opposed to reality

The Assembly as the holder of legislative power is subject to constant observations and evaluations. From the point of view of performance of this branch of power, the opinions and assessments from an expert community perspective are quite divergent. However, the common prevailing dilemma is whether the legislative power in our country is exercising, as a whole and in an appropriate manner, the competences it has been entrusted by the Constitution¹, the Rules of Procedures of the Assembly², and by the Law on the Assembly³.

1 *Constitution of Republic of Macedonia*, Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia, year.: XLVII, No.: 52, Skopje, 1991, pages.: 805-815.

2 *Rules of Procedure of Republic of Macedonia*, Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia, No.: 91, Skopje, 2008, *Rules of Procedure for amendments and addenda to the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of Republic of Macedonia*, Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia, No.: 119, Skopje, 2010 and *Rules of Procedure for amendments and addenda to the Rules of Procedure of the Republic of Macedonia*, Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia, No.: 23, Skopje, 2013.

3 *Law on the Assembly of Republic of Macedonia*, Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia, No.: 104, Skopje, 2009.

In addition, through the prism of the theory⁴ which studies the place of the legislature in countries with representative democracies, as well as based on the intrinsic specificities arising from the Constitution and the indicated laws, we seek to elucidate the dilemma of whether the Assembly, both as a whole and in an appropriate manner, is exercising its competencies.

1.1 Legitimate function, or respectively the function of representation

- The function of representation and its actual effectuation in the case of the Assembly shall be analyzed through the following six indicators:⁵
- First, the duration of the mandate of the Assembly compositions;
- Second, representation of the Members of the Assembly (MA) according to their ethnic belonging;
- Third, gender representation of the Members of the Assembly;
- Fourth, the number of Members in the Assembly whose mandate in the Parliament has been prematurely terminated;
- Fifth, the number of political parties or coalitions in the Assembly;
- Sixth, the number of independent members of the Assembly.

COMPOSITION	PERIOD	DURATION
First composition	1990-1994	Completed mandate
Second composition	1994 -1998	Completed mandate
Third composition	1998 – 2002	Completed mandate
Fourth composition	2002-2006	Uncompleted mandate
Fifth composition	2006-2008	Uncompleted mandate
Sixth composition	2008-2011	Uncompleted mandate
Seventh composition	2011-2014	Uncompleted mandate
Eighth composition	2014-2016	Uncompleted mandate

Table 1: Duration of the mandate of the Assembly compositions from 1991 until 2016⁶.

Although our constitution has not foreseen the constitutional possibility for the President of the Republic, at request of the Government, to be able to take a decision on the

⁴ See Гордана Силјановска - Дафкова, Тања Каракамишева – Јовановска и Александар Спасеновски, *Парламентарно право*, Правен Факултет „Јустинијан Први“ и Фондација „Конрад Аденауер“, 2020.

⁵ The indicators herein referred to are in line with the methodology we have defined in light of the set objective as well as in line with the specifics of the legislative power itself and the political system in the country.

⁶ According to the data obtained from the website of the Assembly, www.sobranie.mk, March 2021.

dissolution of the Assembly as a form of checks and balances of the executive against the legislative power, something which is typical for parliamentary democracies, such factor may still not be assessed as positive from the point of view of the duration of the mandates of the Assembly compositions from 1990 until 2016.

As may be inferred from the data contained in the table above, only 50% of the Assembly compositions have completed their four-year mandate, whereas the remaining 50% had had it prematurely terminated. In particular, the first four Assembly compositions had retained their constitutionally-specified mandate till its expiry, whereas the subsequent four Assembly compositions until 2016 had had it prematurely terminated through their own dissolution due to the decision to organize snap parliamentary elections. In this sense, the duration of the mandate of the Assembly compositions from 1990 till 2016 had been, on the average, somewhat more than 3 years.

The reasons behind such shorter duration of mandates need to be sought within two circumstances:

- First, in the political crises in the country which have had their own impact on reducing the duration of legitimacy entrusted to the ruling parties,
- Second, in the strategies of the ruling parties which due to the distribution of power between themselves and the parties in the opposition had been opting for early elections so as to regain the legitimacy from the citizens.

From the political parties perspective, it should be concluded that until 2016 the Assembly compositions in which the majority of MAs had been from the SDSM-led coalition had remained in power until the end of their mandate, whereas the Assembly compositions with the majority of MAs led by VMRO-DPMNE had been more inclined toward dissolution and organizing early parliamentary elections.

MANDATE	MACEDONIANS	ALBANIANS	TURKS	ROMA	SERBS	VLACHS	BOSNIAKS
2002-2006	70.8	21.6	2.5	0.8	1.66	0.8	1.66
2006-2008	70.8	23.3	1.6	1.6	0.8	0.8	0.8
2008-2011	67.5	24.2	0.8	1.6	2.5	1.6	0.8
2011-2014	68	20	1.6	1.6	3.2	0.8	1.6
2014-2016	74	22	1.6	0.8	1.6	0	0.8
AVERAGE	70	22	2	2	2	1	1

Table 2: Representation of MAs from 2002 until 20167 according to their ethnic belonging

Based on the data above, as well as on the results obtained from the 2002 census on population and housing, it may be concluded that there have been certain, mainly minor deviations in the Assembly from the point of view of the ethnic representation of MAs.

⁷ According to the data obtained from the website of the Assembly, www.sobranie.mk, March, 2021.

Given the fact that such deviations have not been of a grand scale, two major conclusions may be accordingly inferred:

First, the present electoral model (regional – proportionate) which has applied since 2002 to date, with certain changes being made thereat in view of the voting of the diaspora constituencies, has enabled the equitable representation in the Assembly of all ethnic segments in the country, and

Second, the strategy of the largest parties (VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM, but also DUI) to set out with pre-election coalitions which integrate parties from the smaller ethnic communities (Turks, Roma, Serbs, Vlachs, Bosniaks, Egyptians etc.) has proved quite rightful from the aspect of the distribution of powers seen both through the prism of the number of received votes and the correction to the deficiencies in the electoral model which, by making it difficult for the respective political entities to be able to have their own independent presentation, is in fact encouraging them to get integrated in coalitions led by the largest parties in the country.

Considering the above data through the perspective of the constitutional character of the country, especially after the implementation of the 2001 Ohrid Framework Agreement, it is noticeable that the legislative power is a corresponding reflection of the civil and ethnic equality.

MANDATE	MEN	WOMEN
2002-2006	81.6	18.3
2006-2008	70.8	29.1
2008-2011	71.7	28.3
2011-2014	70	30
2014-2016	67.5	32.5
AVERAGE	73	28

Table 3: Gender representation of MAs from 2002 until 2016.

By analyzing the tendencies from 2002 until 2016, we may establish that there has been an increased equality of the gender structure among the Members of the Assembly. Namely, unlike in 2002 when the male-female MA ratio in the Assembly was more than 80% male against less than 20% female, in 2016 the same ratio was 67.5% against 32.5% respectively, which signifies a great progress having been reached. This confirms that the legislative requirements for greater gender equality have gradually yielded results, even though the required gender equality has still not been achieved.

8 Ibid.

COMPOSITION	NUMBER OF MAs WITH PREMATURELY TERMINATED MANDATE
1990-1994 first Assembly composition	2 MAs
1994-1998 second Assembly composition	6 MAs
1998-2002 third Assembly composition	21 MAs
2002-2006 fourth Assembly composition	25 MAs
2006-2008 fifth Assembly composition	12 MAs
2008-2011 sixth Assembly composition	6 MAs
2011-2014 seventh Assembly composition	10 MAs
2014-2016 eighth Assembly composition	14 MAs

Table 4: Number of MAs in the Assembly compositions from 1991 until 2016 whose mandate had been prematurely terminated.

In all compositions of the Assembly since the independence of the country until 2016, there had been MAs whose mandate had been prematurely terminated due to circumstances envisaged by the Constitution, at which in the largest number of cases the termination had ensued by following a submitted resignation (Article 65, paragraph 1) either due to the respective MA being appointed to another function in the executive power or to the local government respectively. On the average, within the eight Assembly compositions until 2016, 12 out of 120 MAs, which is 10% of the total number of MAs, had had their mandate prematurely terminated.

In pursuance to Article 63, paragraph 4 of the Constitution, the MA mandate may be extended by declaring either a Martial Law or a state of emergency in the country, though it should be noted that our country has had no such experience where extension of the MA mandates due to such circumstances has been imposed.

COMPOSITION	NUMBER OF POLITICAL PARTIES/ COALITIONS
1990-1994 first Assembly composition	12
1994-1998 second Assembly composition	9
1998-2002 third Assembly composition	12
2002-2006 fourth Assembly composition	19
2006-2008 fifth Assembly composition	20
2008-2011 sixth Assembly composition	18
2011-2014 seventh Assembly composition	20
2014-2016 eighth Assembly composition	15

Table 5: Number of political parties or coalitions in the Assembly in all eighth compositions from 1990 until 201610.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ According to the data obtained from the official website of the Assembly, sobranie.mk, March 2021.

Despite the fact that the party system of the country has all the characteristics of a system of restricted pluralism (against the systems of extreme pluralism and the atomized systems as per the classification made by Giovanni Sartori)¹¹, when looking from a perspective of the party representation in the Assembly, other conclusions may also be drawn.

Namely, the difference between the formal significant party representation against the essential four-party system is due to the fact that the largest political entities (VMRO-DPMNE, SDSM and the two largest parties of the ethnic Albanians) represent, in fact, coalitions¹² in which other minor parties participate as well, the latter being in the largest part either political entities which advocate for the interests of the remaining ethnic communities (Serbs, Turks, Roma, Vlachs, Bosniaks etc.) or other entities with some rather different ideological specificities.

COMPOSITION	NUMBER OF INDEPENDENT MAs
1990-1994 first Assembly composition	3
1994-1998 second Assembly composition	1
1998-2002 third Assembly composition	6
2002-2006 fourth Assembly composition	0
2006-2008 fifth Assembly composition	4
2008-2011 sixth Assembly composition	2
2011-2014 seventh Assembly composition	2
2014-2016 eighth Assembly composition	3

Table 6: Number of independent Members of the Assembly within the eight Assembly compositions from 1990 until 2016/13.

If we analyze the number of independent MAs within the analytical sample, it is noticeable that this number is quite small, ranging in between 1% and 5% of the total number of MAs. Such situation is due not only to the strong partisanship in the Macedonian society, but also to the nature of the electoral model which is rather discouraging of any initiative implying the composing of election lists which would be rendered equally competitive with the large parties in any of the electoral districts.

¹¹ See: Силјановска – Дафкова et.al, *Парламентарно право*, оп.цит.

¹² Thus, in the elections of 2006, 2008, 2011, 2014 and 2016 VMRO-DPMNE led the coalition „For better Macedonia“.

¹³ According to the data obtained from the official website of the Assembly, op.cit.

Legislative function

According to the Constitution of 1991 and the Law on the Assembly of 2009, the Assembly is defined as a representative body of all citizens and as the holder of the legislative power in the country.

Thus, considering this essential function of the Assembly, its practical effectuation shall be analyzed through the following five indicators¹⁴:

- › First, number of convened sessions of the Assembly;
- › Second, working days set for sessions of the Assembly;
- › Third, items on the agenda of the sessions of the Assembly;
- › Fourth, laws submitted to and adopted by the Assembly;
- › Fifth, number of Laws submitted to the Assembly by legislators.

MANDATE	NUMBER OF SESSIONS
2002-2006	136
2006-2008	115
2008-2011	147
2011-2014	87
2014-2016	125
TOTAL	610
AVARAGE PER MANDATE	122

Table 7: Convened sessions in the Assembly from 2002 until 201615.

MADATE	NUMBER OF WORKING HOURS FOR SESSIONS
2002-2006	389
2006-2008	328
2008-2011	299
2011-2014	318
2014-2016	243
TOTAL	1577
AVERAGE PER MANDATE	315

Table 8: Working hours for sessions of the Assembly from 2002 until 201616.

¹⁴ The indicators herein referred to are in line with the methodology we have defined in light of the set objective as well as in line with the specifics of the legislative power itself and the political system in the country.

¹⁵ According to the data obtained from the official website of the Assembly, op.cit.

¹⁶ Ibid.

MANDATE	ITEMS ON THE AGENDA
2002-2006	1543
2006-2008	715
2008-2011	2130
2011-2014	1910
2014-2016	2064
TOTAL	1672
AVERAGE PER MANDATE	334

Table 9: Items on the agenda for the sessions of the Assembly from 2002 to 2016 17.

MANDATE	NUMBER OF SUBMITTED LAWS	NUMBER OF ADOPTED LAWS
2002-2006	809	594
2006-2008	463	293
2008-2011	1636	982
2011-2014	1488	907
2014-2016	1635	1140
TOTAL	6031	3916
AVERAGE PER MANDATE	1206	783

Table 10: Laws submitted to and adopted by the Assembly from 2002 until 201618.

MANDATE	LAWS PROPOSED BY THE GOVERNMENT	LAWS PROPOSED BY MAS
2002-2006	567	26
2006-2008	289	4
2008-2011	800	28
2011-2014	888	19
2014-2016	1007	63
TOTAL	3551	140
AVERAGE PER MANDATE	710	28

Table 11: Number of law proposals which legislators had submitted to the Assembly in the period from 2002 until 201619.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

As can be discerned from the presented data, during the period from 2002 until 2016 the Assembly compositions had been mainly occupied with adoption of legislation.

Each Assembly composition had convened about 122 sessions on the average per mandate, which is equal to 315 actual working days. Within these 315 days, the Assembly had adopted 334 laws on the average per a mandate period, implying that within one working day the MAs would adopt more than one law. The number of submitted law proposals is much higher than the number of laws being actually adopted. Based on the presented data, 1.206 law proposals on the average per mandate had been put forth to the Assembly for adoption, 783 out of which being actually adopted, which is 60% of the submitted law proposals. Furthermore, although the Assembly is, by definition, the holder of the legislative power, and the MAs should be the key authorized legislators (along the Government and 10.000 voters), in more than 95% of all law proposals submitted to the Assembly, the Government had been the actual law proponent.

Considering the above, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- › First, notwithstanding the fact that the MAs also have as per their mandate other authorizations to perform, the largest part of their activities had been related to reviewing law proposals or draft laws and to law adoption;
- › Second, the political majority in the Assembly is entirely dependent on the instructions and the dynamism imposed by the Government as the holder of the executive power;
- › Third, the political opposition in the Assembly does not entirely exhaust the possibilities for oversight over the executive power, as may be concluded from the exceptionally small number of proposed laws, but also from the submitted interpellation motions, the requests for casting a confidence vote in the Government etc.;
- › Fourth, the lack of reinforced legislative initiative on the part of MAs is a key indicator implying that the function of oversight over the executive power has been likewise very modest.

Oversight function

The Assembly, inter alia, represents the branch of power in the state which has inherently within it important mechanisms for oversight over the performance of the executive power.

With due consideration of this fundamental function of the Assembly, its practical effectuation shall be analyzed through the following two indicators²⁰:

- › First, the number of sessions of the Assembly devoted to MA questions;
- › Second, submitted and adopted interpellation motions to the Assembly.

²⁰ The indicators herein referred to are in line with the methodology we have defined in light of the set objective as well as in line with the specifics of the legislative power itself and the political system in the country.

MANDATE	NUMBER OF SESSIONS DEVOTED TO MA QUESTIONS
2002-2006	25
2006-2008	14
2008-2011	25
2011-2014	22
2014-2016	17
TOTAL	124
AVERAGE PER MANDATE	25

Table 12: Sessions dedicated to MA questions from 2002 until 2016²¹.

Considering the data from the representative sample, it can be concluded that about 25 sessions dedicated to MA questions have been convened on the average per an Assembly mandate. If we add to this the data suggesting that about 20 questions have been on the average addressed per session, the common conclusion that arises is that within a single mandate period, under the competence of oversight of the legislative over the executive power, somewhat more than 500 MA questions are addressed.

The majority of all MA questions are addressed at an Assembly session, which means that the MAs make a very little use of the possibility to address their questions in writing, thus anticipating the replies from the competent institutions in the scope of the executive power. At the same time, the character of the replies submitted by the institutions is likewise disputable, as one part of them has noticeably given rise to discontent and public reactions, as has been observed by the MAs in the opposition. Finally, it has to be emphasized that the MAs from the ruling parties frequently use their right to address MA question only for the purpose of promoting certain governmental projects (rather than as a form of oversight), which further relativizes the power and significance of this mechanism.

MANDATE	INTERPELATIONS	ADOPTED INTERPELLATIONS
2002-2006	6	0
2006-2008	7	0
2008-2011	11	0
2011-2014	4	0
2014-2016	2	0
TOTAL	30	0
AVERAGE PER MANDATE	6	0

Table 13: Interpellation motions submitted to and adopted by the Assembly from 2002 until 2016²².

²¹ According to the data obtained from the official website of the Assembly, op.cit.

²² Ibid.

Considering the data above, it may be concluded that in the period from 2002 until 2016, 30 interpellation motions against the work of the ministries in the government had been submitted, which on the average is 6 submitted interpellation motions within a single mandate period. Also, during the period from 2002 until 2016, not a single debate on the subject of interpellation motion had been resolved through actual dismissal of the respective member of the government against whom the interpellation motion had been raised. This situation points to two critical conclusions:

First, that the Assembly is an institution in the system of power whose primary objective is to oversee and implement the politics of the government led by the president of the government, who is most of the time president of the political party which holds the majority in the Assembly; and

Second, that the oversight of the legislative over the executive power is entirely limited, which, in a way, also distorts the system of the division of power, in particular when the said principle is viewed through the prism of the application of the principle of “checks and balances”.

Conclusion

The Assembly as the holder of the legislative power represents a central authority by which, in reality, all key steps regarding the instituting of independence have been taken and effectuated: starting with the adoption of the Declaration of the Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia of 15th January 1991, whereby the need for „creation of autonomous, sovereign and independent Republic of Macedonia“²³ had been declared, through the adoption of the decision on organizing referendum on sovereignty and independence of 8 September 1991, and the respective Declaration adopted for that occasion²⁴, all the way through the adoption of the Constitution of the state on 17 November 1991²⁵.

Since then, the Assembly, by varying success and enthusiasm, has been accomplishing its competences, which, as mentioned earlier, mainly fall into the scope of three major areas.

As regards the function of representation, the conclusion is that it has been exercised at a satisfactory level. The nature of laws, as well as the nature of the political practice have promoted the Assembly as an institution which is reflecting in a corresponding manner the political, ethnical and confessional divergences of the country, though the minor challenge in this part to be further coped with is the gender representation, as it is still

²³ Declaration for sovereignty of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, No. 08-220-1.

²⁴ Declaration on the occasion of the plebiscitary expressed will of the citizens for sovereign and independent Macedonian state of Macedonia, Assembly of Republic of Macedonia, No. 08-3786, 17.9.1991.

²⁵ Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, op.cit.

being under-attained, notwithstanding it is more than obvious nowadays that there has been a continuous progress in this area with each and every new parliamentary electoral cycle and in each and every new subsequent Assembly composition.

As regards the second, legislative function, based on the sample we have taken for the purpose of preparing this analysis, it can be inferred that there has been a certain failure, in particular when considering the fact that the MA activities are predominantly aimed at and determined by the executive power, which is to the greatest extent the legislator and the one which takes the initiatives on the items to be discussed in the Assembly sittings. Apart from the great tendency of the government to influence the work of the Assembly, there has been a noted absence of reinforced legislative initiatives on the part of MAs, which additionally increases the Assembly dependence and subordination by the executive power. This „subordinate“ position of the Assembly very often reverberates in the saying that the MAs are instruments in the hands of the executive power. Not only do such assertions have negative impact on the reputation and authority of the Assembly in the system, but at the same time they lead to the distortion of the principle of the division of power as an inherent value in our constitutional system.

Finally, in the part of the oversight function, through the presented example on the use of the MA questions and interpellation motions, it may be concluded that the Assembly in continuity has been failing to achieve this important segment of its authorizations.

Considering the above stated weaknesses, one of the important questions that arises in the sense of finding the solutions for Assembly in which the citizens will have greater confidence and which will take more care for the needs of the state instead of taking care for the needs of the government (and of parties).

The facts presented herewith implying that the Assembly is in a subordinate position in relation to the Government, should be merely considered as a challenge to enact rectifications so as to be able to reach the state of more apposite functioning of the parliamentary democracy in the country. The lessons learnt from the three-decade practicing of parliamentary democracy represent a solid ground for embracing more essential changes in our political system by introducing new and more high-quality democratic mechanisms aimed at reinforcing the institutional responsibility.

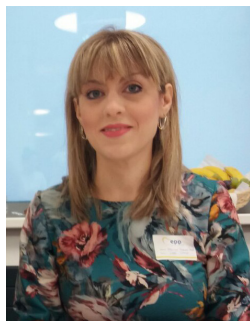
The lessons learnt should be taken as a depository of experience intended to produce a better quality definition of the positions of the Assembly, and in particular of the accountability that MAs have before the citizens, as well as to enable a consistent respect of the rule of law and the division of power as two fundamental tenets on which our political and constitutional system has been founded.



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SHORT BIOGRAPHIES



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Прегледна научна статија
УДК: 551.583:[616.98:578.834-036.21(100)]

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PUBLIC POLICIES FOR CRISIS MANAGEMENT: LESSONS LEARNED FROM COVID-19 ON CLIMATE CHANGE

POLITICAL THOUGHT

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Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic is one of the greatest challenges facing societies in modern history. The crisis has had a severe impact on health systems and the global economy, the effects of which will be felt for many years after the pandemic ends. Although at first glance the Covid-19 pandemic does not seem to have much in common with the world's climate change, the essential analysis suggests that the two phenomena have many similarities given the big picture of these two serious challenges to humanity.

Namely, the pandemic and climate change have a strong resemblance: both are major threats that cause damage to societies globally. The most serious effects can be prevented only if states commit to serious and early action in the face of a seemingly abstract threat. The pandemic is a remarkable, albeit very unfavourable, opportunity to learn very difficult lessons in dealing with a crisis. The pandemic and climate change are potentially devastating global problems requiring rapid government intervention. Although this intervention inevitably creates losers, in both cases it must be decisive and based on social consensus¹.

However, if the authorities make an assessment, in the long run, which of these two severe and serious crises will be easier to deal with, it is believed that it will be the Covid-19 pandemic². Climate change seems to be much harder to defeat globally because of its nature, but also because of the longer period available to deal with it.

The present paper aims to analyze the relationship between the Covid-19 pandemic and climate change, i.e., the degree of impact of Covid-19 on climate change, and the possibilities of response by the competent authorities with appropriate policies in dealing with climate change, as a result of the learned lessons from dealing with the pandemic during the first year of its onset.

Two global 'bad things'

Climate change is not at the top of the global agenda due to the expansion of Covid-19. The pandemic has dealt a severe blow to economies with dramatic results. Namely, although the recently started vaccination process has raised hopes for a reversal of the pandemic, strong new waves and new variants of the virus still cast doubt on expectations and projections. Amid extreme uncertainty, the global economy is

¹ Klenert, David, Franziska Funke, Linus Mattauch, and Brian O'Callaghan. "Five lessons from COVID-19 for advancing climate change mitigation." *Environmental and Resource Economics* 76, no. 4 (2020): 751-778.

² See more at: Fuentes, Rolando, Marzio Galeotti, Alessandro Lanza, and Baltasar Manzano. "COVID-19 and climate change: a tale of two global problems." *Sustainability* 12, no. 20 (2020): 8560, 1.

projected to grow by 5.5 percent in 2021 and 4.2 percent in 2022³. Five years after the Paris Agreement, which is a legally binding international agreement on climate change, governments globally begin work on new economic recovery plans in the light of Covid-19, focusing on climate change and green recovery⁴. The need for a global and rapid transition to clean energy sources is essential to end the excessive use of fossil fuels. However, due to a number of signs of non-compliance with the clear commitments under the Paris Agreement by a number of countries, the global response to climate change is silent and insignificant in many respects⁵. Global climate change has already had a marked impact on the environment. Glaciers have shrunk, the ice of rivers and lakes is falling apart earlier, the range of plants and animals has shifted, and trees are flowering earlier. The effects, which in the past scientists predicted would occur as a result of global climate change, are now happening: the loss of sea ice, accelerated sea-level rise, and longer, more intense heat waves⁶.

However, the magnitude and urgency of the Covid-19 crisis should not disregard the other challenges, such as climate change. Climate change is an existential threat, posing serious risks to individuals, society, and the economy, as evidenced by the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather conditions. The economic losses caused by weather-related disasters are estimated at around \$ 337 billion in 2017, and these figures are expected to grow significantly in the near future⁷.

Hence, decisions made by competent authorities must deal with two crises simultaneously: the Covid-19 pandemic and climate change.

Covid-19 is a new phenomenon associated with a series of uncertainties and insecurity regarding the expectations about how the pandemic will develop and what its far-reaching effects will be. At the time of writing the present paper, the number of patients worldwide is over 127 million, of which more than 2.7 million are deaths⁸.

The analogy between these two crises of different nature can be seen in several segments, which is useful for setting up a structure from which applicable lessons can be learned. Namely, these two are global phenomena that do not recognize borders, nor are they influenced by the sovereign character of the states. Some authors define them

3 IMF World economic outlook update, January 2021: Policy Supports and Vaccines Expected to Lift Activity. Available at: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2021/01/26/2021-world-economic-outlook-update>.

4 Climate and Covid-19: converging crisis. Published Online December 2, 2020. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)32579-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)32579-4) For the 2020 *Lancet* Countdown on Health and Climate Change report.

5 See more at: Watts, N., Amann, M., Arnell, N., Ayeb-Karissou, S., Beagley, J., Belesova, K., Boykoff, M., Byass, P., Cai, W., Campbell-Lendrum, D. and Capstick, S., 2020. The 2020 report of The Lancet Countdown on health and climate change: responding to converging crises. *The Lancet*, 130.

6 NASA Global Climate Change, Vital Signs of the Planet. Available on: <https://climate.nasa.gov/solutions/resources/>

7 Giuzio, M. et al., "Climate change and financial stability", Financial Stability Review May 2019, https://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/financial-stability/fsr/special/html/ecb.fsrart201905_1~47cf778cc1.en.html#toc1

8 Available on: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>

as “global public bads” and negative externalities⁹. The virus overflows in the same way as pollution, making them global, transborder phenomena with inherent transmissibility, accompanied by potentially catastrophic consequences, including high mortality rates. The infection did not take long to spread worldwide since the first Covid-19 cases in China. At the same time, as a common feature of these two devastating phenomena, there is also information asymmetry¹⁰, which refers to the lack of adequate information about the nature of the disease in the population. This is often associated with the deliberate failure of the competent authorities to take urgent action to create and implement policies on behalf of other (e.g., economic or political) short-term goals¹¹. The same applies to information related to the consequences of climate change and the need for immediate action.

Climate change is irreversible, i.e., the situation cannot be restored before it occurs. The Covid-19 pandemic also shows signs of irreversibility when it comes to lost lives and impaired health in individuals. The profound economic consequences, however, can be eliminated in the long run, which requires profound transformational processes.

The similarity of these two phenomena can serve as a basis for structuring the applicability of the experiences and knowledge from the early stages of the fight against Covid-19 on tackling climate change. At the same time, this experience leads to significant conclusions and lessons learned that have applicative value in other potential crisis phenomena/conditions in the future.

Lessons from the Covid-19 crisis applicable to tackling climate change

At the beginning of the pandemic, many political leaders tended to delay making political decisions until it was inevitable. However, in the face of viral epidemics or climate change, delays in the policy-making and implementation process can be tragic. *With the spread of Covid-19 and climate change, the dynamics that govern the processes are non-linear¹². This means that delayed responses from the competent authorities in both cases are disproportionately more expensive and cost more resources and lives.* The longer it takes to take appropriate action, the greater the harm caused by global threats such as the Covid-19 pandemic or climate change. The way out of the crisis requires long-term social transformations, with estimations that climate change will be more difficult to defeat

⁹ Fuentes, Rolando, Marzio Galeotti, Alessandro Lanza, and Baltasar Manzano. “COVID-19 and climate change: a tale of two global problems.” *Sustainability* 12, no. 20 (2020): 8560, 3.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Brazil's example in dealing with Covid-19 is explicated in Nassi-Pires, L.; Carvalho, L.; Rawet, E. Multidimensional inequality and COVID-19 in Brazil; Policy Brief No. 153; Levy Economics Institute of Bard College Public: Annandale-On-Hudson, NY, USA, 2020.

¹² Franziska Funke, David Klenert. “Climate change after COVID-19: Harder to defeat politically, easier to tackle economically” 17 August 2020. Available on: <https://voxeu.org/article/climate-change-after-covid-19>.

than the coronavirus pandemic. Climate stabilization, however, requires more lasting transformations that need to be implemented long before climate change reaches catastrophic proportions¹³.

Second, probably one of the main reasons why countries, companies, and people have so far refused to engage in serious and vigorous action to tackle climate change is due to the assumption that it costs a lot. However, the pandemic has taken a step that many governments have not shown the courage to take before, in the interest of combating climate change, which is to stop economic activity in order to stop the spread of the disease.

The lockdowns imposed around the world, accompanied by declining economic activity, have led to large reductions in greenhouse gas emissions (along with life-threatening air pollutants) from transport and industrial activities. In China, for example, the cessation of industrial activity caused a 25% drop in CO₂ emissions in February 2020, compared to the same month in 2019¹⁴. These effects of improving the environment quickly became noticeable to the human eye. Namely, although unexpectedly, it took only weeks, not years, to clear the sky in the polluted cities with the decline in emissions during the Covid-19 lockdowns¹⁵. The decline in pollution in Europe became visible from space. People in smog-stricken cities in India¹⁶ shared photos of the suddenly visible Himalayas, previously blurred by pollution.

This temporary decline in emissions, however, will be insignificant for climate change, unless supported by additional activities related to the implementation of effective climate policies. Namely, to make climate change happen, important factors are the amount and the composition of the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, and not the short-term flows. Equally important regarding the temporary declines in emissions is that they are not offset by stronger emissions growth in subsequent years¹⁷, as was the case in 2008 when, in the context of the global financial crisis, temporary declines in emissions occurred, which were later offset and exceeded.

However, the reduction of harmful emissions as a side effect caused by the lockdowns to prevent the spread of Covid-19 has shown that the price is high, although in most cases the perception of climate change is that the price of economic inactivity is lower than that of Covid-19. The argument in favour of rising carbon prices in the past has

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Global Carbon Project (2020), Available on: <http://www.globalcarbonatlas.org/en/content/welcome-carbon-atlas>.

¹⁵ Bloomberg, In: "Air Clears in Rome, Paris, and Madrid as Millions Stay Home", Available on: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-03-27/coronavirus-lockdown-skies-clear-in-rome-paris-and-madrid?sref=HJFr5loq>, (accessed July 16, 2020)

¹⁶ Bloomberg, In: "World's Dirtiest Air Gets Cleaner After India's Lockdown", Available on: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-04-07/world-s-dirtiest-air-gets-cleaner-after-india-s-lockdown?sref=HJFr5loq>

¹⁷ See more at: OECD Policy Responses to Coronavirus (COVID-19): COVID-19 and the low-carbon transition: Impacts and possible policy responses, 26 June 2020. Available on: <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/covid-19-and-the-low-carbon-transition-impacts-and-possible-policy-responses-749738fc/#section-d1e32>

been portrayed as an unbearable burden on society. After Covid-19, it will be difficult to reject economic arguments against climate policy because it is predicted that the economic costs of limiting climate change to two degrees Celsius will have weaker effects in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions¹⁸. The short-term reductions in CO2 emissions during the Covid-19 lockdowns are not sufficient to meet the criteria of the Paris Agreement. This suggests the need for much deeper societal change, along with a full “green recovery” in the next phase of Covid-19 fiscal interventions that will eliminate much of the greenhouse gas emissions and lead to slow climate change¹⁹.

Third, the work in conditions of Covid-19 has caused a change in the behaviour of the citizens, which can contribute to the mitigation of climate change in the long run. The Covid-19 pandemic can have long-term consequences for the way we work, where we live, where we shop, and how we spend our free time²⁰. The reduced number of business trips, especially with the use of air transport, reduces emissions. Working with video conferencing reduces the need to use transportation. But on the other hand, the pandemic could affect the reduced use of public transport at the expense of the use of cars to prevent the spread of the disease. If certain business models prove to be successful, such as working from home, the way of working can change even after the end of the pandemic, which will contribute to improving the environment²¹. However, the behaviour change is caused for the most part by the seriousness and credibility of the death threat²², such as the habit of wearing a mask or keeping a distance. Covid-19 mortality creates strong personal, family, and social implications and greater sensitivity when it comes to behaviour change. Climate change, on the other hand, could lead to the potential destruction of the planet and its habitats, threatening the very existence of humanity. The behaviour of individuals is changeable and adaptable to new situations. Alerting on climate change can result in a change in citizens’ behaviour, just as the Covid-19 pandemic forced changes in mask-wearing and physical-distance routines.

The fourth lesson from Covid-19 that applies to climate change concerns the reorganization of economies as a result of the pandemic. There is an interesting dilemma posed by Fuentes, Rolando et.al.²³ as to whether this low-contact economy will turn into a low-carbon emission economy, given that energy is at the heart of economic activity.

18 See more at: Fuentes, Rolando, Marzio Galeotti, Alessandro Lanza, and Baltasar Manzano. “COVID-19 and climate change: a tale of two global problems.” *Sustainability* 12, no. 20 (2020): 8560, 9, also: Klenert, David, Franziska Funke, Linus Mattauch, and Brian O’Callaghan. “Five lessons from COVID-19 for advancing climate change mitigation.” *Environmental and Resource Economics* 76, no. 4 (2020): 751-778.

19 UN News ‘Green recovery’ from COVID-19 can slow climate change: UN environment report. Available on: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/12/1079602>

20 Rice, W.L.; Mateer, T.J.; Reigner, N.; Newman, P.; Lawhon, B.; Ta, B.D. Changes in recreational behaviors of outdoor enthusiasts during the COVID-19 pandemic: Analysis across urban and rural communities. *J. Urban Ecol.* 2020, 6, juaa020

21 For instance, the air transport, although growing rapidly prior to the crisis, accounted for 2.5% of global greenhouse gas emissions at the beginning of 202, indicating that climate change cannot be addressed wiby just a certain change in behaviour, but it requires a joint and comprehensive action.

22 Fuentes, Rolando, Marzio Galeotti, Alessandro Lanza, and Baltasar Manzano. “COVID-19 and climate change: a tale of two global problems.” *Sustainability* 12, no. 20 (2020): 8560, 10.

23 Ibid, 10-11.

In the post-Covid-19 world, it will be the basic human interaction that will determine the organization of this new economy. According to some authors, this will be an opportunity given only once in a lifetime to restart economies with a low-carbon way of working, which should not be taken for granted²⁴.

The expectations are that the economies will undergo a transformation in several aspects of the recovery process. One of the key priorities for transformation will be an economy that will reduce the spread of the disease.

According to Fuentes, Rolando et.al. only if the low-carbon organization is compatible with this priority will it provide low-contact and carbon economic activity. The low-carbon economy will favour those activities which production includes a pure environmental advantage in terms of reduced emissions. As a result of the Covid-19 crisis, there has been a serious shift in demand preferences. The most important attribute in economic exchange would be cleanliness but in a hygienic sense. The altered economic awareness also means that instead of giving priority to activities without emissions, activities without inspections are preferred. This is well illustrated by the so-called paradox of packaging. Namely, before the start of the Covid-19 crisis, the main focus in terms of packaging was waste reduction and the use of biodegradable, i.e., recyclable material. With the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic, the focus of the packaging is on how to obtain the attributes of a surface that will provide protection and health to humans, that is, how to provide a surface that is easy to clean and unfit for growth and spread of viruses and other microorganisms. A packaging design that engages touch from many entities will not be functional due to the new circumstances, but disposable packaging with personalized handles may be desirable in the market. This problem is further complicated due to the possibility of unregulated recycling of the personalized approach, as has already been seen with the dumping of large quantities of pandemic masks and gloves.

Parallel fight against two threats to humanity: Covid-19 and climate change

Climate change is a global challenge that requires a global response, which is why this issue is high on the agendas of governments in many countries around the world. At the Paris Summit in December 2015, 196 countries met to sign a new climate change agreement. This summit on climate change in Paris (held after the coordinated terrorist attacks in Paris, on the night of November 13, 2015) is very important since it made a real difference in climate activities internationally.

²⁴ Winston, A. Is the COVID-19 Outbreak a Black Swan or the New Normal? MIT Sloan Management Review, 16 March 2020. Available on: <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/is-the-covid-19-outbreak-a-black-swan-or-the-new-normal/>

Namely, in December 2015 at the 21st Conference on Climate Change in Paris (COP21), after 20 years of negotiations, the signatory countries of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) reached an agreement on combating climate change, to maintain the rise of the global average temperatures to less than 2 °C above the pre-industrial levels, seeking to limit the rise to 1.5 °C. Simply put, countries are committed to reducing the greenhouse gases they emit to slow global warming. Otherwise, it is to be expected that global warming will have irreversible, catastrophic consequences for all life on the planet.

That is why the Paris Agreement²⁵ creates a kind of process that is expected to result in tackling climate change. The Paris Agreement is considered a great success because, for the first time, it unites all countries under one cause in order to make ambitious efforts to tackle climate change. Countries that have ratified the agreement at a national level have committed themselves to take action at a national and local level to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The belief and expectations that this process is possible remain today, six years later.

With the right political leadership, the Paris Agreement can lead to ambitious results that will have a real impact on tackling climate change²⁶.

The Covid-19 pandemic since its onset on March 11, 2020, has also provoked a wide range of responses from governments around the world. While scientists were trying to find a vaccine and a suitable cure, the states were rapidly taking drastic measures. Today (2021), a year later, governments are working to provide vaccines and debating the introduction of a vaccine passport to normalize the process.

On December 12, 2020, the UN Climate Ambition Summit was hosted by the United Kingdom and France, in partnership with Italy and Chile. The Summit was an opportunity to summarize progress five years after the signing of the Paris Agreement, but also to provide a platform for leaders to announce new, more ambitious national contributions to climate change, as well as long-term strategies that lead us to a neutral, greener and more resilient sustainability.

To combat the Covid-19 pandemic and the “intimidating existential threat of climate change”, the only credible answer is “courageous, visionary and collaborative leadership” anchored in multilateralism, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said during the international discussion focusing on climate change. The Secretary-General called for

²⁵ Paris Agreement, United Nations, 2015. Available on: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf

²⁶ Stojanovska-Stefanova, Aneta and Vckova, Nadica. International Strategy for Climate Change and The Countries Commitment For Developing Policies. In: *International Scientific Conference: Crisis Management: Challenges and Perspective*, 18 Nov 2015, Skopje, Macedonia, (2016): 204.

multilateral co-operation and drew a parallel between the two threats, explaining that “greenhouse gases are like a coronavirus, they know no borders²⁷”.

According to the United Nations, the Covid-19 pandemic should be utilized to create a better world. Scientists have long sounded the alarm about climate change and its inevitable effects on our future. The vast majority of climate scientists, as many as 97%, agree that humans are causing climate change, and the data explicitly support their beliefs. “Science is clear. Science is unequivocal. Politics complicates science’s response, says climate and water expert Dr. Peter Gleick.²⁸”

Experts say that in many cases, climate solutions are in fact pandemic solutions. Countries around the world need to take action on climate change to prevent another pandemic. For example, preventing deforestation – which is considered to be a major cause of climate change – can help reduce biodiversity loss, as well as slow animal migration that may increase the risk of spreading infectious diseases.

A review of agricultural practices, including those that rely on the breeding of tens of millions of animals in tight quarters, can help prevent the transmission of disease between animals spill over into the human population.

Furthermore, reducing air pollution caused by burning fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas, also helps maintain lung health, which can protect us from respiratory infections such as coronavirus.

To combat climate change, countries need to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

States also need to enable low-carbon electricity generation in their policy plans, from sources such as wind and solar power, to reduce harmful air pollutants, such as nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, and carbon dioxide, which lead to diseases in humans.

Given past experiences, the world can make very smart investments to avoid new pandemic outbreaks, primarily by helping poor countries in their efforts to give up coal, oil, and gas, and build windmills, set up wind farms, solar panels, and use geothermal and hydropower.

Political leaders around the world can also support public health and science, and provide more funding for research, early response to epidemics, and sufficient testing materials.

²⁷ United Nations 2020. Parallel threats of COVID-19, climate change, require 'brave, visionary and collaborative leadership': UN chief. Available on: <https://news.un.org/feed/view/en/ story/2020/04/1062752>

²⁸ Lassman, Angie. 2020. What the US' Response to Coronavirus Can Teach Us About Climate Change, NBC Miami 27 April 2020. Available on: <https://www.nbcmiami.com/ news/local/what-the-us-response-to-coronavirus-can-teach-us-about-climatechange/ 2225641/>

The Paris Agreement enabled broad initiative and led to major global movements, enabling the involvement of governmental and non-governmental organisations. The comprehensive nature of the initiative is also a feature of the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic where everyone is called to get involved with a personal example, in terms of respecting the measures and preventing further spread of the infection.

“We are going through dark days, but hope still exists. The unusual window of opportunity to create a better world for us is briefly open before us. Let us use the fight against the pandemic to create a world that can be safer, healthier, and more inclusive for all of us,” said UN Secretary-General, Guterres²⁹.

The climate emergency, like the Covid-19 pandemic, does not respect national borders. Therefore, knowing that the threat of climate change and the pandemic is not over, the United Nations continues to face challenges and to think of future plans for a healthier planet and a society “that leaves no one behind.” Continuous action is being taken throughout the United Nations system to ensure a healthier and more resilient future.

The process of recovering from the coronavirus pandemic offers a chance to change course and put humanity on a path that does not conflict with nature, with the United Nations calling for “greater efforts by all actors to protect biodiversity and intensify climate action³⁰”. Each state will have to determine its own so-called national contributions to climate change mitigation³¹, as a contribution to the global efforts. However, this time, no country can do it alone – success requires multilateral cooperation in which the international community works together to combat climate change and the pandemic.

Conclusions

Covid-19 and climate change are causing a global disruption that transcends borders and threatens the lives of millions of people. They are multipliers of risk that exacerbate inequalities, disproportionately affect the most vulnerable, each in their own way³². Covid-19 and climate change pose global health threats.

²⁹ United Nation 2020. Climate Change and COVID-19: UN urges nations to ‘recover better’. Available on: <https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/un-urges-countries-%E2%80%98build-back-better%E2%80%99>

³⁰ COVID-19 recovery offers ‘chance to change course’, Guterres tells One Planet Summit. Available on: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/01/1081772>.

³¹ See more at: NDCs – a key tool for international climate change mitigation. Available on: <https://www.international-climate-initiative.com/en/ndcs>.

³² Stojanovska-Stefanova A., Runcheva-Tasev H., (2021), “*The impact of the coronavirus crisis on climate action: Lessons learned for the governments*”, In: Proceedings from Annual International Conference “Political Consequences of the Pandemic”, organized by The Serbian Political Science Association (SPSA), University of Belgrade, Faculty of Political Science-Belgrade, Serbia, 26-27 September, 2020, ISBN 978-86-6425-081-8.

The World Health Organisation estimates that between 2030 and 2050, climate change will cause approximately 250,000 additional deaths per year from malnutrition, malaria, and heat stress³³. Climate change and the loss of biodiversity also increase the risk of future pandemics by endangering the fragility of the world's ecosystems³⁴.

Climate change is thought to be more difficult to defeat than the Covid-19 pandemic. The post-pandemic world in apparent normalcy is expected to provide effective vaccines, appropriate therapy perhaps, and treatment protocols. Climate stabilization, however, requires more lasting transformations that need to be implemented long before climate change reaches catastrophic proportions.

There is a big difference in terms of perceptions related to Covid-19 and climate change, which indicates different reactions from the actors involved. The threat of climate change is invisible, it evolves gradually, and it is not felt equally in space and time globally. Giddens's paradox of climate change confirms that no matter how great the dangers of climate change, the lack of their immediate visibility in the everyday world means that people will not act to deal with them; until the dangers are immediately apparent, and then it will be too late for any action by humans to be effective³⁵. Unlike climate change, the harm caused by Covid-19 is close to every individual, and the loss of human lives creates a sense of urgency. The pandemic has created a global crisis in public health, which is a visible danger that conditions our short-term survival. The harm becomes greater if the response is late or delayed, and it is visible in the loss of a huge number of human lives.

Such a visible threat also poses advantage in dealing with the Covid-19 on the global political agenda. Climate change is a long-term problem facing humanity, requiring an intergenerational and multi-dimensional approach from a broad range of stakeholders, unlike the Covid-19 pandemic, which is expected to be a generational battle in the short term.

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³³ UNHCR, In: COVID-19, Displacement and Climate Change. Available on: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNHCR%20COVID-19%20Displacement%20and%20Climate%20Change%20Fact%20Sheet%20-%20June%202020.pdf>

³⁴ Ibidem.

³⁵ Giddens, A. *The Politics of Climate Change*; Polity Press: Cambridge, UK, 2009.

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SHORT BIOGRAPHY



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Изворна научна статија

УДК: 323.21:321.7(100)

323.21:321.7(497.7)

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THE ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF POLITICAL CULTURE IN DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES

POLITICAL THOUGHT

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Introduction

Democracy is one of the most pressing issues in recent world history, especially after the fall of the Berlin Wall and of the totalitarian regimes. If until the late 1980s there was an alternative to liberal democracy, today liberal democracy is almost without a serious ideological competitor in the world of politics. Anticipating the outcome of the Cold War and embracing its aftermath, most countries around the world have embraced liberal democracy as their “credo.” The establishment of democratic order in the former authoritarian socialist societies marked major social, political and cultural changes in them and emphasized the importance and vitality of democracy. The general acceptance of democracy in different societies, but also the great differences in the democratic achievements among the post-socialist orders, raises questions about the cultural preconditions of democracy itself, as well as of the societies that seek to implement and develop it.¹

Given that post-socialist countries are a very specific subject of research within the political sciences, in our analysis we can start from two different positions. On the one hand we can use the positions we use in the analysis of states in other (established) democracies because these are models to which post-socialist states gravitate, and on the other hand it is necessary to justifiably point out the significant differences that these states (and societies) have in relation to Western European “ideal models”.² The experiences of transitional societies indicate that the normative-institutional democratic order is not enough for a political system to be democratic. They confirm the perception of mid twentieth century political science that only the politically institutionalized and the socio-economic factors are not sufficient to explain the conditions for the emergence and development of different types of political systems.³ The democratic normative-institutional set-up is undoubtedly the minimum without which a democratic order is not possible. The aim of this paper is to prove that the development of a stable democracy does not depend only on the structure of the state and its legislation, but above all on the subjective orientations of the citizens towards the political system, i.e. the political culture.

The very notion of political culture arose in an attempt to explain why the formally same institutional-legislative models in different societies do not give the same results.⁴ According to Andrew Heywood, although interest in political culture waned during the 1970s and 1980s, the debate resumed in the 1990s because of the need for democracy in Eastern Europe on the rubble of communism, but also because of the growing concern

1 Pero Maldini, “Političko – kulturalni preduvjeti demokratizacije”, *Politička misao*, 3 (2006), 88

2 Dušan Spasojević, “Građenje države i civilnog društva u postkomunizmu” in *Savremena država*, edited by Vukašin Pavlović and Zoran Stojiljković (Beograd, KAS i FPN, 2008), 147

3 Димитар Бајалџиев, *Политологија*. (Скопје: Правен факултет, 2000), 453

4 Irena Ristić, “Religija kao faktor političke kulture i ekonomskog razvoja”, *Filozofija i društvo*, XXVIII (2005), 145

of mature democracies, such as the United States, due to the alleged reduction of social capital and civic engagement.⁵

The concept of political culture

Political thinkers have always recognized the importance of attitudes, values and beliefs. Nevertheless, in the past they did not see it as part of a “political culture.” Edmund Burke, for example, wrote about customs and tradition⁶, Karl Marx about ideology, and Herder about the national spirit⁷. The development of the term also flowed through terms such as Durkheim’s “collective consciousness”, Weber’s concept of “meanings of individual actions”, Parsons’ “action frame of reference”⁸. According to Vojislav Stanovchikj, there is no doubt that Montesquieu, in analyzing the many factors that determine the spirit of the laws⁹ of a system, paid significant attention to political and cultural actors. In many examples these factors are decisive for the character and mode of operation of a system. He further asks himself: Does not Alexis de Tocqueville, in the second volume of his major work *Democracy in America*¹⁰, who seems to follow Montesquieu, examine the influence of elements of political culture on democratic institutions and vice versa?¹¹

However, interest in the idea of political culture among political scientists did not appear until the 1950s and 1960s, when new techniques of behavioral analysis replaced the traditional institutional approach to the problem.¹²

Although many papers have been written in recent times, it seems that many of them are using the already classic paper on the notion of political culture by the authors Almond and Verba - *The Civic Culture*¹³ published for the first time in 1963. In their sonant work, the authors Almond and Verba especially emphasize the importance of civic (democratic) political culture for the development of a stable and efficient democratic government. Their main thesis is:

But the development of a stable and effective democratic government depends upon more than the structure of the government and politics: it depends upon the orientation that people have to the political process – upon the political culture.

5 Endru Hejvud, *Politika*. (Beograd: Clio, 2004), 381

6 Подетално за ова во Edmund Berk, *Razmišljanja o revoluciji u Francuskoj*. (Beograd, Filip Višnjic, 2001)

7 Endru Hejvud, *Politika*, 380

8 Vladimir Vujčić, “Pojam političke kulture”, *Politička misao*, 4 (1997), 111

9 See , Monteskie, *O duhu zakona, I – II*. (Beograd: Filip Višnjic, 1989)

10 See , Aleksis de Tokvil, *Demokratija u Americi*. (Sremski Karlovci: Knj. Z. Stojanovića, 2002)

11 Vojislav Stanovčič, *Političke ideje i religija t.2*. (Beograd: Udruženje za političke nauke i Čigoja štampa, 2003), 162-163

12 Endru Hejvud, , *Politika*, 380

13 Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, “*The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*”. (New Jersey: Princeton University, 1963)

Unless the political culture is able to support a democratic system, the chances for the success of that system are slim.¹⁴

Many efforts have been made to show how democratic political institutions alone are not sufficient for the stable and efficient functioning of democracy, i.e. for the process of peaceful change in society. Although there are still some ambiguities, today it can be confirmed with certainty that “the political culture of a nation is a very important variable in explaining many criterion (dependent) variables of politics and governance in society”.¹⁵ If this is the case, then we need to work on the elaboration of the term political culture.

The joint work of the authors Almond and Verba - *Civic Culture* is a grandiose work on democratic political culture. In addition to the types of political culture that characterize the five nations surveyed (USA, UK, Italy, Germany and Mexico), one can find in it a comprehensive theory of political culture.¹⁶ Soon after its release, “this study in political science will impose itself as a classic for a whole generation of political scientists.”¹⁷ Therefore, we will focus on the results of this book that are important for understanding the concept itself. The above authors give a definition of political culture. For them, “political culture is a specific political orientation - attitude towards the political system and its segments, as well as attitudes towards the role of the individual in society”.¹⁸ This new term emphasizes the “political orientations and the role of the person in that phenomenon” or the subjective relations of people towards politics. In fact, political culture is exactly the subjective side of politics. There are three types of orientations: *cognitive*, *affective* and *evaluative*. The cognitive orientations encompass knowledge of politics (political system, political role and results of a particular government), affective orientations refer to feelings about the political system, political authorities, and roles, whereas the evaluative orientations indicate judgments and opinions about various political objects, usually combining value criteria, knowledge and feelings about them.¹⁹

So when asked what political culture is, probably the shortest definition of this problematic and difficult to tangle category would be that it is a model of individual attitudes and orientations shared by people in a society, which relate to politics.²⁰ So political culture reflects the values and attitudes that citizens have in a country, and they refer to politically relevant issues, i.e. issues that affect everyone equally. The term political culture also reveals the additional, most complex characteristic and the

14 Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*, 488

15 Vladimir Vujčić, “Pojam političke kulture”, 115-116

16 Vladimir Vujčić, “Pojam političke kulture”, 115-116

17 Димитар Мирчев и Лидија Христова, *Модерната политологија - темелите на проучувањето на политичкиот живот* (Скопје: Универзитет ФОН и Култура, 2008), 200

18 Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, “*The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*”, 13

19 Vladimir Vujčić, “Pojam političke kulture”, 116-117, also see Билјана Ванковска, *Политички систем* (Скопје, Бомат графикас, 2007), 66, as well as Димитар Бајалчиев, *Политологија*, 456-457

20 Л. Христова, „Политичка култура, социјализација и јавно мислење“, in *Наука за политиката*, prepared by Lidija Hristova (Зборник на текстови, Скопје), 6.

relation of the subjective side of politics, i.e. the categories of political cognition, ideology, psychology and the like. This leads to radical changes in the perception of the role of man in the world of politics.²¹ According to Dimitar Bajaldziev "*Political culture is a system of historically created, proportionately lasting institutions, beliefs, notions, models of behavior, manifested in the direct activity of the subjects of the political process.*". It is a method (way, means) of action on the basis of certain values, beliefs and ideas."²²

Simply put, political culture expresses the psychology of a nation in relation to politics.²³

Typology of Political Culture According to Almond and Verba

The notion of a typology of political culture is an integral part of the theory of political culture. Famous American political scientists Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba are the first to speak thoroughly and consistently about this term in their most famous work *Civic Culture*.²⁴

The problem of determining the types of political culture arises from the different criteria used by different authors. Thus, for example, Almond and Verba first determine the types of political culture from the point of view of the role of the individual in politics, i.e. from the position of the individual towards the various objects of politics, and especially in their perception of their own role and the possibility of influencing the political processes. Others use the term ideology to determine the types of political culture, there are those who use the term political style for that, others use the term value, some combine values with the organization of government and power, and so on.²⁵ According to Vladimir Vujchikj, those different classifications are not contradictory but complementary. Each criterion allows the same phenomenon to be approached from a different angle. According to him, political culture is such a complex phenomenon that is determined by various factors (tradition, religion, education, organization of government, etc.), so that it is impossible to determine its typology from just one criterion.²⁶

Almond and Verba develop their typology of political culture in accordance with their definition of political culture as separate political orientations (attitudes) towards different

21 Димитар Бајалџиев, *Политологија*, 454

22 Димитар Бајалџиев, *Политологија*, 457

23 M. Roskin., et al. *Political Science* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1994), 122, quoted according to, Димитар Мирчев и Лидија Христова, *Модерната политологија - темелите на проучувањето на политичкиот живот*, 203

24 Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, "*The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*". (Princeton: Princeton University, 1963)

25 Vladimir Vujčič, "Tipologija političke kulture", *Politička misao*, 4 (1998), 99

26 Vladimir Vujčič, "Tipologija političke kulture", 99

objects of politics. They sought to determine which political culture most effectively supported democratic politics.²⁷

These authors identified three basic (pure) types of political culture: *parochial*, *subject*, and *participatory*. They are mainly derived from the attitude of the individual towards political objects. Almond and Verba describe in detail the pure types of political culture, but also determine the possibility of the existence of so-called mixed types of this phenomenon. The mixed types include “parochial-subject”, “subject-participatory”, “parochial-participatory” and *civic political culture* (which is a mixture of the three basic types). The fundamental characteristics of each of these types should be mentioned.

Parochial - The basic thing about this type of political culture is that individuals have not developed attitudes towards different political objects. This type is found in societies where special political roles have not yet been developed. We find it in societies where economic, political and religious roles are not differentiated. Therefore, individuals in this type have not developed political orientations towards these roles that would differ from their social and religious orientations. The parochial individual is tied to the family, the tribe, the chief. He is not aware of the broad forms of political organization, does not observe the system as a whole, does not observe the roles of the central structures of government, does not demand and does not expect anything from higher state structures.²⁸ They perceive government as a force that only collects taxes. There is a belief that politics is only for the elites and there is no desire for political participation.²⁹

Subject - This type is characterized by the existence of attitudes towards the political system as a whole and towards the output - the objects of politics, but there are no such attitudes towards the input - objects and the notion of the role of the “I” in politics. Accordingly, the subject is a person who is aware of the system as a whole, notices the role of the central government, has political expectations from the central government, but is actually very politically passive, not ready for political participation or for any challenge to existing state structures, form of governance or established political authorities.³⁰ Such a culture is incapable of producing democratic stability, because the citizens lack awareness of their own democratic potential.³¹

Participatory - This type of political culture is marked by the existence of developed political orientations towards all objects of politics. Compared to the subject type, here we have developed attitudes towards input objects and the role of each individual in the political process. A participatory individual is present in a society in which there are

27 Endru Hejvud, *Politika*, 381

28 Vladimir Vujčić, “Tipologija političke kulture”, 101

29 Билјана Ванковска, *Политички систем*, 66-67

30 Vladimir Vujčić, “Tipologija političke kulture”, 101

31 Билјана Ванковска, *Политички систем*, 67

differentiated social and political structures and roles. He is aware of the system as a whole, of the centralized organs of government, he is politically interested, ready for political communication, critical of the government, sets certain political demands and most importantly he is ready for political action to achieve his political goals.³²

Civic Political Culture

This type of political culture corresponds to the type of democratic political culture and the democratic political regime, and will therefore be paid more attention. We again take the teaching of Almond and Verba as a reference point.

In civic political culture, the emphasis is on political participation. It encompasses high levels of political awareness, willingness to communicate, political organization and political action. But there is more to it than just those activist elements. Civic culture, for example, is a loyal participatory culture. Only one political order suits her, and that is the democratic one. In civic political culture the participatory political orientations are combined with the subject and the parochial. Individuals become participants in the political process but they do not abandon their orientations and roles as subjects or parishioners. And not only are parochial and subject orientations held together with the participatory ones, but they are compatible with the participatory political orientation. In fact, these subject orientations affect the restriction of political activism of individuals in politics. Were it not for these subject orientations, there would be no moderate political action by individuals - their activism would often escalate into revolution and various other forms of extremism, and the current political power would not be able to rule steadily. It would be under constant pressure from the energetic public and its justified and unjustified demands. It can be said that civic political culture is not as much a participatory political culture as a *potential participatory culture*. The citizen is more a potential than a real activist. He acts when needed, but not when not necessary. Thus, he enables efficiency of the government but also control over it in the country.³³

Democratic Political Culture as a Condition for Democratic Transition and Consolidation

As we mentioned in the introduction, the establishment of a democratic order in authoritarian socialist societies signifies great social, political and cultural changes in them. The general acceptance of democracy in different societies but also the great

³² Vladimir Vujčić, "Tipologija političke kulture", 101-102

³³ Vladimir Vujčić, "Tipologija političke kulture", 102-107

differences in their democratic achievements, raise questions about the cultural preconditions of democracy itself, as well as the societies that implement and develop it.

Although according to Gjorgje Ivanov "there really are differences in the transitions from one country to another"³⁴ and the common link that connects the transition societies (different from each other) is the process of democratization that takes place differently in each individual society and with varied success. Numerous transitional societies are marked by social change that does not correspond to their proclaimed democratic transformation. Their experiences indicate that the normative-institutional democratic order is not enough for the political system to be democratic. These facts show us that the transition is not a one-way or predictable process of social development that necessarily leads to the establishment of a democratic order.³⁵

One of the facts that requires an explanation that cannot be given by the normative-institutionalist approach is the failure of certain political institutions when for any reason attempts are made to transplant them into another environment or graft them on local institutions and relations. There are several examples with which such (un)successfulness can be explained by factors that are largely related to political culture. There is no doubt that attempts to transplant North American political institutions such as federalism and the presidential system in Latin American countries has failed. Institutions that have brought permanence, stability, dispersion of power, and many other beneficial effects to North America have become just an empty form in South America, a lifeless copy of many vital models. Attempts to transplant the institutions of Western European parliamentarism to some developing countries, which lack the political and cultural climate and action, these institutions do not bear the fruits they gave in the social "climate" where they sprouted. When it is pointed out that systems with similar basic structures, goals and mechanisms in East Germany give one result, and in Poland quite another (i.e. lack of results in a number of areas), it undoubtedly shows how it is affected by different conditions relating to tradition, attitudes towards certain values, religion and other elements of political culture.³⁶ The experience of transition from one type of regime to another already existed with the transition of the old authoritarian regimes of Spain, Portugal and Latin America to a democratic one, but such are not the legacies of the communist regimes. Many of these regimes before their dictatorial past had already built some civic institutions or were under the direct influence of the leading colonial capitalist dominators. On the other hand, post-communist countries have very little or no experience with civil democracy and have no legacy of institutions that would enable it.³⁷

³⁴ Ѓорѓе Иванов. "Транзитологија". *Политичка мисла*. 1 март (2003), 59

³⁵ Pero Maldini, "Političko - kulturalni preduvjeti demokratizacije", 88

³⁶ Vojislav Stanovčić, *Političke ideje i religija* t.2, 163-164

³⁷ Branka Galit, "Politička kultura 'novih demokracija". *Revija za sociologiju*, Vol. XXXI No. 3-4 (2000), 202

That is why the American political scientist Ronald Inglehart rightly asks the question: "Which comes first - Democratic political culture or democratic institutions?"³⁸, and the Macedonian political scientist Nenad Markovikj the question: "How can the citizens expect the realization of full democratic capacity in conditions of non-existence of structures that will bear (carry) it?"³⁹ The question of whether institutions can act democratically given that they are made up of people who are marked by the political culture of the society in which they live so the institutions are an expression of them and their socio-cultural and political features. On the other hand, how will the civic (democratic) culture and trust in the institutions necessary for the democratic functioning of the order be realized, if the institutions do not act democratically? The solution to this *circulus vitiosus* is posed as one of the central issues in the democratization of transitional societies.⁴⁰

The political culture of a democracy can be defined on two levels. The structurally relevant values that are codified by social norms (laws) are the first level. The other level is the confidence of the society to apply those values.

When we talk about transitional societies we are talking about societies with developmental discontinuity, which is marked by normative-institutional on the one hand and cultural change on the other. Each of these changes has its own dynamics that often do not correspond to the other. The speed of the state-building process is undoubtedly a new phenomenon in political science and practice.⁴¹ Unlike Western European societies, which for centuries have sought solutions to build a functioning state apparatus (but also the social consensus that will support it), post-communist societies faced this problem overnight.⁴² Culture and structure do not change in parallel. When one institutional system is substituted by another, the old cultural patterns operate for a long time, as a rule not corresponding to the changes and requirements of the new system. The new structure cannot be consolidated because the citizens act in accordance with the old cultural patterns. The mismatch of culture and structure emerges as a major problem in transitional societies, as it calls into question the democratic legitimacy and success of the democratic consolidation and in some cases even the survival of the democratic order.⁴³

Every society, no matter how developed or underdeveloped, has a certain political culture. Its content and degree of development or underdevelopment affect social development and progress and modify political institutions and relations. The importance of democratic culture in modern societies is enormous. That is why we easily get used to

38 Ronald Inglehart, "How Solid is Mass Support for Democracy - And How Can We Measure It?", *PS Online* (2003), 56 < <http://home.sandiego.edu/~mb5/inglehart.pdf>>, accessed on 16. 4. 2

39 Ненад Марковиќ, "Лидерството, легитимитетот и транзицијата", *Политичка мисла*, 11 September (2005), 41

40 Pero Maldini, "Političko poverenje i demokratska konsolidacija", *Politička misao*, 1 (2008), 180

41 Dušan Spasojević, "Građenje države i civilnog društva u postkomunizmu", 151

42 Dušan Spasojević, "Građenje države i civilnog društva u postkomunizmu", 151

43 Pero Maldini, "Političko - kulturalni preduveti demokratizacije", 90

thinking that where there is no democratic political culture, there is none at all.⁴⁴ But is that so?

According to Vojislav Koshtunica, the rapid or slow movement towards democracy in post-communism⁴⁵ is influenced by many factors. One such factor is the authoritarian political culture of communism, whose basic values have shaped entire generations, created a new type of man who values certainty in lack of freedom more than uncertainty in freedom. In communist societies, thanks to the central government and the party, life becomes very simple. People get used to a system in which they do not have to take care of themselves, nor be responsible for themselves or anyone else. Democratic change in these societies has been slowed down by the "remnants of the old". This action of the authoritarian political culture can explain the resurgence in power of the communist party in many Eastern European and Balkan countries (including ours). It must be noted that the return of these parties is not the return of communism. These are reformed communist parties that must abide by the democratic rules of the game.

The political culture of communism arose within a system that was totalitarian in its methods of governing and aspirations to control every aspect of social life. The main instrument of control was the omnipotent, hierarchically organized, self-sustaining Communist Party, which maintained its monopoly of power by force (violence). Any collective activity beyond its control could not be carried out, and all important links between the party and society were artificially structured under the auspices of the party. Private economic activities, organization of religious activities, interest groups and other associations, i.e. all elements of what constitutes civil society had been banned or suppressed.⁴⁶

According to Academician V. Stanovchikj, the Balkan region is burdened with an authoritarian political culture due to a series of historical circumstances under which independent states and political movements were formed and due to the long-term domination of foreign powers. It marks all political events and relations. Centuries-old authoritarianism and the role of power have found their expression in the folk sayings that aspire to teach man and that create patterns of behavior and comprise the segment of political understandings or political culture. Messages such as "The sword does not cut the bowed head", "Patience - salvation", the conviction that "Every government brings pleasure", i.e. that "A gram of power is worth more than tons of wisdom", or the

⁴⁴ Vojislav Stanovčić, *Političke ideje i religija t.2*, 167

⁴⁵ "Despite the clear fact that 'communism', even for Marx and Engels, was only an eschatologically intoned sign of the ultimate goal and outcome of history, and not a concrete form of social organization, the meaningless phrase 'post-communism' is used in serious theoretical texts to testified to their profound propaganda indoctrination and superficial critical consciousness. The pamphlet label, launched by Adam Michnik, has become a litmus test for the degree of theoretical "basicity" and ideological "acidity" of social and political thinkers. Communism was not established anywhere, neither as social, nor as an economic or political state, thus, one can never speak of "post-communism"." (Ферид, Мухиќ, *Логос и хиерархија: историја и теорија на политичко-филозофските доктрини* (Скопје: Крвр, 2001), 230

⁴⁶ Branka Galić, "Politička kultura 'novih demokracija". *Revija za sociologiju*, Vol. XXXI, No. 3-4 (2000), 202

famous “Power does not pray to God”, of course are part of the political understandings, tradition and political culture and influence the formation of patterns of behavior. This authoritarian component is also present in the folk poetry with which many generations have been brought up over the centuries. When history reminds us of the Eastern influences and seals left by Byzantine, Tatar-Mongol, Ottomans, Austro-Hungarian, and even domestic despotism, then it becomes clear how poor the political culture in this area was and how subordinated it was on one side to the techniques of domination, and on the other hand to the struggle for bare survival.⁴⁷

The field of political culture, like all modern social processes and phenomena, is always a field of conflicts and tendencies of traditionalism and the modernization process, a conflict of traditional and democratic political culture.⁴⁸ Tradition, although needed to establish certain continuities, sources and identities in modern living, can sometimes be an obstacle. According to Professor Ratko Bozhovikj, “in the field of social indoctrination, there may be a bad reading of tradition, tradition may be an obstacle to finally achieving what is relevant to the political culture itself.” According to him, an authoritarian political culture may be present that is tied to the family and to the traditional form of survival in politics and life, mythomania may also be present and everything that can be a residue of the past and no rooting in the present and modernity.⁴⁹

It is particularly important to point out the parallel existence of elements of authoritarian and democratic political culture. According to Stanovchikj, “a mixture of authoritarian, democratic, patriarchal and other types of political cultures can be seen in countless everyday cases, some of which are of wider social significance, while others only take the form of a belated folkloric torment or reaction. Some ethnographic studies reveal how our mentality changes more slowly than external circumstances.”⁵⁰ Political as well as general culture is something that must be nurtured, developed, promoted, and it progresses slowly and hard, just like changing the inherited or acquired political culture of a society over time. “Today this process takes place as a clash of authoritarian and patriarchal political tribal consciousness with elements of participatory and liberal democratic political culture. On a larger scale, this clash has its basis in the clash between the etatistical and the social, between the authoritarian state and the society, and it is a clash that is felt on a global scale.”⁵¹

47 Vojislav Stanovčič, *Političke ideje i religija* t.2, 166-167

48 Dragica Vujadinović, “Civilno društvo i politička kultura”. *Filozofska istrazivanja*. 109 God. 28 Sv. 1 (2008), 31

49 Ратко Божовиќ. “Pojmovnik politike - Politička kultura.” *YouTube*, uploaded by RTS Kulturno-umetnički program - Zvanični kanal, 8 Feb. 2016, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4Ko56ebNX0&list=PLxbMnBfiy6iFLam3uszKk4jCaHOvnosi&index=6>>

50 Vojislav Stanovčič, *Političke ideje i religija* t.2, 168

51 Vojislav Stanovčič, *Politička teorija* t. 1. (Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2006), 696

Characteristics of the Macedonian political (non) culture

If we look at the state of democracy in 2020 in the post-socialist countries of Eastern Europe (which includes the countries of the Western Balkans), according to the democratic index published by the Economist⁵², we will see that among the 28 Eastern European countries included in the analysis, there are no full democracies. The Index intends to measure the state of democracy in 167 countries. It is based on 60 indicators arranged in 5 different categories, measuring the electoral process and pluralism, the functioning of government, civil liberties, political participation and *political culture*. In addition to the numerical evaluation and ranking, the index categorizes each country into one of four types of regimes: full democracies, flawed democracies, hybrid and authoritarian regimes.

According to the data available in the report, there are 13 flawed democracies, 8 hybrid and 7 authoritarian regimes in Eastern Europe. In 2020, the average regional rating of Eastern Europe in the democracy index decreased to 5.36, compared to 5.42 in 2019. This is significantly below the region's score of 5.76 in 2006, when the index was first published.⁵³ Unfortunately, Macedonia does not deviate much from this perception with a democratic index of 5.89, and thus remains in the group of hybrid regimes and is ranked 79th.⁵⁴ What is interesting for this research is the score obtained for the fourth indicator that measures **political culture**, which as the lowest of all measured indicators is **3.13**. Although this Report aroused public interest due to the fact that we failed to get out of the group of countries with a hybrid regime, the lowest score obtained for the state of political culture was almost not commented in the public discourse. One of the few who spoke publicly about this problem was Jovan Donev, who as an expert participated in the public debate organized by the Committee on Education, Science and Sports of the Assembly, regarding the new concept of primary education, held on 5. 2 . 2021. Referring in his speech to this low grade, he stressed the importance of education for political culture.⁵⁵ In continuation we will try to sketch the most important characteristics of the Macedonian political culture and answer the question about the (un) merit of the received low grade.

Political scientists who deal with the phenomenon of political culture in our country consider it a challenge to sketch our political culture due to the small and limited number of related research and public opinion polls. Professor M. Maleska believes

52 In fact, The Democracy Index is published by the Economist Intelligence Unit of the Economist Group, a sister company to The Economist.

53 The Economist Intelligence Unit. *Democracy Index 2020 – In sickness and in health?* (London: 2021), 26

54 The Economist Intelligence Unit. *Democracy Index 2020 – In sickness and in health?*, 10

55 Јован Донеv. "2-2 проф д р Јован Донеv, Институт за национална историја Собраниска седница 05 02 2012 ". *YouTube*, uploaded by INFO MK. Feb 7 2021 < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tB3Kmjw_2zo >, accessed on 12. 4. 2021

that the reason for this is the insufficient political science research at universities, and that gap cannot be filled by individual efforts and projects. In her words, “except for the publication ‘Political Culture and Identities’, edited by Emilija Simoska and Slavica Indzevska and ‘Political Identities in the Republic of Macedonia’ by the research team led by Lidija Hristova and Aneta Cekikj,” no other specific research on political culture can be found.⁵⁶ The Macedonian political scientist N. Markovikj, on the other hand, takes a different view and believes that “although there are a limited number of studies that fully encompass the problem of political culture in the Republic of Northern Macedonia, those studies that are available give a complete picture of the model of political culture, which is characterized by specific features”.⁵⁷ He refers to the publication “Political Culture in Macedonia - National Field Survey Report”⁵⁸ published in 2013. which “is a complete field research of the political culture of Macedonia”⁵⁹. In the words of Markovikj, who is in fact one of the authors of the publication:

The concept of political culture, although relatively new to political science, has strong exploratory and normative potential. It explains the formation of political views and beliefs, as well as the sources from which they are formed. In this sense, it must be borne in mind that there are different approaches to the phenomenon of political culture, but also that there are different classifications of political culture, which, most often, stem from the European and American tradition of political thought. These classifications often cannot be fully applied to a particular local context (as in our country), but certain elements of these different types can certainly be recognized in a local context. One of the things that can certainly be recognized in the local context are the elements of parochial and moralistic political culture that is recognized in the attitude of the local population. Research indicates phenomena such as: distance from politics, weak associative capacity, pronounced patrimonialism, nostalgia for the previous regime, etc. All these features create a favorable climate for the development of clientelistic practices, which, it seems, are a regional, not just a local problem.⁶⁰

When analyzing the political culture in Macedonia the former ambassador and professor Gj. Spasov also refers to the same field research. According to him, the measurements of the citizens’ trust in the government institutions show that their trust, except in the army, the police and the church, is at a very low level. The very low trust in the judiciary, government, political parties, Parliament, media, NGOs and trade unions indicates a high degree of disappointment in the ability of key

56 Мирјана Малеска. “Политичката култура и демократската стабилност”. *Предизвици - списание за општествени прашања*. Год. 1 бр. 3 (2019), 29-30

57 Ненад Марковик. “Политичката култура во Северна Македонија и прашањето на клиентелизмот”. *Предизвици - списание за општествени прашања*. Год. 1 бр. 3 (2019), 12

58 Ненад Марковик, и други. *Политичката култура во Македонија - Извештај од националното теренско истражување* (Скопје: Канцеларија на Фондацијата „Фридрих Еберт“, 2013)

59 Ненад Марковик. “Политичката култура во Северна Македонија и прашањето на клиентелизмот”, 11-12

60 Ненад Марковик. “Политичката култура во Северна Македонија и прашањето на клиентелизмот”, 18

institutions to develop democracy, in the exercise of the rights and interests of citizens and an inclination of the public sentiment towards firm hand ruling to prevent anarchy and chaos.⁶¹ Maleska is of the same opinion and thinks that non-governmental organizations, associations, trade unions, etc. are often seen as an “extended arm” of government⁶².

However, Spasov finds the key problem with the political culture in Macedonia in the (lack of) democracy in the political parties. According to him, Macedonia, even after almost 30 years of independence and transition from communism to democracy, remains a deeply politically divided society in which, after almost every election cycle, the parties that lose the elections dispute the election result and the legitimacy of the government. In this context there is deep political mistrust between the political parties in the country and a high level of centralization and non-democracy in them.⁶³ A similar position on this issue is taken by the former President Ivanov, who will say the following in front of the Parliament at the annual solemn session:

The European Union report is objective. This one sentence points to the root of most of the crises we face, namely “the lack of political dialogue and the difficulties in reaching a consensus on issues have re-emphasized the political culture of division in the country.” Correct me if I am wrong, but a political culture of division is just an elegant name for political nonculture. This is a lesson on how political parties should not behave. The citizens gave their trust because they expect progress, not a setback of the already built values.⁶⁴

In countries where a polarized culture prevails as a result of deep social divisions, any policy will cause great dissatisfaction of significant sections of the population, and this can lead to political instability. According to Maleska, the ethnic and political divisions in our country are deep, and when they occasionally get out of control, such as the military conflict of 2001, the Przhino Agreement, etc., the re-established control is not due to an agreement of political parties, but, above all, to the pressure of foreigners. Therefore, “our political culture is far from balanced: there is no necessary balance of power and responsibility of government. The ruling majority ignores the government even when it comes to the strategic goals of the state. On the other hand, the opposition is often irresponsible and unconstructive in its desire to come and stay in power at any cost and to avoid responsibility for the abuses it committed while in power. According to her, we have set a democratic political framework (constitution and laws) which includes: pluralism, free elections, freedom of the press, guaranteed freedoms and rights of man

61 Горѓи Спасов. “Политичка култура – ‘рогови во вреќа’”. *Предизвици - списание за општествени прашања*. Год. 1 бр. 3 (2019), 59

62 Мирјана Малеска. “Политичката култура и демократската стабилност”, 29-30

63 Горѓи Спасов. “Политичка култура – ‘рогови во вреќа’”, 58

64 An integral version of the speech of President Ivanov can be found in the shorthand notes from the 81st session of the Assembly held on December 22, 2015 at the following link: <<https://www.sobranie.mk/sessiondetails.aspx?sessionDetailsId=994aac90-33e0-4bf7-8f5f-8c565ec09579&date=22.12.2015>>, accessed on 11.4.2021

and citizen, separation of powers, rules that determine the responsibility of the elected to the electorate, etc. But this is just a framework and it is often filled with undemocratic content. Our democracy is new and with significant weaknesses. The main weakness of the system is that the citizens do not trust the government institutions or such trust is very low.⁶⁵

It is interesting to mention the existence of a great discrepancy between the citizens' perception of their own democracy on the one hand and the real picture of the degree of their true democratic consciousness, on the other hand. According to former Minister Ganka Cvetanova, "we could draw a general conclusion that points to the fact that although most Macedonian citizens are declaratively committed to nurturing and promoting democratic values, in fact they have a significantly reduced willingness to deal with things in a way that would be in line with the modern principles of democracy".⁶⁶

While in public opinion polls researchers can be satisfied with the quantity of data obtained, political culture requires an in-depth approach. In trying to capture the cultural past of a society, the researcher can use knowledge from the history or literature of a country. Mirchev and Hristova in their work *Modern political science - the foundations of the study of political life* give us useful advice that "when it comes to the study of political culture in the Republic of Macedonia, for example, researchers should take into account the following facts: Macedonia exists as a separate state for a very short period, it was part of the Ottoman Empire for about 5 centuries, the dominant religions are Orthodox and Muslim and for about 50 years it was part of the communist Yugoslavia", etc.⁶⁷

As a country located on the border between East and West, where one third of the population is Muslim and until 1913 remained part of the Ottoman Empire, and from 1945 to 1990 was part of the Communist Federation, Macedonia did not have much opportunities to reform and change its patriarchal family, the primary nucleus in the political socialization of citizens. In patriarchal families for many reasons the father still has absolute power and they create personalities who later tend to admire dictators, strong political leaders, seek leaders and show obedience to government.⁶⁸

Research shows that not only under the influence of the establishment of patriarchal families, but also under the influence of secondary socialization through authoritarian and undemocratic parties and the media they use, many citizens are disillusioned with democracy and, in particular, with the way things are presented as "democratic". In

65 Мирјана Малеска. "Политичката култура и демократската стабилност", 30

66 Ганка Цветанова. "Индикатори на демократската свест" во Славица Инџевска и Емилија Симоска. (edit.) *Политичката култура и идентитетите*. (Скопје: ФООМ и ИСППИ, 2012), 51

67 Димитар Мирчев и Лидија Христова. *Модерната политологија - темелите на проучувањето на политичкиот живот*, 224

68 Горѓи Спасов. "Политичка култура - 'рогови во вреќа'", 68

Macedonia the authoritarian consciousness of many citizens persists under the influence of nationalism and political populism.⁶⁹

In short, "historical and social circumstances from 1991 to the present, such as the transition, high unemployment, the enrichment of the minority at the expense of the impoverishment of the majority, the ethnic conflict of 2001, political crises and the lack of cooperation between government and opposition, the massive and unpunished violation of human rights and corruption that go up to the top of the government have deeply fragmented society, undermined the democratic process, marginalized the participatory role of the citizen and made the struggle for power fierce and unfair."⁷⁰

The long process of Macedonian society's transition from the socialist to the liberal model of democracy, leads to the conclusion that for the success of such a transition only the declarative commitment of the key actors is not enough, but that their coordinated and synchronized action is necessary and not only in designing reforms, but also in their implementation.⁷¹

Today, political science has accepted the view that when political institutions are not supported by an appropriate cultural heritage, their functionality will be seriously questioned. The lack of a democratic political culture is felt at all levels of the society. At the government level, it is recognizable by the arrogant behavior of the ruling political elite, the unwillingness to establish a dialogue with the public, the insensitivity to criticism and the effort to discipline the opposition and the public. The public or most of the citizens behave in a similar way. With a structure of consciousness that we can label as a mixture of subject and anarchist, conformist and rebellious, the average citizen personalizes politics and divides it into blocks, ours and theirs, focusing primarily on the person of the interlocutor, not his arguments, reacting emotionally, a priori refusing dialogue and not feeling the need to explain or prove his views.⁷²

Conclusion

According to Anthony Giddens, "democracy can be portrayed as something that thrives only on particularly fertile soil, cultivated for a long time. In societies with little democratic history, it seems to have shallow roots that are easily uprooted. Instead of looking at democracy as a fragile flower that anyone can trample on, we should look at it as a hardy plant capable of growing in deeply emaciated land."⁷³ But the experiences of the farmers

69 Ѓорѓи Спасов. "Политичка култура - 'рогови во вреќа'", 68

70 Мирјана Малеска. "Политичката култура и демократската стабилност", 29-30

71 Анета Јовеска. "Граѓаните меѓу социјализмот и капитализмот" in Славица Инцевска и Емилија Симоска. (edit.) *Политичката култура и идентитетите*. (Скопје: ФООМ и ИСППИ, 2012), 11

72 Томо Јантол. *Политичка јавност*. (Zagreb: Bivotisak, 2004), 68

73 Ентони Гиденс, *Забеган свет*. (Скопје: Филозофски факултет, 2003), 75

tell us that even the most fertile soil, if not cultivated, can be neglected and not give good yields. Therefore, the land should be tilled jointly, i.e. cultivated, especially where it is still emaciated. "Etymologically the word culture comes from the Latin word 'cultura' which primarily means cultivation of land, and then everything that can be grown and improved, especially in the field of education and upbringing."⁷⁴ Therefore, in the emerging democracies a democratic political culture should be sown, and in the established ones nurtured and cultivated regularly.

Democratic political culture by its nature and content can not be successfully developed in a narrow and authoritarian state framework, because it falls more in the sphere of society than in the sphere of the state. Political culture is one of the constituent factors of any society and greatly influences the nature and functioning of all political and legal institutions and the behavior of members of society. That influence was often underestimated or overlooked.⁷⁵

As Heywood says, much of politics takes place in our heads. It is shaped by our ideas, values and assumptions about how society should be organized, and our expectations, hopes and fears about government. Perception may not only be more important than reality, perception may be reality. Furthermore, it highlights the vital role played by what we call political culture. People's beliefs, symbols and values structure both shape their attitude towards the political process and, crucially, towards the regime in which they live - especially whether they consider their regime legitimate.

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⁷⁴ Ljubomir Tadić, *Politikološki leksikon*. (Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, 1996), 111

⁷⁵ Vojislav Stanovčić, *Politička teorija t. 1.*, 697

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SHORT BIOGRAPHY



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Прегледна научна статија
УДК: 342.8:342.2-021.416(497.7)

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REPRESENTATION: ARE 'OPEN LISTS' THE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM?

POLITICAL THOUGHT

61



Introduction

Election models are, in fact, formulas for answering the question “Who is in power?”. However, the study of electoral systems is not only about votes and seats in elected bodies, but also about “the numerical **values** of seats and votes for individual political parties and candidates [, which] are among the most important quantitative indicators that we, as political scientists, employ in our work.”¹

The election process is one of the foundations of a political system. Fair and competitive elections are considered a *conditio sine qua non* for a representative democracy.² Meanwhile, in the theory of political systems, the electoral model is narrowly defined as a “system for translating election results into seats in parliament”, and more generally as a “complex mechanism of rules and procedures concerning the entire content of elections, regulated by law”.³

Reynolds, Reilly and Ellis analyse representation in the context of electoral models through the prism of four concepts: geographical representation, representation of ideological divisions, representation of the party-political situation, and descriptive representation, in which legislature is understood as a mirror of the nation.⁴ Geographical representation implies that each region, big or small, has representatives whom it chooses and who are ultimately accountable to their area. On the other hand, representation of ideological divisions within society may be represented in the legislature, whether through representatives from political parties or independent representatives, while a legislature may be representative of the party-political situation, even if political parties do not have an ideological base. The concept of descriptive representation considers that the nation should be, to some degree, reflected, which implies representation of ethnic groups and religious, social and other affiliations in the elected bodies.⁵

In the study at hand, the question of representation is examined with regard to both subtypes of the proportional electoral system. Apart from a short analysis of the Closed List Proportional Representation system and its main points of criticism, a detailed analysis of its alternative, the Single Transferable Vote, is presented. Furthermore, possible impacts of introducing the latter approach into the Macedonian electoral system

1 (emphasis added) Matthew Søberg Shugart, “Comparative Electoral Systems Research: The Maturation of a Field and New Challenges Ahead.” in *The Politics of Electoral Systems*, ed. Michael Gallagher and Paul Mitchell, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 25-55.

2 Elisabeth Carter and David M. Farrell, “Electoral Systems and Election Management.” in *Comparing Democracies: Elections and Voting in the 21st Century*, 3rd ed. ed. Niemi LeDuc, Richard G. Lawrence and Norris Pippa (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2010)

3 Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, Tanja Karakamiševa-Jovanovska, Aleksandar Spasenovski, *Parlamentarno pravo* (Skopje: Fondacija Konrad Adenauer vo Republika Severna Makedonija, Praven fakultet “Justinijan Prvi”, 2019), 94-95.

4 Andrew Reynolds, Ben Reilly, Andrew Ellis, *Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook*, (Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance: 2005), 71, <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/electoral-system-design-the-new-international-idea-handbook.pdf>

5 Ibid, 71

are discussed, based on the long-standing experience of states that practice it. The study closes by suggesting mixed-model alternatives which could be taken into account in the case of a reform of the electoral system.

Representation in the electoral system: the proportional representation model

In theory, electoral models are defined according to the criterium for distributing seats in parliament. The main models are the majority model (the one who gains the most votes wins), the proportional system (representation according to the number of gained votes), and various mixed models.⁶ Basically, the proportional system refers to electoral units with multiple mandates and represents a “translation” of the share of votes won by a list to the appropriate proportion of seats in the elected body. Therefore, “there is a very high correlation between proportional electoral systems and the most important tenets of democracy: participation and election.”⁷ There are two major subtypes of proportional systems: the proportional representation system with closed lists, and Single Transferable Vote (STV).⁸ Apart from them, there are various hybrid models that are characteristic of certain political contexts.

The proportional representation system with closed lists represents a traditional and widely accepted approach, which is applied in most states with a proportional system, first and foremost due to the parity of the representation of parties, the representation of the elected bodies, and the participation of a large number of parties.⁹ The Macedonian model falls into this group of systems, with a proportional electoral system with closed lists being used to elect the council members of the units of local self-administration (the municipalities and the City of Skopje) as well as the members of the Assembly.¹⁰

Critics of the proportional system with closed lists refer to the system’s disadvantages, such as weak links between voters and their representatives, strong polarisation of political parties, and the dependence of elected candidates of the parties that put them forward.¹¹ Therefore, the single transferable vote is regarded as an alternative model. The crucial feature of this model is that voters choose a single candidate from their preferred list. In practice, this means that they vote for a certain candidate and/or the list of their choice. According to some authors, “the personal vote reduces the negative impact of the fact that there is no tangible close relation between the voter and the candidate, which

⁶ Savo Klimovski, Renata Deskoska, Tanja Karakamiševa-Jovanovska, *Ustavno pravo* (Skopje: Prosvetno delo AD, 2010), 331.

⁷ *Ibid*, 332

⁸ Reynolds, Reilly, Ellis, *Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook*, 57

⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁰ Article 127 and Article 130, Electoral Code

¹¹ Reynolds, Reilly, Ellis, *Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook*, 71

the proportional system is often criticised for.”¹² In some types of the single transferable vote model, voters have the possibility to indicate several favoured candidates or to rank them according to their wishes. Candidates who receive at least a previously defined minimum number of votes (most commonly, the so-called Droop quota) win a seat. The remaining votes above or below the quota are transferred to other candidates (ranked higher or lower on the list) by a defined method. In some cases, if insufficient representatives from a certain party were elected by preferential vote, or if the candidates did not pass the quota, the remaining free seats are redistributed according to the list of the proposer.¹³ If one thinks about it creatively, many other alternatives can be imagined, including an alternative where only the candidate who is heading the list is guaranteed a seat, while all other candidates are elected by preferential vote.

The single transferable vote model is used in Australia in the elections to the federal Senate and some of the states, in Northern Ireland in European and local elections, in Malta (since 1947), and in the Republic of Ireland in the elections to the lower house of Parliament (the Dáil), however its practice is not completely identical in all those electoral systems.¹⁴ In Ireland, the 166 Members of Parliament are elected from 40 electoral units, and every unit accounts for three, four or five seats. At the election, the voters mark their favoured candidate, and they are also allowed to rank the remaining candidates. It is important to note that the voters can also rank candidates from other parties, so that some of them vote according to their geographic affiliation.¹⁵ In Malta, the state territory is split into 13 electoral units of roughly the same size and population for parliamentary elections. Unlike in Ireland, the same number of seats (five) is allocated to every electoral unit, and each seat corresponds to approximately 4,200 registered voters. On the ballot paper, candidates are listed alphabetically within party blocs. Voters express their preferences by writing sequential numbers next to the candidates’ names. There is no obligation to rank-order all of them or to stick to candidates of a single party.¹⁶

The supporters of the single transferable vote model point out the following advantages: voters have better possibilities to express whom exactly they want to represent them, parties as brands with not very well-known candidates have less influence, the democracy within parties is strengthened, good candidates from small parties have a chance to be elected, independent candidates are strong, and the citizens are better represented.¹⁷ The common denominator is a stronger tie between the voters and their representatives. At the other hand, the tie between voters and parties, as well as parties and candidates can

¹² Klimovski, Deskoska, Karakamiševa, *Ustavno pravo*, 337.

¹³ Reynolds, Reilly, Ellis, *Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook*, 76

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 71

¹⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁶ “Malta: SVT with some twists”, ACE the Electoral Knowledge Network, accessed 11.03.2021, https://aceproject.org/main/english/es/esy_mt.htm.

¹⁷ Carter and Farrell, “Electoral Systems and Election Management,” 38

be expected to weaken for the benefit of a more individual tie between candidates and voters. In recent times, the “small” parties on the Macedonian political stage have been intensely lobbying for introducing the open-list system. Among other things, they think that such a system change would allow the parties to act more independently and lead to the formation of post-electoral coalitions and governments that are more democratic instead of being dominated by one of the largest parties.¹⁸ However, when considering radical changes to the electoral system, all positive and negative aspects of the suggested alternatives have to be taken into account in order to achieve maximum success and not to put the political system at risk.

Keeping in mind that there are not many detailed analyses of possible impacts of applying the single transferable vote and open list model to the Macedonian electoral system, and knowing that this model is not all too broadly applied at a global scale, nevertheless, the study at hand tries to offer an objective analysis. We think that, apart from its advantages, the single transferable vote model would produce negative internal campaigns within parties, undermine the representation of certain groups of citizens, lead to further fragmentation of the political scene, and seriously complicate the political choice. Therefore, in our opinion, alternative mixed systems with both the advantages of the personal vote and the traditional benefits of closed lists in proportional electoral systems should be considered for the Macedonian political context, so as to combine the positive effects of both models.

Possible effects of open lists in the Macedonian system

Firstly, open lists create intense, often unprincipled, intra-party competition. In the case of Ireland, analyses show that more incumbent MPs lose their seat to a running-mate than to a candidate of another party.¹⁹ Applied to the Macedonian context, it can be expected that, instead of promoting the politics of their party during the election campaign, candidates would direct some of their activities against their own party colleagues. This practice would more strongly affect opposition parties and smaller parties, for they cannot pacify the “quarrelled” sides by promising them positions in other institutions or other political or clientelist services.

One should also bear in mind that the preferential vote would hamper the current quota for women and other groups represented on the lists. Respecting the constitutional principle of equality, according to which the “citizens of the Republic of Macedonia are

¹⁸ “POPOVSKA za edna izborna edinica, no so ednakov broj ženi i maži na otvoreni listi”, Politička partija DOM, accessed on 11.03.2021 http://www.dom.org.mk/index.php/component/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=100:2008-12-16-21-32-53&catid=14:2008-04-19-15-33-33&Itemid=42.

¹⁹ Reynolds, Reilly, Ellis, *Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook*, 73

equal in their freedoms and rights, regardless of [their] sex (...)."²⁰ the political elites started guaranteeing women positions in the representative bodies long ago. Article 63 of the Macedonian Electoral Code refers to women's representation using the infelicitous wording "the under-represented sex".²¹ The actual objective of this gender-sensitive provision is to guarantee women political participation in the local and central decision-making bodies. According to the Electoral Code, at least 40%, not only of the candidates, but also of the elected members of collective representative bodies, have to be women. In practice, this means that at least every third position on the proportional lists must be occupied by a woman. Additionally, if a woman gives up her position as a councillor or a member of the Assembly for whatever reason, she will not be replaced by the next person from the list, but by the next woman. This is how the legislator attempts to prevent the number of women in representative bodies from falling under 40%. In practice, 45 out of 120 members were women in the previous composition of the Assembly, while currently, 47 women are Assembly members, equalling 38.3%.²²

The principle of the under-represented sex could be seriously jeopardised if the single transferable vote were introduced. Due to the predominantly patriarchal context, it is possible that only men would win preferential votes in many places, which would lead to a significant reduction of the number of women elected. This undesired scenario would set back the Assembly and the councils of the units of local self-administration by 20 years, when women's participation was below 2%. The same would apply to candidates from small and rural areas: they would have to rely on a small number of supporters from their own area and thus remain in a subordinate position with regard to candidates from large municipalities who have voter bases of 50 to 100 thousand inhabitants at their disposal. Similar scenarios can be predicted concerning the affiliation to ethnic communities, candidates of the small partners in electoral coalitions, as well as other groups and communities. A possible solution to this problem could be to guarantee positions for women and other defined groups, which would, however, raise the question of directed preferences and create a preferential system for men and other "unprotected" groups only.

The preferential model and the election of many independent candidates could also lead to further fragmentation of the political scene. After elections, the process of forming a majority would be long and difficult, characterised by a large number of concessions to single representatives or relatively small groups, which in turn would lead to unstable majorities, coalitions based on personal gratifications rather than joint programmes, as well as frequent delays in the processes.

²⁰ Article 9, Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia

²¹ Article 63, Electoral Code

²² Data taken from the websites of the State Electoral Commission and the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia: <https://sobranie.mk/segashen-sostav-2020-2024.nspx>

Finally, the single transferable vote system is the most complicated system for electing candidates. Preferential lists require the electorate to be much more literate and informed than other electoral systems. Therefore, this system is predominantly used in the case of electoral units with a small number of seats, such as Ireland and Malta. For comparison, in the Macedonian electoral system, e.g. in the City of Skopje, voters have to choose between 405 candidates for councillors, as well as tens of candidates for their respective municipality.²³ As a result of the single transferable vote system, they would have to deal with complicated ballot papers with many columns and numerous possibilities of combination, which could result in a high number of invalid ballots. Certainly, large investments in the education of voters would be required before elections.

Regarding complexity, another aspect mentioned in different analyses is the difficult administration of the counting of votes, which can sometimes take several days. The single transferable vote model requires repeated recalculations of the remaining votes' value and their redistribution. Therefore, votes have to be counted at central counting venues instead of directly at the polling stations. In the Macedonian case, this would not only undermine the legitimacy of the voting, but also the overall integrity of the elections.

A hybrid model – the solution to the problem

Taking into account the above mentioned circumstances, it is not surprising that the closed-list model is much more widely applied than the single transferable vote system, which is used by a few countries only.²⁴ Decades of appraisal of the preferential lists' positive aspects by political theorists have not changed this situation. According to our analysis, in the Macedonian context, the basic single transferable vote system would cause more problems than it would offer solutions. If, however, political decision-makers decide to initiate electoral reforms that encompass a change of the electoral system, we argue that some types of mixed models should be taken into account. Disadvantages of the closed lists could thus be diminished without risking to introduce the weaknesses of the single transferable vote analysed above. According to a recent trend in political practice, the closed-list proportional model can be upgraded by providing the voter with a certain **degree** of personal choice, instead of, as in the single transferable vote system, defining the ranking of the elected candidates entirely based on preferential votes. This degree can vary from one to a larger number of candidates. Regardless of the level of freedom of choice, the goal is to build a "bridge" from the parties' closed lists to the

²³ In 2017, 9 lists were submitted for the local elections in the City of Skopje, and every list encompassed 45 candidates for councillors.

²⁴ Seventy states analysed in the IDEA Handbook use the proportional model with closed lists, while only two use the open-list model (Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook)

preferences of the voters. Such types of models are applied in many European countries, including Denmark, Sweden, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Poland, Croatia, Kosovo and others.

One possible alternative that would be suitable for the Macedonian political sphere is the closed-list proportional system plus a preferential vote with a threshold. According to this model, voters elect parties, but they can also mark their favoured candidate from that party. Candidates that surpass a certain number of votes, the threshold, are automatically elected, while all others are elected according to their ranking on the list. Croatia used this model in 2013, when it took part in the elections to the European Parliament for the first time. According to the respective Croatian law, the necessary threshold for a candidate to win an MP seat in the preferential model was 10% of the overall votes gained by the respective electoral list.²⁵ If all candidates that surpassed the threshold have been allocated a seat, the next free seat goes to the candidate that is next on the list. Hence, the Croatian model allows for the option of voting for favoured candidates in addition to parties. If a candidate receives a significant number of “personal votes”, he/she will be given priority before the other candidates. If no candidate surpasses the threshold, they are ranked in the order of their list.

Another possible alternative that should have a positive impact is a parallel system in which two votes are given: one for a closed list and one for a list of preferences. In this model, a certain number of seats is filled according to the classical closed-list proportional model. Apart from that, a number of seats defined beforehand is also allocated to the candidates who win the largest number of preferential votes. Thus, the open lists would guarantee that the best (one, two or three) candidates who win the largest number of direct votes would also receive a seat in the councils of the local self-administration units and the Assembly, regardless of their position on the submitted lists.

Meanwhile, the basis of the lists of candidates for the councils and the Assembly would be given by the parties or the submitters of the lists. Even though this model is purely theoretical, its parallelism is similar to the German model, in which the voters give their first vote to individual candidates (majority system) and their second vote to a party list.²⁶ Austria also has a mixed system, in which regional, federal state level and national elections are operated with a different formula: at the regional and federal state level, the voters can choose a party list or give their vote to one candidate. If candidates win a certain number of preferential votes, they are shifted to the top of their party's list. The system is highly proportional, since all votes are reused at the third, national, level for

²⁵ Zakon o izborima zastupnika iz Republike Hrvatske u Europski parlament

²⁶ Klimovski, Deskoska, Karakamiševa, *Ustavno pravo*, 337.

distributing the seats. The objective of this system is to combine classical proportionality with an individual tie between voters and their representatives at a the most direct level.²⁷

Conclusion

This study analysed the positive and negative aspects of the proportional electoral system with regard to the representation of the members of elected bodies. Two subtypes of the electoral system were examined: the closed-list model, including main points of criticism, and, as a second option, the single transferable vote. Possible impacts of introducing the latter into the Macedonian political context in the framework of a reform of the electoral system were analysed, based on the long-standing experience of states in which that system is in place. In particular, possible consequences of strong and unprincipled intra-party competition were explored, supposing that it would have a negative impact on the inner dynamics of the political parties. We also came to the conclusion that the single transferable vote would hamper the current quota for women and other groups represented on the lists, and that it would lead to a further fragmentation of the Macedonian political scene. With regard to the election process, introducing this model would lead to a more complicated political choice and numerous administrative problems concerning the counting of the votes and the education of voters

Drawing pragmatic conclusions for the legal and political system, the study at hand presents mixed models that could be applied in the framework of the Macedonian political system in order to build stronger ties between voters and their representatives while avoiding political fragility. We think that, by applying one of the suggested alternatives, the advantages of the preferential vote could be introduced, such as improving the relation between voters and candidates in the election process and reducing the power of the parties and enabling the voters to make a personal choice. At the same time, voters would not have to choose a candidate at any rate, since the personal choice would be optional. This, on the one hand, would reduce the danger of confusing the voters, which could result in many ballot papers being invalid, and the threat of intra-party and post-election pressure, on the other.

Also, combing both models would reduce the disbalance in the representation of the under-represented sex (women or men), minority ethnic groups, smaller coalition partners, as well other groups, which would certainly result from introducing the single transferable vote system.

Finally, we should bear in mind that a perfect model which would satisfy everybody does not exist. Many states have not changed their electoral system in years, introducing minor

²⁷ Wolfgang C. Müller, "Austria: A Complex Electoral System with Subtle Effects." in *The Politics of Electoral Systems*, ed. Michael Gallagher and Paul Mitchell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

modifications and alternations in the management of election processes instead. Maybe this is the reason why global theory has stopped to support universal rules for elections which would apply to all situations and societies as umbrella solutions. The history of a political system and the context of the society are increasingly taken into account, rather than the parties' power games in the political arena. Therefore, the individual features of a political context, combined with the benefits of political analyses, should provide the answer to the question which electoral system should be used to determine who is in charge of governing us at the local and central levels.

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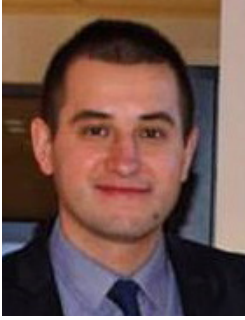
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SHORT BIOGRAPHY



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Изворна научна статија

УДК: 005.962.13-057.52]:616.98:578.834-036.21(100)

005.962.13-057.52]:616.98:578.834-036.21(497.7)

Dejan Dimitrievski

CHALLENGES OF MONITORING AND ASSESSING THE PERFORMANCE OF EMPLOYEES WORKING FROM HOME DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

POLITICAL THOUGHT

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Introduction

The declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 brought about a new global reality with regard to work processes that hardly anyone could have predicted. Based on the changes and restrictions due to the pandemic, companies and organisations were forced to change their work processes completely within a very short time period, now focusing on working from home. Some companies and organisation were successful in adapting to this new reality, while others faced multiple challenges and problems. The new situation showed us that working from home when it is a result of necessity differs substantially from remote working by choice.¹ Not all working duties can be fulfilled from home, and not all employees have the necessary tools and conditions to deal with the challenges brought on by working from home. The main challenge that a large number of companies and organisations faced was the lack of experience with working from home and the necessity to adapt to the new situation within a very short period of time.

The changes in the overall operations of companies and organisations also affected the field of performance management. During that period, it was crucial to introduce and implement a tangible policy of performance management with regard to employees in home office, providing the work process at home with a distinct structure by defining clear instructions, objectives and expected results for every employee.

The subject of the study at hand is performance management, with a special focus on managing the working efficiency of employees that work from home due to the situation arisen from the COVID-19 pandemic. There is no mistaking about the need of research on the subject, given its importance and topicality. In North Macedonia, just like all over the world, a huge number of companies, organisations and institutions were forced to instruct their employees to work from home due to the new situation. The lack of home office experience, as well as the lack of time for preparations made it even harder for the managers to successfully deal with the challenge of managing their employees' achievements under the new conditions. An additional problem was the fact that the system in place included very few instructions for performance management for employees who work from home.

The main argument of this study is that the current system for performance management of administrative officials in North Macedonia is not appropriate for managing the work efficiency of employees in home office, and that changes are necessary in order to make the system applicable to the new situation.

1 Mani, D., & Tomar, S. (2020, March 30). *Work from Home in the time of COVID-19*. The Hindu. <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/work-from-home-in-the-time-of-covid-19/article31207008.ece> (accessed on 7.4.2021)

The system of performance management

According to Puja Lalwani, “the definition of performance management has evolved since it first appeared as a concept. What was once an annual process is now transitioning to continuous performance management. The goal is to ensure that employees are performing efficiently throughout the year, and in the process, address any issues that may arise along the way that affect employee performance.”²

Lussier and Hendon define performance management as the “process of identification, evaluation, management and development of human resource performance in one organisation.” According to them, there is a difference between performance management and performance appraisal. The latter is a continuous process of evaluating the employees’ accomplishments based on overviews of their current performance.³ In other words, “performance appraisal takes into account all past actions of the employees during a certain period of time, assessing how well they performed their role and how many of the pre-established objectives they fulfilled. Performance management is directed at the present and future of an employee, i.e. what can be done to improve the performance and to fulfil future objectives.”⁴

Analysts warn that the significance of performance appraisal must not be neglected by any means, as it is a key element of the performance management system. Good performance appraisal can be of huge significance for an organisation, whereas poorly conducted performance appraisal can lead to a decrease in the employees’ productivity and motivation.⁵

Lalwani identifies three probable trends regarding the future of performance management: for annual performance management to go out of style, for one-on-one feedback to gain importance, and for performance management technology to become more mainstream.⁶

2 Lalwani, P. (2019, May 16). *What Is Performance Management? Definition, Process, Cycle, and Best Practices for Planning*. HR Technologist. <https://www.hrtechnologist.com/articles/performance-management-hcm/what-is-performance-management/#> (accessed on 25.3.2021)

3 Lussier, R. N., & Hendon J. R. (2017). *Human Resource Management: Functions, Applications, and Skill Development (3rd Edition)*. Sage Publications, Inc, pp. 285

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Performance management for employees working in home office

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organisation officially declared COVID-19 as a pandemic. The changes and restrictions brought about by the pandemic with regard to work processes, mainly the necessity of working from home, led to significant shifts in the operations of organisations worldwide.

Working from home means that employees fulfil nearly all working duties at home, or that they spend only part of their working hours at the office, otherwise working from home.⁷ According to Kurland and Bailey, all types of home working have in common that they represent a shift from direct to remote supervision, from face-to-face communication to technology-based communication, from office work to work at different locations, and from direct to virtual teamwork.⁸

In the past, working from home has been widely associated with certain stereotypes, including being used as a synonym for avoiding one's duties ('shirking from home'), an allusion to the possibility to spend a lot of time in bed or watching television.⁹ Another stereotype was that working mums benefit most from home working.¹⁰

According to a Gallup poll, 41% of the employees in the USA work from home due to the pandemic.¹¹ The main challenge for organisations was the lack of experience with home working and the need to adapt to the new situation in a very short time period.

"In the current situation, many companies, government entities, and universities have asked their employees to work remotely. (...) Some organizations have a clear work from home policy that has matured through the years, but many are seeing this for the first time due to the pandemic. It is a major cultural change in the way work is performed. The level of preparation that was available in the past is simply not an option; most companies are having to execute work from home plans in a matter of days."¹²

7 ACAS (2014). Homeworking – a guide for employers and employees. <https://archive.acas.org.uk/media/3905/Homeworking---a-guide-for-employers-and-employees/pdf/Homeworking-a-guide-for-employers-and-employees.pdf>, pp 2

8 Kurland, N. B., & Bailey, D. E. (1999). *The advantages and challenges of working here, there anywhere, and anytime*. *Organizational Dynamics*, 28(2), 53–68. doi:10.1016/s0090-2616(00)80016-9, pp. 53

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10 South, R. (2017, June 18). Working from Home 101: The Complete Guide to Remote Work. *CakeHR by Sage*. <https://blog.cake.hr/working-home-complete-guide-remote-work/> (accessed on 12.6.2020)

11 *Coronavirus Pandemic*. (2020, June). Gallup. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/308222/coronavirus-pandemic.aspx> (accessed on 25.3.2021)

12 *Managing Employees Work From Home Performance*. (2020, March 23). Assess TEAM. <https://www.assessteam.com/managing-work-from-home-employee-performance> (accessed on 12.6.2020)

Against the background of the new situation, the changes in organisations' overall work processes also affect performance management. According to several studies, in such a situation, it is crucial for organisations to have a tangible performance management policy for employees who work from home. This policy should not only be the basis for assessing results, but also provide a clear structure of the work process for employees working from home. Additionally, one should bear in mind that performance management is not the same for employees working at home and for those working in the office.¹³

According to Mani and Tomar, from the point of view of research, it should be taken into account that "the insights from prior studies on the impact of work from home arrangements do not extend to the current context since these arrangements were mostly limited to a select group of workers and/or organizations and were often self-selected."¹⁴

The main results from a research by the Slack platform show that, by 27 March 2020, about 16 million intellectual workers in the USA had shifted to working from home due to the pandemic. Also, having previously worked from home proved to make a significant difference, for productivity and communication efficiency of those who worked from home for the first time was clearly lower. Furthermore, the data show that the change hampers professional ties and has a negative impact on the feeling of affiliation to the organisation. On the positive side, tools that help to cope with some of the problems can be identified.¹⁵

Given that many uncertainties remain with regard to the situation, a large number of organisations and employees have to get used to the "new normal", i.e. to working from home.¹⁶ The huge technological progress of the last ten years has changed our perception of the way things are done and provides many possibilities in this field. Analysts predict that the number of employees in home office will continue to grow, especially in the area of office jobs.¹⁷ A survey conducted by Gartner, Inc. on 30 March 2020 with 317 respondents shows that 74% of chief financial officers and finance leaders intend to shift

¹³ Ibid (accessed on 25.3.2021)

¹⁴ Mani, D., & Tomar, S. (2020, March 30). *Work from Home in the time of COVID-19*. The Hindu. <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/work-from-home-in-the-time-of-covid-19/article31207008.ece> (accessed on 25.3.2021)

¹⁵ *Report: Remote work in the age of Covid-19*. (2020, April 21). Slack. <https://slackhq.com/report-remote-work-during-coronavirus> (accessed on 25.3.2021)

¹⁶ Lindner, J., Sahdra, S., Bernier, C. A., DeVries, L., Belanger, C., & Robert, A. (2020, April 7). *COVID-19 Update: The "New Normal" - Facilitating Work-from-Home Arrangements*. McCarthy Tetrault. <https://www.mccarthy.ca/en/insights/blogs/canadian-employer-advisor/covid-19-update-new-normal-facilitating-work-home-arrangements> (accessed on 25.3.2021)

¹⁷ ACAS (2014). *Homeworking - a guide for employers and employees*. <https://archive.acas.org.uk/media/3905/Homeworking---a-guide-for-employers-and-employees/pdf/Homeworking-a-guide-for-employers-and-employees.pdf>, pp 4

no less than 5% of their employees to working from home permanently after the end of the COVID-19 crisis.¹⁸

Working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic: the case of the Parliamentary Institute

The Parliamentary Institute of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, a separate organisational unit within the Service of the Assembly, is a research centre that provides members of the Assembly with timely, objective and independent scientific research and analyses for their office as parliamentarians.¹⁹ The Institute's employees have the status of administrative officials, and therefore their employment is regulated by the provisions of the Law on Administrative Officials, including the system for managing the efficiency of administrative officials.

Being part of Service of the Assembly, the Institute's staff were affected by the measures adopted by the Government, so that a large number of them were shifted to working from home. Additionally, the Institute's work processes were reorganised, so that the employees that were not affected by the measures were also shifted to part-time working from home, thus spending only part of their working hours at their workplace. For analysing the results of the survey, the following three factors have to be taken into account: 1) working from home became a necessity due to the pandemic rather than being chosen by the employer, 2) the employees did not have any previous home office experience, and 3) since kindergartens and schools were closed and mobility was restricted, many employees were faced with the situation of having to work from home at the same time as attending to their family and domestic duties.

The survey was conducted with ten respondents, using a questionnaire. Ten employees of the Parliamentary Institute participated in the survey, four of which from the management level and six of which from the staff level. Taking into account that mandatory remote work is a fairly new phenomenon, the goal of this research is mainly explorative, i.e. a research hypothesis was experimentally tested with a small group of respondents. Therefore, the survey was conducted with employees of one organisation unit of a state institution only. In the future, the research is expected to be expanded, first to all organisation units of the same institution, and later to a larger number of state

¹⁸ *Gartner CFO Survey Reveals 74% Intend to Shift Some Employees to Remote Work Permanently*, (2020, April 3). Gartner. <https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2020-04-03-gartner-cfo-surey-reveals-74-percent-of-organizations-to-shift-some-employees-to-remote-work-permanently2> (accessed on 25.3.2021)

¹⁹ Article 42 of the Law on the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia (Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia Nr.1 04/2009 and 14/2020)

institutions at different levels (central and local), in order to achieve a broader view on the subject.

According to Hackshaw, a strength of studies with a small number of subjects is that the research question can be addressed in a relatively short period of time. Additionally, it is often better to test a new research hypothesis in a small number of subjects first. As he puts it, “there is nothing wrong with conducting well-designed small studies; they just need to be interpreted carefully. (...) Data from such studies should be used to design larger confirmatory studies”.²⁰

On the topic of studies with a small number of subjects, Etz and Arroyo point out that there are certain advantages, such as the focus and a better understanding of the context in which a research is conducted.²¹

Anderson and Vingrys approve of working with a small number of subjects in some studies, arguing that the goal of those studies is not to quantify general views within a population, but rather to document the presence of a certain phenomenon, so that the number of respondents is not that important.²²

The questionnaire, which consisted of six questions, was answered by all respondents. They were asked to express their opinions and views on working from home and on managing the efficiency of officials under the conditions of working from home due to COVID-19.

The first question was introductory. Its goal was to achieve a general picture of the respondents’ perception of efficiency management under the conditions of working from home. They were asked to state whether they think that the current efficiency management system is appropriate for the conditions of working from home, with the possibility to choose from three options, i.e. that the efficiency management system is fully applicable to working from home, that it is applicable to some extent but needs to be adapted, or that it is not appropriate and a new system is needed for managing the efficiency of employees who work from home. From the answers to the first question, it can be concluded that the respondents do not think that the current system is applicable to a situation in which employees work from home. Only one respondent chose the first option, while six chose the second one, i.e. that the system is applicable to some extent but has to be adapted to the specific situation. Three respondents thought that it is not appropriate at all and that a new system is needed for managing the efficiency of employees who work from home.

²⁰ Hackshaw, A. (2008). *Small studies: strengths and limitations*. *European Respiratory Journal*, 32(5), 1141–1143. doi:10.1183/09031936.00136408

²¹ Etz, K. E., & Arroyo, J. A. (2015). *Small Sample Research: Considerations Beyond Statistical Power*. *Prevention Science*, 16(7), 1033–1036. doi:10.1007/s11121-015-0585-4

²² Anderson, A., & Vingrys, A. (2001). *Small Samples: Does Size Matter?*. *Investigative ophthalmology & visual science*. 42. 1411-3.

The second question was designed to find out what the respondents think about the way the institution they work for deals with the challenge of working from home. The respondents were asked to state whether they think that the institution has established a good system for successfully dealing with working from home for part of its staff. From the answers, one can see that the respondents are mainly negative about this question. Not a single respondent stated that, in recent times, the institution had established a good formal policy with clear and tangible instructions, objectives and expectations for every employee who works from home. Half of the respondents stated that they had received only general instruction and recommendations, while the others stated that, according to their perception, every manager was left to his/her own devices when it comes to regulating the employees' working from home.

In the third question, managers were asked to list the main problems and challenges they face while managing the efficiency of employees in home office, and staff were asked to list the main problems and challenges they experience while working from home. The answers to this question can be seen from Table 1 below.

Problem or challenge	Frequency
Problems with equipment that does not work properly and lack of appropriate technical tools for working from home	4
Challenge of balancing work with domestic and family duties	3
Decreased efficiency of communication due to physical distance	3
Work duties require physical presence at the workplace	2
Lack of tangible instructions, objectives and expected results for every employee	2
Managers do not sufficiently value remote work done by employees working from home	1
Working duties are such that they cannot be accomplished due to the situation with the pandemic	1
Decreased motivation and initiative of home office workers	1
Lack of working atmosphere at home	1
Decreased team work	1
Working time of employees has not been harmonised (employees decide for themselves during which time of the day they attend to their working duties)	1
Problems with regard to coordination between managers and staff	1

Table 1: Problems and challenges and their frequency

As can be seen from Table 1, the respondents listed 12 problems or challenges that they had been faced with while working from home, i.e. while managing the efficiency of home office employees. Four respondents stated that they had problems with the equipment and that there was a lack of technical tools for working from home, which is the problem with the highest frequency of mentions. Three respondents wrote that balancing work with family and domestic duties was a challenge for them, and the same number of respondents stated that efficient communication was hampered by physical distance. A lack of tangible instructions, objectives and expected results for every employee, as well as work duties that require physical presence at the workplace were listed by two respondents each.

The answers to the **fourth question** allow to draw conclusions about the respondents' opinion on different aspects of remote work in recent times. They were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement. The average assessments can be seen from Table 2 below.

	average assessment: management	average assessment: staff	total average assessment
> employees have appropriate conditions for home office work at their disposal (work space, atmosphere, equipment, etc.)	3,25	3,67	3,5
> employees successfully deal with the challenge to maintain a balance between work and home duties	4,25	4	4,1
> a general change in the employees' relation to the work progress can be observed	2	3,17	2,7
> for some employees, working from home is a possibility to evade work duties	2	3	2,6
> employees who continue to work at their workplace are dissatisfied	3	3,83	3,5
> supervision and control over the exercise of working duties by employees in home office require more effort from the manager	3,5	4,17	3,9

> employees who work from home receive less feedback on their work	2	2,67	2,4
> there have been no significant changes to the efficiency of communication with employees	2,5	2,5	2,5
> under the conditions of working from home, employees ask for help or consultation more often than when working in the office	2,5	3,5	3,1
> it is harder to evaluate the performance of remote workers	3,75	2,33	2,5
> remote workers have a clear picture of what is expected from them and how their performance will be evaluated	3	4	3,6
> the productivity of employees has decreased since they started working from home	3	1,5	2,1
> motivating employees who work from home is a serious challenge for the manager	4	2,83	3,3
> professional development of employees (by means of trainings, informal learning, etc.) is harder to realise under the conditions of working from home	3,5	4,67	4,2
> the general experience with working from home in recent times has proven to be positive	3,25	3,33	3,3
1 = I do not agree at all			
2 = I do not agree			
3 = I agree to some extent			
4 = I agree			
5 = I totally agree			

Table 2: Level of agreement

Assessing their experience of working from home in recent times, the respondents stated that they agree to some extent that it has been positive. The difference between the assessment by management and staff is minimal. Generally, the respondents agreed to some extent that employees have appropriate conditions for home office work at their disposal, such as work space, atmosphere, equipment, etc. They also generally agreed that employees successfully deal with the challenge to maintain a balance between work and home duties. The staff level respondents' most accentuated opinion was that professional development of employees by means of trainings, informal learning, etc. is harder to realise under the conditions of working from home. The management level respondents also agreed with this statement, however to a lesser extent.

The general assessment was that the productivity of employees has not decreased since they started working from home. This opinion was especially accentuated among the staff level respondents, whose average assessment of 1,5 shows that they do not agree with that statement, whereas the management level respondents' average assessment of 3 shows that they agree to some extent that productivity has decreased. In addition, the respondents agreed to some extent with the statement that employees who continue to work at their workplace are dissatisfied, especially staff level respondents.

The most significant difference between the assessments of the management and staff level respondents concerns the statement that it is harder to evaluate the performance of remote workers. Unlike the staff level, the management level respondents thought that it is much harder to evaluate the performance of employees who work from home. There is also a difference with regard to the employees' general relation to the work process: while the managers did not perceive any change, the staff respondents agreed to some extent that a change can be observed. Another noticeable difference can be seen in the assessment of the statement that for some employees, working from home is a possibility to evade work duties. The interesting aspect here is that, unlike the managers, who did not agree with the statement, part of the staff level respondents agreed that working from home gives their colleagues the opportunity to evade work duties. The motivation of employees who work from home was also assessed differently by the two groups of respondents: while the managers agreed that motivating employees who work from home is a serious challenge, staff level respondents did not agree with this statement.

With regard to communication, the respondents acknowledged that its efficiency has been hampered since working from home was introduced. Nevertheless, they did not agree that employees who work from home receive less feedback on their work than usual. The staff level respondents stated that they ask for help and consultation more often under the conditions of working from home than when working in the office, unlike the managers, who generally did not notice any difference.



The respondents agreed that supervision and control over the exercise of working duties by employees in home office require more effort from the manager, especially management level respondents. Staff level respondents stated that they have a clear picture of what is expected from them and how their performance will be evaluated, while management level respondents agreed with this statement to a lesser degree.

In the fifth question, respondents were asked to state whether they think that the practice of working from home could be maintained for all or part of the employees even after the end of the situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The respondents could choose more than one of the proposed answers.

A majority of the respondents stated that some form of working from home could be maintained as a practice even after the end of the pandemic. Three answers indicated that the type of working duties allows for work to be completely shifted to the home office. According to another three answers, working from home could be maintained as a temporary option, i.e. part of the working time could be spent working from home and part in the office. Five answers were in favour of the possibility for every employee to choose whether they want to work from home or not. It was only according to two answers that working from home should not be practiced anymore after the end of the pandemic: one answer stated that it is better for employees to come to their workplaces, while according to the other, the type of working duties does not allow for them to be exercised from home.

The sixth question concerned the changes that should be introduced into the system of managing the efficiency of administrative officials in order for it to be more successful with regard to employees who work from home. The answers can be seen from Table 3 below.

Suggested change	Frequency
To use state-of-the-art electronic tools or IT platforms for monitoring and assessing remote work	2
To organise more meetings by means of electronic tools	2
To define concrete objectives and expected results for every employee	1
To provide appropriate equipment for successful working from home	1
To define precise instructions for regulating working from home, taking into account the specific features of every position	1
To specify the home office working hours of every employee	1
To introduce electronic signature of documents in order to avoid bureaucratic procedures that limit the possibilities of working from home	1
To provide security measures so that employees can come to the office unhindered and do not have to work from home	1

To organise trainings for remote workers so that they can continue their professional development	1
To pay more attention to factors that have an impact on the motivation of employees in home office	1
To introduce the possibility for every employee to work from home one day per week	1
To help the employees to create a balance between work and domestic duties	1
To introduce a more appropriate system for managing the efficiency of employees who work from home	1

Table 3: Suggested changes to the system and their frequency

From Table 3, we can see that the respondents suggested a total of 13 changes to be introduced into the system of managing the efficiency of employees who work from home. The most suggestions refer to the use of state-of-the-art electronic tools and IT platforms to monitor and assess working from home, and to the necessity of holding organise more meetings by means of electronic tools. Both changes were suggested by two respondents each.

Conclusion

Based on the changes and restrictions due to the pandemic, companies and organisations had to change their work processes completely and focus on working from home. The companies and organisations with previous experience in working from home benefited from their clear remote work policies developed through the years. However, many companies and organisations found themselves confronted with this challenge for the first time, with additional problems arising from the lack of time for properly preparing and adapting to the new way of operating. The numerous challenges which they were faced with while setting up an appropriate structure confirmed the assumption that managing the performance of employees who work from home is different from performance management in the office.

The main objective of this study was to evaluate the advantages and downsides of the performance management system under the conditions of working from home, to identify problems and challenges that arise from its implementation, as well as to suggest possibilities for improving the system in order to maximise the benefits from this process, with a special focus on performance management under the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Based on the conducted survey, the general impression regarding working from home in recent times due to the COVID-19 pandemic is that the performance managing system for administrative officials, as it is now, is not applicable to a situation in which the employees work from home. The general opinion is that the system can be adapted, but that serious changes are necessary, in line with the specific features of working from home, or that a different system for managing the efficiency of employees who work from home is needed.

Taking into account that the Law on Administrative Officials covers a broad range of public sector employees whom the same procedure of performance management applies to, and due to the specific features of different institutions and organisation units and the diversity of individual work processes, it can be expected that problems and challenges arising from the process of performance management in different institutions, as well as within institutions themselves, will vary between institutions and even between organisation units. Bearing in mind that the survey was conducted among respondents from one state institution's organisation unit only, the idea of expanding the research suggests itself: first to all organisation units of the same institution, and then to a larger number of state institutions at different levels (central and local), in order to achieve a broader view on the subject.

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