

## **The complexity of integrating democratic values and societal security through the process of timely intervention: empirical analysis and projection of North Macedonia**

**Assoc. prof. Katerina Veljanovska Blazhevska, PhD**

*veljanovska\_katerina@yahoo.com*

*MIT University – Skopje, Faculty of Security Science (North Macedonia)*

### **ABSTRACT**

The promotion of democratic values, societal security through the actualization of the securitization process, is inevitable through the applicability of early warning methods. All of this is particularly evident when the focus is on national interests, as opposed to state capacities.

The building of a stable and democratic state is correlated with establishing cooperation between the local and state authorities, and more specifically, finding an appropriate way to understand security social challenges and segmentation of the public with the aim of transparent representation and achieving the realization of the so-called “mini publics” concept.

Within the framework of this scientific paper, an empirical framework of quantitative research has been implemented in order to perform a relevant presentation of the situation in the Republic of North Macedonia, from the perspective of: (1) implementation of programs for involving the public at the local level in the so-called mini publics; (2) the existence of a strategy between the local and state authorities for targeting the challenges of the domestic societal framework; with the aim of a real and effective insight into the priorities and needs of the societal security. In addition, a method of descriptive analysis is used to interpret the obtained data.

**KEYWORDS:** democracy, societal, security, local, state, “mini-public”

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**Introduction.** The last two decades have been marked by radical and various changes in all spheres of social life. During this period, in-depth changes were conceived that now have a decisive impact on the economic, social, political and security configuration of the world community, and the first consequences of those changes are already being felt. Among other things, the list of security challenges, risks and threats has been changed and expanded, and parallel to this, their nature, content, appearance forms and their reach are also changing. Some new threats to individual, regional and global security have also entered the scene, to which no society can remain immune.

The huge impact of globalization processes is also reflected on all types and ways of governance around the world. To this, relations are set for precise assessments and analyzes in relation to the developments in connection with the borders, on a local, regional and global level. Even the world's biggest actors and donors in politics, those who create and support world politics, international financial institutions, the European Union, the World Bank, base their decision-making on key decisions regarding political and social reforms in states and interest in their development process.

The national security of a state, especially the societal security, has a complex design and structure aimed at guaranteeing national peace and security as part of regional and global security. The goals of the societal security in the area of national security derive from the key strategic policies and acts of the governmental institutions and all the other institutional capacity that is involved.

The purpose of this paper is to give a clear overview of the aspects of societal security, based on practical implications on the local and national concept of understanding the needs of the public and segmenting them in order to establish a strategic approach to action. In the paper, through the application of non-quantitative empirical analysis and the method of descriptive analysis, the set hypotheses, which refer to the Macedonian society, are analyzed and interpreted. They provide a clear roadmap for new challenges and perspectives in the domain of the problem frame.

## **Theoretical concept**

### **Understanding of democratic values and concept**

The democratic values of a society are a key factor for the successful functioning of social institutions. Their credibility and integrity, if based on democratic capacity, can lead to Europeanization of the overall social and normative order and respect for human freedoms and rights.

The basic postulates for the democratic character of the social institutions within which the security institutions have a special place and role derive from the constitutional norms and international rules that have been ratified in one legal system.

The processes of globalization "recomposition", redefinition of the classical sovereignty of nation states are taking place in the conditions of increasingly intense political globalization in the world, which, generally speaking, represents the process of creating a global political system, and which, in turn, initially exists in parallel with the existing system of nation states. Political globalization is treated as a global political evolution of the world system. More specifically, it is a multidimensional process, not only economic, more specifically, historical (in millennial proportions) and transformative (in changing planetary institutional structures) (Davies, 2008).

The great transformation of sovereignty does not take place in one, but in several completely different directions, it creates new types of sovereignty. Initially, the world political scene is flooded with the emergence of new, weak states, which are characterized by the pre-modern, almost exclusively formal aspect of sovereignty, short autonomy and excess of dependence, interventionism in their internal life. Secondly, the states of classical, modern sovereignty found it on two sides. On the one hand, they retain a significant measure of sovereignty – an undisputed monopoly of power on their territory and a series of key economic and social functions, they have a certain measure of influence on the management of regional affairs (Graham, Poky, 2000). But at the same time, a part of the sovereignty is being emptied. The decisions of supranational actors – transnational corporations, the Group "G-7", the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, NATO, become decisive for many economic, social and security measures of the nation states. The birth of the postmodern, "common", "divided", "participatory sovereignty" is a completely opposite trend – the power that is lost at the national level is compensated by participation in decision-making at a higher, regional level.

From a contemporary perspective, democracy lies between globalization and national sovereignty. Namely, they coexist together, since globalization will not destroy sovereignty, but, nevertheless, it must have frameworks for movement in the international field, otherwise it can lead to disproportionate economic and political changes, different from national, state perceptions (Clarke, 1972).

In addition to the above, interests are the driver of the development of democracy in transitional societies, as well as everywhere in the world. Interests become politically relevant by the fact that they seek their realization by political means with the help of the state or more broadly, speaking with the help of the historically determined mechanism of allocation of values and regulation of relations between social groups. The distinction of interests is difficult, primarily because they are a concomitant part of a moral, religious, political, social aspect of action.

The transition period has been a dominant process in Macedonian society for more than two decades. It is the period in which many things are not in accordance with the normally ordered and organized life, which leads to the disruption of the normal functioning of individuals and groups, causing an unbalanced situation that makes it impossible to control and direct the social conditions and changes,

which is reflected at the security and societal level. In fact, the transition period is an expression of, in a certain domain, a negative current situation in society, that is, it expresses a serious social crisis. Namely, the stratification of internal relations takes place in the direction of creating a privileged few "elite" and against it a mass of socially threatened and frustrated citizens. The imbalanced state of stratified groups creates an unequal adjustment of persons and groups, institutions and standards in which they change. At the same time, the predominance of destructive forces over the forces of balance and order are manifested through forms of cultural, economic, ethnic, ideological, political and other conflicts (Hansen, 2000).

The development of democracy in transitional societies, such as the Macedonian one, is especially current in terms of the achieved results, but also negative repercussions in certain periods of this development. At the same time, it is indisputable that there is a different level of democratic development, a different level of rule of law, a different level of respect for human freedoms and rights.

Certain elements of resistance to democracy arise from certain weaknesses, and above all from the imperfection of democracy itself. All of that also refers to aspects of the public's understanding of democracy, that is, the established order and its characteristics. At the same time, the priority is the understanding and analysis of the established social system, moral-ethical and value system, etc. In addition, the party system is analyzed and interpreted, which is closely related to the understanding of democracy and democratic values, as well as the acquired level of political culture.

According to Grodach and Silver, political culture is understood as a set of values on which the political system relies. In addition, political culture is important for bringing order to political life and the public sphere (Grodach, Silver, 2013). However, it can also be a generator of promoting fake news, which is also harmful to democracy and democratic processes, and to society as a whole.

### **Securitization – conceptual framework, challenges and perspectives**

Securitization theory analyzes the construction and deconstruction of threats as a social reality by using speech acts, images, tools and practices. Assuming that social reality is intersubjectively constructed; thus, can be changed by human agency, this perspective rejects the realist conceptualization of security that is argued to be fixed and given by geopolitical realities. It considers security as a 'speech act', which is not given but constructed through a discursive process. As an explanation, a speech act is a security utterance that frames the issue in conflictual terms that it becomes represented and recognized as a threat. The Copenhagen School considers traditional approaches insufficient to understand post-Cold War security challenges including civil strife, illegal migration, refugee crisis, environmental degradation, climate change, transnational terrorism, and health epidemics. It has thus widened the scope

of security to other spheres other than military including economic, environmental, societal, and political sectors (Aradau, 2004).

According with the above, securitization examines how political elite moves issues like migration, environmental degradation or religion into the realm of security through speech acts. Moreover, the sectors of securitization help us better analyse which referent objects are framed as being subject to an existential threat. Bigo identify states, sovereignty or the ideology of states, national companies, collective identities such as nations and religions, and individual species and climate as the possible referent objects in the military, political, economic, societal and environmental sectors, respectively (Bigo, 2002).

Conceptualizing security in broader terms, the Copenhagen school is composed of three pillars: (1) Securitization; (2) Sectors of securitization, and (3) Regional Security Complex Theory. Considering proximity as an important factor in security studies, Regional Security Complex Theory focuses on subsystems or regions defined as units having specific characteristics that differentiate them from other units within the international system. Furthermore, according to Regional Security Complex Theory, unlike the anarchical nature of the international system that is fixed, the structures of subsystems can change due to significant shifts in major components of the security complex such as the distribution of power among major units and the patterns of friendship and enmity among the units (Walsh, 2020).

The securitization pillar has put forward that a certain issue is securitized when identified as a threat to a referent object; requiring extraordinary measures. According to the Copenhagen School, deciding on which issues to securitize as a threat is a political choice. The politically decided and socially constructed securitization process is analyzed through three levels of analysis: (1) agents; (2) acts; and (3) context. The agents level of analysis deals with revealing the actors that are engaged in securitizing issues and the actors that resist such securitizing initiatives. While securitizing a particular issue, the securitizing actor, including political leaders, bureaucracies, governments, lobby and pressure groups, labels a particular issue as a national security threat by using certain words, phrases and actions in order to justify a certain policy tool to be implemented (Guzzini, 2011).

Hansen has suggested that by framing a specific issue as an eminent threat, the political elite claims a right to take extraordinary measures to combat it (Hansen, 2012). Although it is the securitizing actor that frames a certain issue as an immediate threat through speech acts, the audience must accept that there is an existential threat that requires extraordinary measures. Issues become securitized based on an intersubjective interaction between the securitizing actor and the audience that gives consent to the securitization discourse. It is thus necessary to persuade the audience to internalize the threat claims of the securitizing actor. Moreover, Hanesen, also emphasises the need for the securitization actor to use the right language, body gestures, and ideas to convince the public for the urgency of a specific security threat. While the agent level of analysis focuses on the discursive practices of securitization actors during

the securitization process, the context level of analysis is concerned with studying the context in which securitization process occurs. It deals with the social and historical construction of the structure on which common interpretations regarding what constitutes a threat and how that particular threat might be abolished is grounded. Criticizing the Copenhagen School's overemphasis on the role of textual analysis while ignoring contextual analysis, the sociological approach to the securitization theory (Paris School) focuses on both the context in which securitization discourses are embedded and the practices of the institutions on a given security issue. The Paris School insists on the examination of the broader context in which securitization process occurs, rather than focusing narrowly on political elites and their speech acts. Knudsen, similarly highlights the need to examine the role of the context in securitization theory to understand why particular securitization claims have repercussions on a particular audience. The acts level of analysis examines the outcomes of policy instruments and tools that are used by securitizing actors to overcome threats in the securitization process. It deals with the impact of the constructed social reality on security concerns. Instead of focusing on the securitizing actors and the nature of their discourse, the Paris School examines the outcomes and effects of security discourses in real life conditions. It empirically examines the outcomes of a particular securitization instrument and tool in the construction and consolidation of a security threat (Knudsen, 2001).

### **Timely intervention to ensure societal security**

In Timely warning as a mechanism, by which the society will recognize the coming threat, was created with the intention of obtaining an effective strategy for dealing with modern threats from different domains. The largest number of states and international institutions direct their attention to preventive action in relation to the protection of their security. The complexity of the security problem and the dynamism of modern threats to societal security impose a need for a timely assessment of risks and a warning about their dynamics and escalation. In fact, this is done in order to take an appropriate strategy for dealing with, that is, managing the possible conflicts and risks from a different domain (Allen, Diego, 2019).

Timely warning is often placed in the context of crisis management, considering it as part of the crisis management system. In doing so, in the context of the established tasks of crisis management, aimed at societal security, the following directions are taken into account (Ahmed, et al., 1998):

- Effective crisis management towards societal security and domestic securitization, as well as prevention of opportunities to transform the crisis and their further escalation into threatening conflicts;
- Timely and appropriate response in case of violation of societal security and domestic securitization. First of all, it must be kept in mind that for the successful management of crises after societal security and prevention of escalation into deepening threatening conflicts, it is

necessary to have a system for prevention and deliberate warning of upcoming risks and threats, which have been previously detected. In addition, the process of activating the mechanisms for handling and crisis management has its own preliminary procedure in the assessment, analysis and intended warning.

Preventive action and timely detection of possible disturbances after societal security, is presented in different directions in daily practice. Namely, in theory, the represented models for the timely prevention of threats to societal security, depending on the goals and methodology, have a different approach, whereby there are (Adelman, 1998):

- Models that are designed for a specific problem (conflicts, ethno-political conflicts, state stability, refugee crises and others);
- Models that can provide short-term or long-term warning, depending on the stages of crisis escalation;
- Models that use empirical methodology, isolating the factors that contribute to the escalation of crises, the structural processes in the states, the processes that determine the instigators of societal crises.
- Models that use structural information from society to enable long-term prediction. Each model of timely warning of a breach of societal security is mainly based on the empirical knowledge acquired by society in its history of dealing with risks from a different domain.

The specifics that characterize the construction of a possible warning in the event of a breach of societal security, goals, interests from a different domain, are a prerequisite for successful prevention and compatibility with analysis, planning, the decision-making process, implementation and evaluation of information.

The timely prevention of societal security is directly related to the collective understanding of societal security, both by the institutions and by the affected public. At the same time, this process is characterized by the need for systematic collection and analysis of information coming from all aspects that could disrupt societal security.

## Methodological framework

Within this scientific paper, quantitative empirical research is analysed and interpreted. The research was conducted in the time period of 11.10. – 23.10.2022 with direct distribution of questionnaires. The research includes a target group of academics, experts, analysts, as well as public administration officials in local self-government and central institutions, which in their domain include work with the challenge of security, societal security and respect for democratic principles of population equality, with special reference to the right of representation at the local and national level.

The empirical research framework is based on the data obtained by the survey questionnaire. The basic methodological idea is aimed at the analysis and interpretation of the special hypotheses based on the analysis and comments of which the general hypothesis is finally analysed and interpreted.

A group of 50 respondents was included in the research. The data have been sublimated based on the received responses from the research and they have been selected in the direction of proving the special and general hypothesis within the framework of the research.

The survey questionnaire that is applied within the framework of the empirical research in this paper (its legitimacy for application in a given situation and the framework of perception of a certain ratio of the attitudes of the respondents to the research questions), is obtained on the basis of the theoretical aspects that are applied in this paper, and the practical implications that have been explored, based on certain existing real conditions in the country, from the aspect of understanding and functioning of the societal security.

The attitudes related to this research, which are presented in a survey questionnaire, are indicated to be placed on a Likert scale, in order to see the gradation of the attitude of the respondents. The data are statistically processed and graphically displayed. In addition, a descriptive method is used for analysis and interpretation of the data obtained.

The questionnaire was administered individually to each respondent, taking into account the ethical dimension of the questions, as well as the protection of personal data in relation to public presentation of the same, without damaging the credibility of both the respondents themselves and the organization itself from which that they originate.



## Results and discussion

In terms of demographic, the following data were obtained in relation to the target group (%) within this research:

### 1) Gender

Male	Female
53	47

### 2) Age

from 18-29 years	from 30-49 years	50 years and more
11	42	47

### 3) Ethnicity

Macedonian	Albanian	Turkish	Others
61	21	3	15

### 4) Level od education

Elementary	High-School	Faculty	MA/PhD
/	4	61	35

### 5) Working Experience

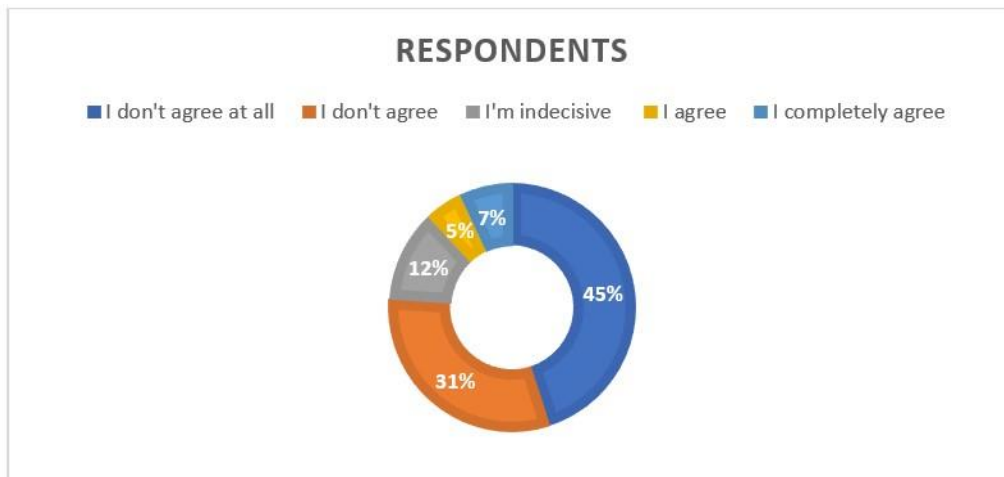
Up to 5 years	from 5-10 years	from 11-20 years	More than 20 years
12	26	45	18

### ***Analysis and interpretation of a hypothesis 1***

The first special hypothesis in this paper is the following: "If Macedonian society practices programs for involving the public at the local level in the so-called mini-publics, in that case a better familiarization with their priorities in the domain of societal security is expected."

The most appropriate choice for displaying the analysis of hypothesis 1 is through sublimated responses (shown in Graph 1).

**Graph 1:** *At the local level there is a model of segmenting the public into "mini-publics", for a better understanding of their societal security needs*



*Noted.* Author's own research

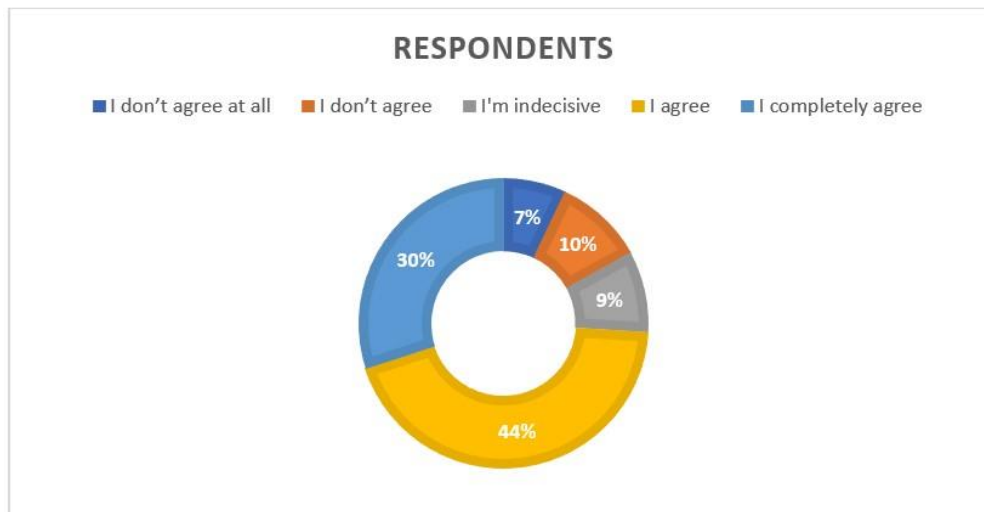
On the basis of the obtained data within the Graph 1, it can be seen the denial of the question/statement by the respondents, that is, with a high 76% (category: "I don't agree at all" and "I don't agree"), the respondents do not agree with the statement. Therefore, the concept of "mini publics" needs to be included in the framework of local self-government, as a key for the appropriate segmentation of the public in order to have a realistic insight into all needs, with special reference to societal security, which occupies different dimensions in different social frameworks.

### ***Analysis and interpretation of a hypothesis 2***

The second special hypothesis in this paper is the following: "If effective cooperation between the local and national authorities is established, in connection with setting specific steps and a strategic plan for localizing the most common challenges in the domain of social security, in that case an improvement of the social security of the public is expected".

The most appropriate choice for displaying the analysis of hypothesis 2 is through sublimated responses (shown in Graph 2).

**Graph 2:** *There is a real need for a cooperation plan between local and national authorities to detect challenges related to societal security*



*Noted.* Author's own research

According to the obtained data shown in Graph 2, the high percentage of responses justify the claim (74%), that is, the respondents show a clear attitude regarding the need for a cooperation plan between local and national authorities to detect challenges related to societal security. Only in this way real benefits can be expected.

### ***Analysis of a general hypothesis***

Based on the obtained data within Graph 1 and Graph 2, the analyzed and interpreted general hypothesis is confirmed, that is:

“If social security is set as a priority by the local and national authorities within the Macedonian society, in that case it is expected to set up and implement an effective strategic approach to eliminate the revealed challenges in the domain of social security.”

In addition, the application of the concept of “mini publics” in order to regularly detect challenges in the domain of social security for the population in a certain local government, as well as the establishment of a plan for cooperation between the local and national authorities, to detect challenges from the aspect of societal security, will greatly help to effectively deal with the challenges in the domain of societal security. Only in such a way can one acts strategically and expect efficient and effective measures and results.

**Conclusion** .Respect for democratic values, and social security as well as securitization in social frameworks are closely related. It is about a phenomena whose explanation presupposes a broad approach, multifactorial, an approach that connects them in a common social structure. However, this process of mutual action is not fixed, it is constantly subject to changes, reforms, which arise as a result of the dynamics and changes of the global social structure. Some of these changes take place in the long term and are focused on all aspects of societal security, and some arise from current environmental needs. However, what is important to highlight is the constant need for transformation and change.

The relationship between changes in social frameworks and securitization is in great dependence and proportionality with the social structure, radical changes, but also the form of governance and established relationship between the representation of the public, at the local and national level.

Credibility and integrity gained by the public is equally important both locally and nationally. In the context of the above, in order to enable a high level of societal security and securitization, it is necessary to regularly and promptly monitor the needs of the segmented public. A segmented public means that, starting from the local level, all the way to the national level, all the problems and challenges faced by the population in a certain framework of action will be known. The best way to achieve this is through the creation of a model of “mini publics” at the local level, which will greatly improve the representativeness of the population in a certain place of residence, and thus improve their societal security. In addition, the establishment of an efficient strategic plan for the exchange of experiences and models of behaviour between the local and national authorities, will set up an effective system of timely warning for certain societal changes and an appropriate timely, that is, preventive reaction to them.

Within the framework of this paper, empirical research was conducted on a target group of 50 respondents, academics, experts, analysts, as well as public administration officials in local self-government and central institutions, which in their domain include work with the challenge of security, societal security and respect for democratic principles of population equality, with special reference to the right of representation at the local and national level. Moreover, according to the obtained results, the hypotheses set in this paper have been confirmed, that is:

- If the Macedonian society practices programs for involving the public at the local level in the so-called mini publics, in that case a better acquaintance with their priorities is expected.
- If effective cooperation between the local and national authorities is established, in connection with setting specific steps and a strategic plan for localizing the most common challenges in the domain of social security, in that case an improvement of the social security of the public is expected.
- If social security is set as a priority by the local and national authorities within the Macedonian society, in that case it is expected to set up and implement an efficient strategic approach to eliminate the revealed challenges in the domain of social security.

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