

THE CULTURE OF PEACE: STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE
EMOTIONAL CLIMATE IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

КУЛТУРА НА МИРОТ: СТУДЕНТСКИ ПЕРЦЕПЦИИ ЗА
ЕМОЦИОНАЛНАТА КЛИМА ВО РЕПУБЛИКА МАКЕДОНИЈА

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ABSTRACT:

This paper focuses on students' perception of the emotional climate as one important aspect of the culture of peace. The accent is placed on the conditions in the Republic of Macedonia which is relatively young democratic society aimed to complete its European perspective of development. The research sample consists of students at the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje. Theoretical basis of this study are given in the first part of the paper where the main characteristics and processes of the culture of peace are presented. Research results indicate that situation is not alarming, but is either not so promising since there are many high scores on insecurity, anger and fear measures, and many low scores on measures of social trust and security. Respondents are concerned about future and mainly see the system as corrupted. They also question freedom of information, but not in so dark light. Findings are further discussed and future steps for strengthening and promoting the culture of peace in the Republic of Macedonia are presented as well.

Keywords: culture of peace, emotional climate, students, Republic of Macedonia

АПСТРАКТ:

Во трудот се разгледува студентската перцепција на емоционалната клима како мошне значаен дел од културата на мирот. Акцентот е ставен на состојбите во Република Македонија, која е една релативно млада демократија, насочена кон реализирање на својата европска перспектива. Истражувањето е спроведено на студенти од Филозофскиот факултет во Скопје. Во теоретскиот дел од трудот се изложени позначајните карактеристики на културата на мирот и на процесите низ кои таа се гради. Потоа се прикажани резултатите од проценката на емоционалната клима. Од нив се гледа дека состојбата не е алармантна, но не е ниту ветувачка, со оглед на тоа што се добиваат многу високи скорови на прашањата поврзани со чувството на несигурност, гнев и страв, а многу ниски скорови на прашањата во врска со општествената доверба и сигурноста. Резултатите се понатаму дискутирани, а кон крајот се дадени заклучни согледувања со насоки за јакнење на потенцијалите за градење и унапредување на културата на мирот во Република Македонија.

Клучни зборови: култура на мирот, емоционална клима, студенти, Република Македонија

INTRODUCTION

Establishing the culture of peace is complex and long-term process. Yet, it is among most important tasks on the "to-do" list of every democratic society in the world. This is true for both young democracies and the societies with old tradition of democratic practices. The first ones are aiming towards building it, while the later are focused on preserving it for new generations by constantly promoting it through various peaceful activities. Building the culture of peace affects not only the society itself but also the people who live in that society. In other words, on society level it can be understood as an important historical and societal change while on the individual level it is a significant developmental change of each person who is part of that transformative process.

When we speak of culture of peace, we often think of the transformation of values, attitudes and behavior in each individual that lead to the culture formed by peace and aimed towards peace (Мурцева-Шкарик, 2007). However, there is no universal definition of this concept which is usually understood as holistic and normative (Petrović, Selimović and de Rivera, 2010). Galtung (according to Мурцева-Шкарик, 2007), who is one of the leading authors in this area, argue that the culture of peace represents, in the same time, different

levels of culture and different levels of peace. The peace itself can be understood as positive emotional climate both inside individuals and outside of them i.e. around them. In that sense is Galtung's famous line "Tell me how you behave in conflict and I will tell you how much culture of peace you possess" (Мурцева-Шкарик, 2007: 130).

Hence, promoting culture of peace is not at all an easy task, but it is substantially important and has to be taken seriously if people in every society are about to live together in long-term peace. This is especially true for multicultural societies and for post-conflict societies where a lot needs to be done for differences and misunderstandings to be overcome and transformed into mutual trust, respect and tolerance. Although there are some very efficient practices from western countries that can be used for this purpose, more complete and more successful results are obtained when concrete society stands on the capacities of its own people to mobilize their strengths to behave peacefully and nonviolently and to build those strengths in, what in future will be called, the culture of peace.

THE CULTURE OF PEACE: PRECONDITIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

De Rivera (2009) describes eight preconditions that have to be fulfilled for one nation/society to be recognized as a culture of peace. First, the light is shed on peace education and its importance in the process of building the culture of peace. Then is the gender equality with special focus on women rights as well as on the need for valuing women and their values more than previously. The third precondition is improved tolerance and acceptance of group differences which leads to social cohesion. Democratic participation is another sine qua non precondition for the culture of peace, so every society that inclines towards it has to place significant efforts to mobilize and provide opportunities for each individual to be actively involved in this process. Next is open communication among individuals and groups after which come human rights and peacebuilding. Later cannot be done if some substantial values, such as respect for others, mutual trust, tolerance of the differences etc. are not promoted. Last two preconditions are international security and sustainable development which are also crucial for establishing the culture of peace.

Beside previously mentioned preconditions, the same author accentuates various methods for building cultures of peace. Among more general ones he especially addresses nonviolent action and trust, negotiation, deliberate dialogue, restorative justice and police oversight. When it comes to more concrete methods targeting specific levels of influence, de Rivera (2009) focuses on personal transformations, achieving peace in family, community

reconciliation etc. Hence, he emphasize that a societies and their members need to be creative and able to envision the final goal they tend to achieve, in order to establish the culture of peace. Visions about the future are those driving elements that motivate people to behave constructively and move forward.

Nevertheless, de Rivera (2009) stresses that staying firm on the ground and facing reality is also one crucial part of this process. It is important to be aware of the fact that conflicts are present in everyday life and that people can behave extremely violently, but they can also be highly peaceful and cooperative. When people live in a culture of peace they are manifesting various positive characteristics, values and capacities. For example, they can be willing to help others, act in a caring and supportive way, be empathetic, brave and honest. This further means that they are able to accept the others that are different from themselves the way they are i.e. to be aware that each person is unique and has his/her own identity.

Wessells, Schwebel, and Anderson (2001; according to Mayton, 2009) highlighted seven substantial components that define the culture of peace. Those are social justice, human rights, nonviolence, inclusiveness, civil society, peace education, and sustainability. The theory of basic human needs can also be applied here. It describes conflicts as arising from unsatisfied basic human needs (ex. Мурцева-Шкарик, 2007; Staub, 2003). Therefore, the resolution of a conflict can be achieved only by satisfying those needs (or at least some of them) and by reaching social justice. In this sense, Christie (1997; according to Мурцева-Шкарик, 2007) argues that central for peacekeeping are the needs for security, identity, material goods and self-determination. Galtung (according to Мурцева-Шкарик, 2007) emphasize the needs for survival, well-being, identity and freedom. In the situation of direct violence, between individuals or nations, the needs for security and identity are becoming most important. When people are living in structural violence, where economic needs or the needs for freedom of speech and self-determination are not met, the road to violence is clearly open. Thus, as Christie puts out (1997; Мурцева-Шкарик, 2007), the permanent peace requires, at least, righteous satisfaction of human needs for security, identity, well-being and self-determination. Hence, psychologists and peace workers have to be constantly oriented towards transformations of structural violence into righteous social activities aimed for satisfying basic human needs.

Worldwide, there are examples of societies that are characterized as peaceful and nonviolent, although there is no universally accepted categorization among authors about what exactly defines nonviolent culture. In this sense, it is crucial to have in mind that not only individuals have their dominant emotions, but societies too can be characterized

with collective emotional orientation (Jarymowicz and Bar-Tal, 2006; according to Bar-Tal, Halperin, and de Rivera, 2007). Hence, it is important to analyze the centrality of emotions in different contexts, especially social and political, both in intragroup and intergroup processes, due to the fact that they have potential to transform into societal phenomenon. Thus, the process of conflict resolution and peace making, particularly considering intergroup conflicts, could be better understood if analyzed from the point of the collective emotions and their role in this regard (Bar-Tal, Halperin, and de Rivera, 2007).

In the attempt to describe a model of nonviolent society, Bonta (1996; according to Mayton, 2009) discuss some useful guidelines. More precisely, a particular society needs to be "characterized by [1] a relatively high degree of interpersonal harmony; [2] little if any physical violence among adults, between children and adults, and between the sexes; [3] workable strategies for resolving conflicts and averting violence; [4] a commitment to avoid violence (such as warfare) with other peoples; and [5] strategies for raising children to adopt and continue these nonviolent ways" (Bonta, 1996: 405; according to Mayton, 2009: 128). The same author compare societies with these characteristics to less nonviolent ones and finds differences in all five points, beginning from the quality of interpersonal relations, socialization of children, ways of conflict resolutions etc. As Bonta emphasize, "within peaceful or nonviolent societies, cooperation is clearly the dominant orientation" (Bonta, 1996: 405; according to Mayton, 2009: 130).

Basabe and Valencia (2007), highlight four orthogonal factors that define four distinct dimensions of the culture of peace as recognized by de Rivera (2004; according to Basabe and Valencia 2007). Those are Liberal Development, Violent Inequality, State Use of Violent Means and Nurturance. The conflicts could arise in or among all four factors and thus can be differently resolved. Therefore, it is possible for societies to have unequal levels of peacefulness. Since the culture of peace is a holistic concept, the nonviolent actions have to be undertaken in all four dimensions in order for permanent peace to be established. The subjective dimension of the culture of peace can be measured by focusing on beliefs and values. Here, shared values are crucial in subjective culture. So are the subjective values, which are usually related to certain dimensions of emotional climate that are important to the culture of peace. As Basabe and Valencia (2007) further note, recent studies found cultural determinants of emotional climate. For example, in hierarchical societies there are more frequent negative affect (Basabe and Ros, 2005; according to Basabe and Valencia 2007). High correlations were also found between negative affect, Masculinity and Uncertainty

Avoidance (Basabe et al., 2002; according to Basabe and Valencia 2007).

THE EMOTIONAL CLIMATE AND THE CULTURE OF PEACE

The concept of emotional climate is still very new in the area of peace psychology. It was introduced by de Rivera in the last decades of XXth century. De Rivera distinguishes this concept from emotional atmospheres by pointing on the main characteristic of the emotional climate, which is its scope. More precisely, emotional climate incorporates the relationships among all members of one group, while emotional atmospheres are defined by the focus of all group members on a certain event (de Rivera and P´aez, 2007). The emotional part in the concept of emotional climate concerns the collective emotions that arise from the shared social interactions of group’s members, which are culture specific. As further stated by de Rivera and P´aez (2007), these collective emotions could be both constructed and measured in several different ways.

There are various factors that influence the construction of emotional climate in particular society. Among them are specific political policies and objective facts that have potential to create common state of feelings experienced by all society members, directly or indirectly. Nevertheless, emotional climate is under influence of individual and collective behavior as well. This means that its construction depends on the processes that extend from micro-social to macro-social level. Some aspects of emotional climate and of the culture of peace are related to certain norms and values that can vary across the societies. Although there are similarities between these two concepts, they are two independent aspects due to some important differences. Such differences become clearly obvious when individualistic and collectivistic societies have being compared (de Rivera and P´aez, 2007).

For measuring emotional climate in different cultures, De Rivera (de Rivera and P´aez, 2007) constructed a 24-item scale aimed to encompass the feelings of security, insecurity, confidence, depression, anger, love, fear, and trust. The target group was students from different countries. As expected, he found some very interesting differences. For example, the students who felt most secure were those from the United States, after which are students from Spain and Colombia. The students from Honduras and Nicaragua felt least secure. When it comes to confidence in individual opportunities and government empirical data showed that students from Honduras and Nicaragua had less confidence in these dimensions than their peers from Colombia and Peru. The anger was most expressed in Honduras, Colombia, and Nicaragua. Findings for Nicaragua also indicated that there was significantly less fear

of speech. More detailed analyzes showed significant differences between Honduras and Columbia in the source of fear of speaking. Namely, in Honduras it was more related to governmental oppression while in Columbia to the fear of groups and the lack of adequate control of their behavior by the government.

The research on the emotional climate in the Balkan region is still very scarce. One recent study was conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Tuzla) and Serbia (Belgrade). The same standardized questionnaire of 24 items with seven-level scale of agreement and disagreement whose author is Joseph de Rivera, was applied. Within the central part of the questionnaire the status of several indicators of the emotional climate of society that are of importance for a culture of peace, was determined. Among them were resentment or anger towards the government, fear of communication, security, insecurity (as an independent dimension), the sense of hopelessness and social trust. It was found that the most dominant factor in both countries was anger towards the government, but also other elements such as helplessness, insecurity and fear were also expressed. This indicates that the results in these two countries are similar to those of the other countries with economic and social problems (Petrović, Selimović, and de Rivera, 2010).

In the Republic of Macedonia, as far as authors of this paper are informed, this is the first study that measures the emotional climate using de Rivera's questionnaire. It is also the first study focusing on students' perception of the emotional climate. Since there is lack of relevant research on this topic in the present country, we will discuss the actual situation through some general indicators.

Republic of Macedonia, however young in its independence as a state, invested significant effort in the processes for peace building and peacekeeping, especially after the conflict in 2001. Such efforts are inevitable in the societies who are aiming towards reaching permanent peace and are "multi" in many ways (cultural, ethnic, religious etc.). This is the case with the Republic of Macedonia as well. Its people throughout history have faced many wars and conflicts and yet, stayed relatively nonviolent and tolerant in their nature.

According to the Global Peace Index Report for 2014, R. of Macedonia is ranked 87th which place her in the group of countries with medium state of peace. This means that there is still more to go until the state of permanent and stable peace is achieved. As previously noted, one precondition for building a culture of peace, is peace education. In that sense, R. of Macedonia developed various curricula at the university level particularly designed to address the importance and long term implications of nonviolence. Curricula on conflict

transformations and peace building are also present in elementary and high schools, whether as elective subjects or as projects implemented both by the Government and different NGO's (ex. the project "Heritage and Dialogue" implementer by UNESCO as part of the broader topic on Culture of Peace and Non-violence, 2009-2014). The same is true for gender equality. Here, Republic of Macedonia signed all important and compulsory EU documents and developed national strategies in which reaching and maintaining gender equality remains a priority.

Tolerance and acceptance of group differences is promoted throughout various activities implemented on different levels and populations. The scope of those activities is wide and incorporates all relevant parties, institutions and individuals starting from the officials in the Government, through governmental and nongovernmental institutions, formal and non-formal education etc. Nevertheless, as we will see later in this paper, results from the study on the emotional climate in the R. of Macedonia indicate that more needs to be done in order for systematic change to be achieved.

Democratic participation is guaranteed for every citizen in the country, although sometimes it does not look like it is always practiced. Therefore, individuals and groups has to be continuously motivated to participate more in various forms of nonviolent and democratic activities that will both improve the awareness of the importance of democratic participation in the society and will enable its future promotion.

When it comes to open communication and human rights, some international reports (ex. "Commission Staff Working Document, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2012 Progress Report"; Amnesty International Report 2012, The State of the World's Human Rights, etc.) are stating that these aspect needs to gain more attention in the Republic of Macedonia. For example, in the report of EU from 2012 about the progress of the R. of Macedonia, concerning the field of human rights and the protection of minorities, it is written the following: "Limited progress can be reported in the promotion and enforcement of human rights. Efforts were made to strengthen the implementation of the legal framework, and increase staff in institutions" ("Commission Staff Working Document, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2012 Progress Report", 2012: 13). The latest Country Report on Human Rights Practices, released by U.S. Department of State (2013), points out that among most important human rights problems are "tensions between the ethnic Albanian and Macedonian communities; discrimination against Roma and other ethnic minorities; inadequate enforcement of labor laws etc." (p. 1).

Finally, the issues of international security and sustainable development are

continuously in focus in all action plans of the Government of the R. of Macedonia. Therefore the progress can be expected in both these aspects of the culture of peace. Considering all mentioned above, there are some domains that still need improvement, in order for better quality of life to be achieved and systemic transformations to occur. Yet, this country committed itself to European perspective, which means putting all its efforts in building and maintain the culture of peace at all levels, permanently. It is hard and long process but certainly not unreachable.

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH OF THE STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE EMOTIONAL CLIMATE IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

To build a culture of peace, what is important, is emotional climate among members of a society, the expression of their hopes, fears and anxieties. Moreover, it is crucial to determine this subjective potential for peace in countries that went through many challenges, including armed conflict and political turbulence, in the recent past, and in countries with uncertain economic status for many citizens. Since R. of Macedonia can be classified in this group of countries considering its recent past, the necessity to conduct a research that will focus on the emotional climate and the culture of peace becomes very important. Therefore, the main goal of this study was to analyze how students perceive the emotional climate in the country in which they live and where they are building their future.

The instrument used in this study has been developed by de Rivera and it is previously applied in neighbor countries: Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Petrović, Selimović, and de Rivera, 2010). Standardized questionnaire with 24 items with seven-degree scale of agreement and disagreement has been administered. Seven degrees used for answering each question are described as: no, a little, somewhat, more or less, quite a bit, mostly and absolutely - respectively. The 4 is theoretically average answer.

The questionnaire assessed several indicators of emotional climate of society that are of importance to the culture of peace, including: resentment or anger towards the government, fear of communication, security, uncertainty (as an independent dimension), a sense of hopelessness and social trust. In addition to these indicators, the questionnaire has a series of questions that determine the potential factors of that potential: gender, age, religious beliefs etc.

The sample consisted of 150 university students (mean age 21,20), predominantly females, 70% declared as Orthodox Christians and 10% as Muslims, from Skopje. The scale

shows good psychometrics characteristics, including coefficient of reliability.

The results, generally speaking, show that situation is not alarming, but is either not so promising. This further means that there are many high scores on insecurity, anger and fear measures, and many low scores on measures of social trust and security. It is even more problematic, having in mind that the sample consists of young people, with education and social status above average in the population. The analyzed questions are divided in several logical groups presented in the following tables.

Table 1. Descriptive results for perception of (in)security

Security/insecurity	Mean	1 ^a	2	3	4	5	6	7
Are most people feeling secure that there is enough food, water, medicine, and shelter for themselves and their families, and that they will continue having these things?	3.40	14.7	14.7	32.0	12.0	11.3	12.0	3.3
Are people feeling insecure because the amount of violence is preventing people from living peacefully?	4.24	4.0	16.7	18.7	12.7	21.3	13.3	13.3
Do most people in this country feel secure that there are others who care for them?	3.16	22.0	12.7	24.7	23.3	6.0	8.0	3.3
Are people feeling very insecure because they are worried about what might happen in the future?	4.51	4.7	8.7	15.3	18.0	22.0	18.0	13.3
Do most people feel secure that they will receive help if they have a problem?	2.72	32.7	20.0	16.0	16.7	6.0	6.0	2.7

Table 1. indicates that our subjects, generally, do not perceive their environment as a secure. Even on the question about the basic, existential needs, which is involved mainly for the Third world countries, „Are most people feeling secure that there is enough food, water, medicine, and shelter for themselves and their families, and that they will continue having these things?“, only 15% answered with „mostly“ or „absolutely“, and the mean for the whole sample is above theoretical average, only 3.40.

One more similar question, appropriate in the first place for countries in armed conflict, also shows worrying answers. On „Are people feeling insecure because the amount of violence is preventing people from living peacefully?“ 48% of subject agree (more or less,

answers from 5 to 7) while 39% do not agree (answers from 1 to 3).

Answers also show relatively high level of worrying because of potential future problems and because people are not sure that they can expect help from their communities.

Table 2. Descriptive results for perception of trust in society

Social trust	Mean	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Do people trust that the different political groups in this country trust each other and will work together for the progress of the country?	1.78	68.7	11.3	6.7	5.3	4.7	1.3	2.0
Do most people in this country sympathize with the difficult situation of some children and want to contribute to their betterment?	3.90	5.3	18.7	22.7	16.7	18.0	8.0	10.7
Do people from different organizations trust each other enough to work together to try and find a solution that works for everyone?	3.01	19.3	24.7	18.0	20.0	12.0	4.0	2.0
Do most people in this country respect each other enough so that they do not become violent when there is a conflict?	2.69	31.3	19.3	20.0	14.7	8.7	4.7	1.3
Do people from different ethnic and religious groups trust each other in this country?	2.68	30.0	28.7	10.7	14.0	10.7	2.7	3.3
Do men and women respect each other as equals?	4.03	13.3	8.7	14.0	22.0	19.3	12.7	10.0

Table 2. shows also very low level of, what Putnam (2000) refers to as, “social capital”. According to the respondents’ answers there is not enough trust in any social relationship. The average point of 4 is found for the respect among genders. However, people mainly do not sympathize even with children with problems, and there are only less than 10% of people who agree that there is trust among organizations, people in general and ethnic groups. The lowest level of trust is registered among political groups.

Table 3. Descriptive results for perception of hopes for the future

Future hopes	Mean	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Are people feeling confident that there are good opportunities to make a better life for themselves and their families?	3.31	15.3	22.0	22.7	15.3	12.0	6.0	6.7
Are people feeling hopeless about things ever getting better?	3.72	14.7	14.7	18.0	17.3	14.7	13.3	7.3
How confident are people that nonviolent methods (such as voting, peaceful protests, strikes that do not destroy property) can increase justice in this society?	3.54	8.7	24.0	20.0	18.7	14.0	10.0	4.7
Are most people confident that they can make their voices heard when they really care about something?	2.75	28.7	21.3	17.3	18.7	8.7	3.3	2.0
Is this country so hopeless that many people want to leave?	5.23	7.3	8.7	5.3	9.3	10.7	19.3	39.3

Our respondents are concerned about future, as we can see in Table 3. There are elements of anomia and hopelessness in the obtained answers. For instance one third of all respondents even question that “things ever getting better”. They are not sure in power of their voices, neither in power of nonviolent methods in pursuing justice and making things better.

Table 4. Descriptive results for peoples’ anger because of corruption

Anger because corruption	Mean	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Are many people angry with the government because it favors people who have money and power?	4.97	3.3	7.3	12.0	14.7	15.3	23.3	24.0
Is the political system so corrupt that it is hopeless to use it to work for the public good?	4.46	9.3	13.3	11.3	15.3	14.0	12.0	24.7
Is there a lot of anger because there is not a fair distribution of wealth in this country?	5.07	2.0	6.0	14.0	12.7	16.7	24.0	24.7
Do people in this country feel insecure because the justice system isn’t working to punish people who commit crimes against other persons?	4.96	6.7	6.0	16.0	8.0	12.0	22.0	29.3
Are many people angry at the amount of corruption in the government?	5.15	6.0	3.3	11.3	12.0	16.7	18.0	32.7

The next group of questions deals with problems of injustice in society, embodied through corruption, Table 4. Our respondents mainly see the system as corrupted, and they

are very angry because of that fact. It is very dangerous combination when people are angry because of corruption and see themselves as hopeless and powerless to do something to change the inadequate conditions.

Finally, in Table 5 participants question also freedom of information, but not in so dark light. In other words, around 43% of respondents answered that people are generally not afraid to gather publicly for a peaceful meetings and/or to organize protest. Considering freedom of press, 51% answered with „mostly“ or „absolutely“ which indicate that they perceive the journalists and the media as afraid of publishing information that people should know. Finally, more than half of respondents (56%) perceive that people are “quite a bit”, “mostly” or “absolutely” afraid of saying what they really think because speaking out is dangerous.

Table 5. Descriptive results for peoples feelings of freedom

Feelings of freedom	Mean	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Are people afraid of having peaceful public meetings to organize or protest?	4.15	12.7	12.0	18.0	13.3	10.0	17.3	16.7
Are journalists, and the media afraid of publishing information that people should know?	5.01	10.0	6.0	6.7	12.7	14.0	16.7	34.0
Are people here afraid of saying what they really think because speaking out is dangerous?	4.75	6.0	10.0	12.0	16.0	13.3	16.7	26.0

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Research findings on emotional climate in the R. of Macedonia are in line with the similar research conducted in the region. The main factor in all countries from the region is anger directed toward the government (Petrović, Selimović, and de Rivera, 2010). This is similar to the countries in the world that are facing economic problems (de Rivera and P’aez, 2007).

Results from this research can be explained in several ways. First, the fact that the students, generally, do not perceive their environment as a secure even when the satisfaction of basic human needs is in focus, is not surprising if, for example, the official data published by the State Statistical Office of the R. of Macedonia are considered. According to them, in the IV quarter of 2013, the unemployment rate was 28.6% which is still high, although there is obvious decrease in this percentage compared to previous years. Furthermore, as released

in the Bertelsmann Transformation Index Report (2014), poverty rate (which is a percentage of population living on less than \$2 a day), is 9.1%. These findings, even though the target is student population, possibly indicate that many people in R. of Macedonia are living in uncertainty and are concerned for their future. They don't have decent jobs and many don't have jobs at all. On the other side, those who are employed are concerned about losing their jobs which will directly affect their quality of life and life satisfaction. This conclusion finds support in research results on unemployment from studies conducted in Macedonia and elsewhere, which confirm that prolonged periods of unemployment can lead to apathy and psychological death (Мурџева-Шкарик, 2007).

Therefore, it is not surprising that many individuals, especially young people, are taking their chances abroad. This condition is clearly represented in the students' answers to the question "Is this country so hopeless that many people want to leave?" which belongs in the block about perception of hopes for the future. Here, almost 70% of respondents answered with "quite a bit", "mostly" or "absolutely" (i.e. answers from 5 to 7 on the scale). They are about to complete their education and look for a job in some foreign country rather than in their homeland. Such negative feelings of insecurity, hopelessness and fear all connected to the perception of the future, as indicated in the research of Basabe and Ros (2005; according to Basabe and Valencia 2007), are mostly found in hierarchical societies.

What is alarming in the findings from this study, is that even on the question about the basic, existential needs, which is involved mainly for the Third world countries, the percentage of those who "mostly" or "absolutely" agree that most people are feeling secure that there is enough food, water, medicine, and shelter for themselves and their families, and that they will continue having these things, is very low. From a psychological perspective, basic needs are conceptualized as the most fundamental motives. When they are not satisfied, or are violated, a person's well-being, growth and development are compromised. It brings uncertainty and sometimes even apathy in many people's lives. In such conditions, people will try to fulfill them either constructively, or, if obstructed, they will act destructively in ways that will harm themselves and/or other people (Staub, 2003). Considering what is previously mentioned, it is understandable why certain results in our research are indicating presence of anomia and hopelessness among young people.

Another important finding considers the state of the anger among students because of the corruption. Our respondents mainly see the system as corrupted, and they are very angry because of that fact. Considering the freedom of speech, it might also be inferred from

the results that respondents feel less free to speak up loudly and openly in public. De Rivera found similar results in these two aspects in his own research in different cultural settings (de Rivera and P'aez, 2007).

Nevertheless, the changes that have been made in the law for journalists, especially the decriminalisation of defamation indicate that in future, things might change for the better in terms of the freedom of speech. This is also supported by the evaluation from EU Commission about the progress in the field of freedom of expression and the media, presented in the 2012 progress report for R. of Macedonia: "Some progress has been made in the field of freedom of expression and the media. The overall constitutional and legal framework protecting freedom of expression is generally in place." ("Commission Staff Working Document, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2012 Progress Report", 2012: 14).

Findings about feelings of insecurity because the amount of violence is preventing people from living peacefully, as well as those concerning the social capital, providing evidence that there is not enough trust, in any social relationships, are partly supported by some of the latest relevant international reports and documents (for more details see: Bertelsmann Transformation Index Report (2014); and U.S. Department of State Country Reports on Human Rights Practices (2013). When these results are considered together with abovementioned possible explanations for presence of anomia and hopelessness, we can see clearer picture about the conditions in which young people are developing. More precisely, they are facing frustration and uncertainty in the period of life when they are oriented towards completing their higher education and finding appropriate job. These are two very important developmental tasks. When they are not completed successfully, the whole process of personal development is compromised (Мурџева-Шкарик, 2010).

Overall, the results show that many patience and laborious building of social climate is necessary in order to secure people, who will, in turn, with their more positive and more optimistic attitudes, make a positive feedback, that will ensure long peaceful development. As it is accented in the latest Human Development Report 2013, in order for some country to achieve long-term transformation it has to envision and establish "consistent and balanced approach to development" (p. 4). It further state that efforts should be continuously placed on enhancing equality among different individuals and groups so the human development could be promoted as a whole. In this respect education is one of the most powerful instruments a country can have. Following this is the need for increasing possibility for meaningful participation of people in various events and processes that influence their lives. This enables

satisfaction of self-determination which is one of the basic human needs.

The trust in social relationships and the feeling of security could be enhanced by reconciliation and forgiveness. As Bar-Tall (2009) explains, reconciliation is complex process which requires profound changes – social and psychological – among all individuals and groups. In other words, he emphasize that “The essence of reconciliation involves socio-psychological processes consisting of changes of motivations, goals, beliefs, attitudes and emotions by the majority of society members (Kelman 1999; Lederach 1997; Shonholtz 1998; Wilmer 1998; according to Bar-Tall, 2009: 365). Reconciliation can be promoted into culture of peace if particular criteria are met. Those are: mutual knowledge, mutual acceptance, mutual understanding, respect for differences and focus on commonalities, development of cooperative relations, valuing peace, and mechanisms for maintaining peace. All of them have to be developed for this transformation to take place. Therefore, Bar-Tall concludes, “when society members, at least the great majority, internalize the values, beliefs, attitudes and practices of culture of peace, it is possible to characterize the society as peaceful, and its collective identity is imprinted by this characteristic” (Bar-Tall, 2009: 371).

One of the limitations of this study is the possibility that respondents exaggerated with their answers, and with level of pessimism, that is not in complete accordance with real state of affair. On the other hand, some of them maybe responded in socially desirable way, which could alter the results. We also have to bear in mind that we are analyzing students’ perceptions that sometimes can be quite different from factual situation. Furthermore, some variables couldn’t be controlled, since the respondents were not willing to share the information, for example, about their political beliefs, family conditions etc. Therefore, this study is aimed to identify the possible problematic topics in emotional climate and the culture of peace, on which we all need to work in future. With our results we pointed the indicators of culture of peace in R. of Macedonia and how these indicators are perceived by students. Now, it is a time for all social institutions, from Government, to educational system, to culture makers, journalists and others to do what is in their might, in order to build better and more secure worlds, not for some “other” people, but for all of us.

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(Footnotes)

1 All values from 1 to 7 are given in percents.