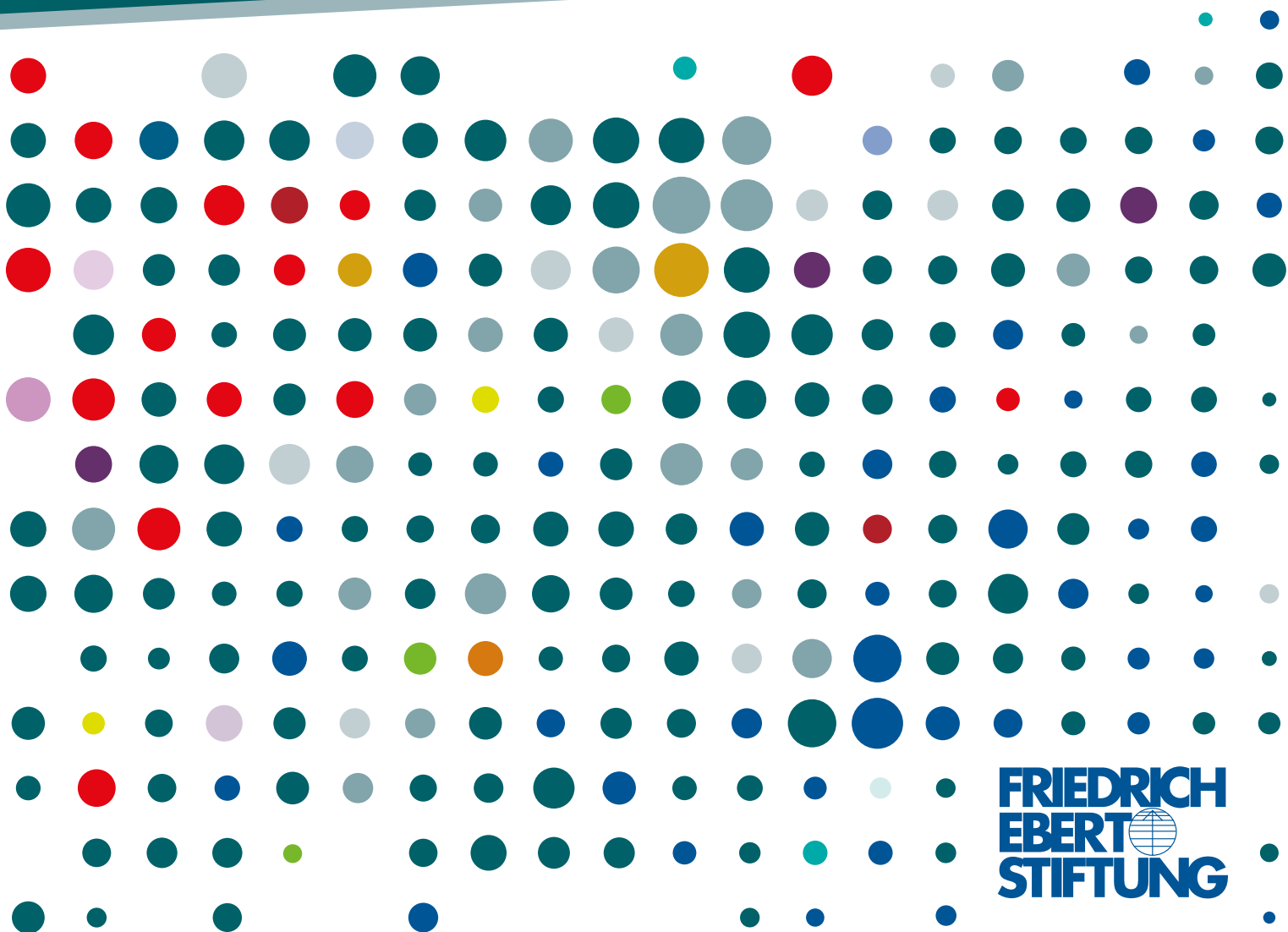




# YOUTH STUDY NORTH MACEDONIA 2018/2019



## **THE FRIEDRICH-EBERT-STIFTUNG**

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) is the oldest political foundation in Germany, with a rich tradition in social democracy dating back to 1925. The work of our political foundation revolves around the core ideas and values of social democracy – freedom, justice and solidarity. This is what binds us to the principles of social democracy and free trade unions.

With our international network of offices in more than 100 countries, we support a policy for peaceful cooperation and human rights, promote the establishment and consolidation of democratic, social and constitutional structures and work as pioneers for free trade unions and a strong civil society. We are actively involved in promoting a social, democratic and competitive Europe in the process of European integration.

### **YOUTH STUDIES SOUTHEAST EUROPE 2018/2019:**

“FES Youth Studies Southeast Europe 2018/2019” is an international youth research project carried out simultaneously in ten countries in Southeast Europe: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia. The main objective of the surveys has been to identify, describe and analyse attitudes of young people and patterns of behaviour in contemporary society.

The data was collected in early 2018 from more than 10,000 respondents aged 14–29 in the above-mentioned countries who participated in the survey. A broad range of issues were addressed, including young peoples’ experiences and aspirations in different realms of life, such as education, employment, political participation, family relationships, leisure and use of information and communications technology, but also their values, attitudes and beliefs.

Findings are presented in ten national and one regional study and its accompanying policy papers, which have been published in both English and the respective national languages.

# YOUTH STUDY NORTH MACEDONIA 2018/2019

Marija Topuzovska Latkovikj, Mirjana Borota Popovska, Eleonora Serafimovska,  
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<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b> .....	3
<b>2</b>	<b>Executive summary</b> .....	5
<b>3</b>	<b>Methodological approach</b> .....	9
<b>4</b>	<b>Lifestyle and leisure</b> .....	15
<b>5</b>	<b>Mobility</b> .....	27
<b>6</b>	<b>Individual: young people's values, attitudes, and beliefs</b> .....	39
<b>7</b>	<b>Education and employment</b> .....	53
<b>8</b>	<b>Politics and democracy</b> .....	67
	Referenced literature .....	84
	Footnotes .....	86
	Table of Figures .....	87
	Table of Tables .....	89



## 1

# INTRODUCTION

In 2013, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung conducted the first national youth study in Macedonia to measure, describe and explain the main attitudes of the young Macedonian population relating to society, politics, education, employment, family, religion and integration in the European Union. The study was conducted using the same methodology in all countries in the region, which ensured and resulted in additional comparative analyses. The results of this study generated extensive interest in Macedonia and have been used as a basis in the formulation of certain policies and projects in the past few years.

Now, five years later, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung has reinitiated this process. By simultaneously conducting youth studies in each of the ten countries of the southeast Europe region in 2018, we have collected, analysed and interpreted data on the perceptions of youth, their expectations, attitudes and approach to current events and everyday life. This new youth study provides both deep insights about young Macedonians and their desires, hopes and fears and additionally compares this new data with the results from 2013, providing a unique comprehensive analysis of what “drives” this young generation.

Since youth is looked at as a specific category, one can posit that three time periods are crucial from a lifetime perspective: individual, generational and historical time. Individual time refers to biological time. It is assumed that periods of life such as childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, positions of influence, roles and rights in a society are based on culturally shaped age. Generational time refers to the adult groups or cohorts in which people are grouped, based upon their age or the period in which they were born. Historical time refers to the societal context, events and changes (political, economic, technological) in the environment in which people live.

The young population investigated in the study is aged 14–29 and currently consists of two generational cohorts, globally known as Generation Y (born between 1981 and 2000) and Generation Z (born after 2000). These young people are witnessing dynamic changes at a global level (rapid technological development that

results in the digital transformation of all areas of life, climate change and natural disasters, political movements and political instability in connection with terrorism, populism, wars and the economic crisis. But they have also been directly or indirectly witness to turbulent developments in the political and social sphere in Macedonia, particularly in the past period: political crisis, numerous affairs and scandals, student protests and the Colourful Revolution, which resulted in a change in government in Macedonia. In addition to disrupting democratic processes in the country, such events obviously, to a varying degree, have had an impact on the lives and attitudes of young people.

According to the results of the study, Macedonia youth undoubtedly share general traits, values, desires and concerns of Generations Y and Z, similar to their peers in the region and generally speaking in the rest of the world. However, the national context has influenced them noticeably in some respects.

Unfortunately, young people in Macedonia still have a desire to migrate and consider leaving the country to pursue better standard of living to be an alternative. Their distrust in public institutions and political parties is still significant, while prejudices against minorities and those differing from the norm remain deeply rooted in attitudes – worrying results indicating a range of challenges that need to be addressed by decision- and policy-makers as well as youth to reverse these trends.

The study outlines the challenges and measures that urgently need to be taken to improve the situation of young people in Macedonian society. They are the future leaders, politicians, educators, innovators and employers of the country and will help shape its future as well as impact the EU as future citizens there. The future is in their hands and this society will rely on their ability and motivation to improve, update, and strengthen democracy and the economy in the country.

Eva Ellereit, Resident Representative, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Skopje  
Nita Starova, Project Coordinator, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Skopje



# 2

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The study analyses and describes phenomena, topics, and trends relating to youth in Macedonia while providing recommendations to improve conditions there. This research is part of a larger project carried out in southeast European countries with the support of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. The study is based on a combined approach using quantitative and qualitative research methods to analyse primary and secondary data. In the quantitative research, stratified quota sampling was used. Field research was performed by means of CAPI (Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing) in the period from 12 February to 12 March 2018.

In the interviews, on the other hand, the sample consisted of 10 respondents, young people from Macedonia who are heterogeneous in terms of demographic traits (such as gender, age, ethnicity, level of education and place of residence).

The quantitative data obtained from the survey research were analysed at univariate, bivariate, and multivariate levels by means of appropriate statistical procedures in SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), and they are textually interpreted and visually presented through tables and figures.

The qualitative data obtained from the interviews conducted have been anonymised, narratively analysed and presented in the form of anecdotes and quotes.

The report is split up into five parts.

## LIFESTYLE AND LEISURE

Young people like to listen to music, spend time with their family and go out with their friends, and rarely meditate/practice yoga, volunteer for social projects or go abroad. Time spent on the Internet has increased by 2 hours compared to 2013 (they spend approximately 3 hours per day watching TV and 6 hours on the Internet). Young people usually use the Internet for social interac-

tion and communication, education, information and entertainment/amusement.

Almost one-third of young people regularly smoke cigarettes, and 24% drink alcohol on the weekends. Most of them (89% of youth) responded that they do not use soft drugs such as marijuana. The Macedonian population of young people as a whole exhibit low values on the deviance scale;

Females have their first sexual experience at the age of 18, males at 17. The life trajectory of young people, both males and females, depends on the level of education, while the age when key life events occur increases with level of education, and the span of time accounted for by all crucial events on the trajectory decreases with the increasing level of education.

## MOBILITY

Young people rarely travel out of the country, and even 91% of the youth have not resided in a foreign country for more than 6 months, which means that their expectations in terms of living abroad are not based on personal experience.

Regarding their desire to migrate, youth can be divided into three groups: one-third of young people have a strong desire to leave their motherland, one-third expressed a medium-level desire to migrate, and one-third do not wish to migrate at all. An equal percentage of 33.80% compared to the 2013 Study (33%) responded that they plan to stay in the desired country forever. The following group of young people shows the greatest tendency to migrate: predominantly Macedonians aged between 14 and 19 who have completed primary and secondary education and mainly live in urban areas.

For almost half of young people, the main reason to migrate is to improve their standard of living. The most desired destination

for young people is Germany. Young people, in addition to failing to take any action to move (low levels of proactiveness), display a low level of knowledge/information regarding opportunities for immigrants in the preferred country of destination.

The factor that to a great extent keeps youth in the country is undoubtedly their family.

## INDIVIDUAL, SOCIAL RELATIONS, MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

The most important values for the youth are: to be faithful/loyal to one's partner/friends/employers; to be independent; to have a successful career and to assume responsibility. The least important values in life for youth are: to be politically active and to participate in civic activities/initiatives. Respondents are far more optimistic about their future than they are about the future of Macedonian society. Macedonian youth have fears regarding virtually everything, and particularly about pollution, climate change and poverty. Young people are more religious today compared to 5 years ago. Most of them only attend religious services on important religious holidays.

Just like 5 years ago, young people mostly trust their immediate and extended family members and friends, while political leaders are held to be least deserving of their trust. Macedonians and Albanians trust each other less in 2018 compared to 2013. Young people's attitude is that sexual orientation and the language they speak is rarely a reason for discrimination, while political affiliation and ethnical background are the most common reasons for discrimination.

A household profile in Macedonia looks like this: an average family is made up of 4 members among Macedonians and 5 among Albanians: two parents and their children. The family lives in their parents' home mainly because it is the most practical and simplest solution. Family members get along well with each other. Both parents are involved in young people's decisions. Young people see themselves as married with two children, they are raised to respect their parents, and they would like to bring up their children in the same manner.

## EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Young people have high aspirations (more than 80% want to attain higher education), they do not study hard (the percentage of those who study more than 3 hours a day has declined from 44% in 2013 to 22.55% in 2018), they think that grades are "bought", and one-third of respondents perceive a typical school day as hard and stressful.

Almost half of respondents are dissatisfied with the quality of the educational process in Macedonia. The reasons for dissatisfaction may be seen to lie in the perception of the application and the benefits of the acquired knowledge. Regression analysis name-

ly indicates that young people's subjective perception of satisfaction with quality of the education in the country will increase if curricula are adjusted to align with the work environment and if young people have an easier path to finding a job after completing their education.

Youth would mostly like to work in the public sector (45%), and "a stable job without fear of being fired" is ranked first in importance when it comes to job options.

Luck is among the three factors stated to be important in finding a job (the first is "ties and friends", second is "ties with powerful persons").

The finding that less than one-third of full-time high school and university students attended any type of practical training is worrying, while only 20% of the young people volunteered in the past 12 months.

## POLITICS AND DEMOCRACY

Interest in politics among youth and discussions relating to political topics have decreased. It is only half the level found in the 2013 study. This reduced interest is among other things due to the political crisis that gripped Macedonia in the period 2015–2017, triggering widespread dissatisfaction among the population, long-term international problems associated with the "name issue", and failure to start negotiations for ascension to the EU.

61% of young people believe that politicians do not care about their opinions, and 73% think that they should have more opportunities to raise their voice in politics. More than 80% of youth vote in elections. Approximately 40% have a positive attitude toward political participation when it comes to signing petitions, participating in protests and activities of voluntary or civil society organisations.

Confidence in institutions is low. Young people have the least confidence in national political institutions and political parties.

Youth exhibit leftist political orientations, particularly when it comes to the state assuming a greater role in the economy. On the other hand, they position themselves towards the right when it comes to the liberalism-conservatism dimension.

71.3% of youth are of the opinion that "we should have a leader who rules Macedonia with a strong hand for the public good" as well as that "a strong party representing the common folk in general is what we need in Macedonia right now" (68.5%), which are typical indicators of authoritarianism and, as of late, tendency toward populism.

Young people think that their society is overburdened with numerous problems and express moderate optimism in terms of expectations relating to the development of the economic situation in the next 10 years.

Accession to the European Union is supported by 81% of youth.







# 3

# METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

## RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

The study is based on a combined approach using quantitative and qualitative research methods to analyse both primary and secondary data. The following data collection research techniques were applied:

- Literature review;
- Face-to-face survey of a representative, national sample with a standardised core questionnaire identical for all SEE countries included in the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung project;
- Semi-structured interviews.

The survey questionnaire included the following thematic sections:

- Leisure and lifestyle;
- Values, religion and trust;
- Family and friends;
- Mobility;
- Education;
- Employment;
- Politics;
- Demographic data;
- Appendix: Confidential questions;
- Module specific for the country (with obligatory items).

The interview consisted of 10 open questions (with sub-questions) for all questionnaire topics, plus a part relating to demographic data.

## RESEARCH SAMPLE DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

Stratified quota sampling was used for the survey research design.

For this purpose, official data on estimates<sup>1</sup> of the population published on the website of the State Statistical Office of Macedonia were used.

The young Macedonian population aged 14–29 (divided into three age categories by the State Statistical Office) was first segmented into mutually exclusive sub-groups according to the eight statistical regions in the country and municipalities. Then cases within each segment/stratum were calculated and selected based on a specified proportion or quota by gender, ethnicity and place of residence (urban/rural).

The sample size was calculated using a formula (with a 3% marginal error and 95% level of confidence). The target population size (total number of young people aged 14–29 in Macedonia) is 454,979, so the planned research sample size was  $N=1065+200$  in line with the requirements of the project documentation.

For the interview, on the other hand, the sample included 10 respondents, young people from Macedonia who were heterogeneous in terms of demographic traits (such as gender, age, ethnicity, level of education and place of residence).

In the field survey research, a total of  $N=1038$  respondents completed fully filled-in questionnaires. The research was performed by means of CAPI (Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing) in the period from 12 February to 12 March 2018. For this purpose, a bilingual version of the questionnaire was devised (in Macedonian and Albanian) in an offline Android application. A total number of 20 interviewers conducted face-to-face surveys using 20 units of Lenovo Tab 3 7 tablets throughout the territory

of Macedonia. The average duration of the interview was 45 minutes.

The in-depth semi-structured interviews (N=10) were successfully conducted, and a consolidated transcript was made.

## POST-SURVEY RELIABILITY TEST

A post-survey reliability test was conducted by means of CATI (Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing) of 69 subjects (6.6% of the sample). The survey questionnaire used for this purpose consisted of 14 questions<sup>2</sup> drawn from the core questionnaire intentionally selected to cover various type of variables (nominal, ordinal and scale). Kappa analysis was conducted in SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to confirm reliability.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Data were analysed at quantitative and qualitative levels applying the following research methods:

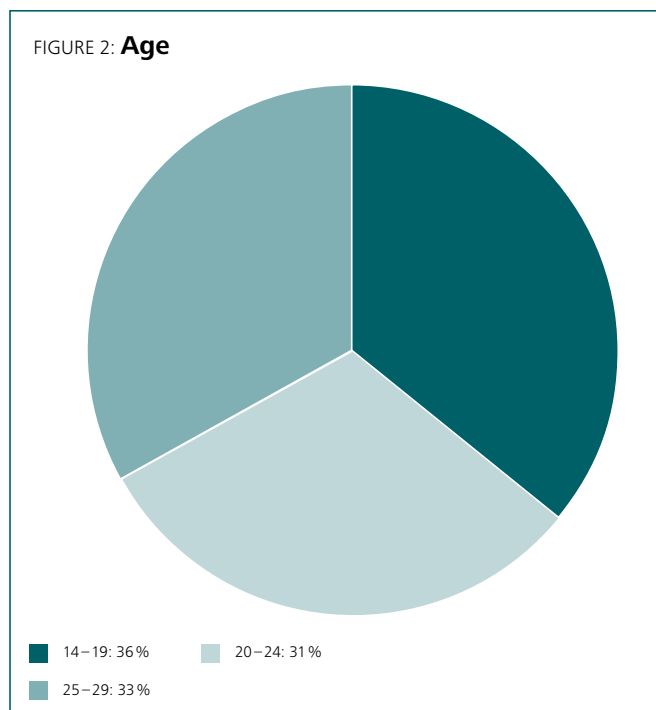
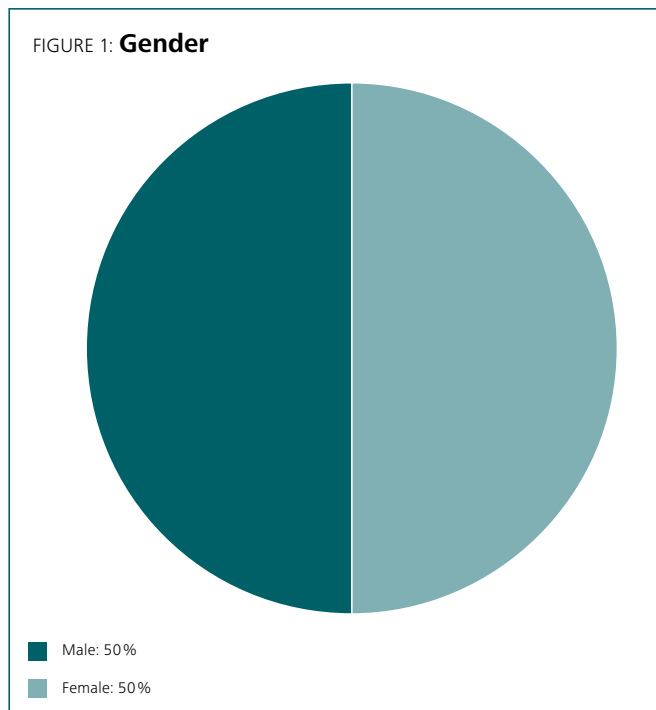
- Exploratory method;
- Descriptive method;
- Comparative method;
- Explanatory method.

Quantitative data obtained from the survey research were analysed at univariate, bivariate and multivariate levels by applying appropriate statistical procedures in SPSS, and they were textually interpreted and visually presented through tables and figures.

Qualitative data obtained from the interviews conducted were anonymised, narratively analysed, and presented in the form of anecdotes and quotes.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

The research sample (N=1038) broken down according to demographic traits included 50% male and 50% female respondents. The respondents were split up by age groups into the following groups: 14–19 (36%), 20–24 (33%) and 20–24 (31%).



With regard to place of residence, a cumulative 66% of respondents stated that they live in an urban area, and 34% in a rural area.

FIGURE 3: **How would you describe your place of residence?**

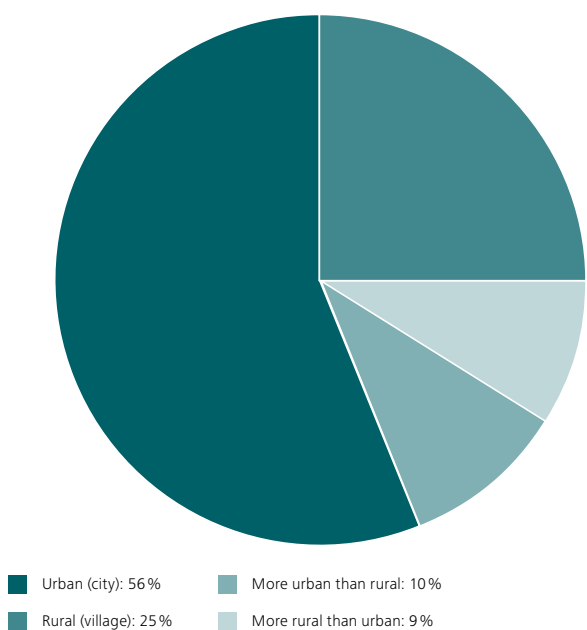
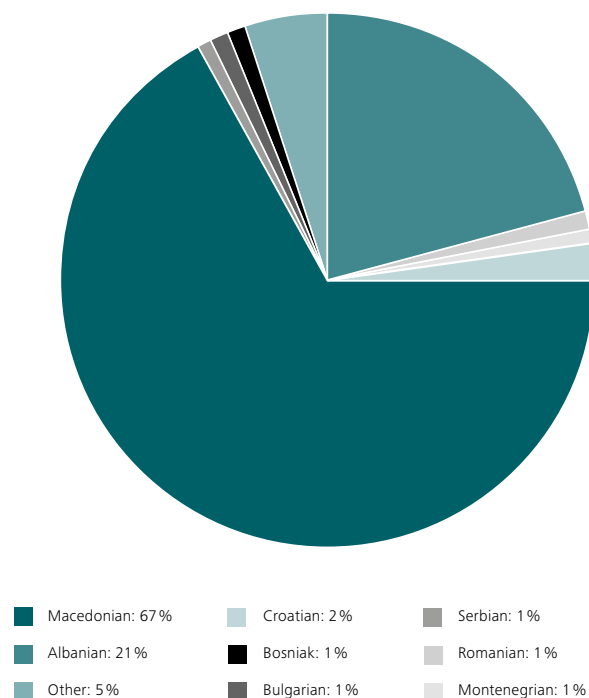


FIGURE 4: **Nationality**



In terms of nationality, 67% of respondents were Macedonians, 21% Albanians, and the remainder were Roma, Serbs, Bosnians, Vlachs, Turks, Bulgarian, Croats, Montenegrins, and others. Almost all, or to be precise 98.7%, have a Macedonian passport. Most young people (48.20%) responded that they can afford some expensive items, but not a car or an apartment; 25.70% stated that they have enough money for food, clothes, and shoes, but not for a fridge, TV set or similar items.; 7.70% only have enough money to pay their utility bills and food; 3% do not have

enough money to pay their utility bills, and only 15.40% can afford everything they need for a better standard of living.

A total 88.8% of young people have their own room, while their parent’s flat/house usually has two rooms. There are around 10 to 20 books in the home they grew up in. Together with their parents, young people usually possess one flat/house, 3 or more mobile phones, one computer or laptop, one Internet connection in the home, one bicycle, one dishwasher, one washing machine and one car.

FIGURE 5: **Financial situation of the household (in percent)**

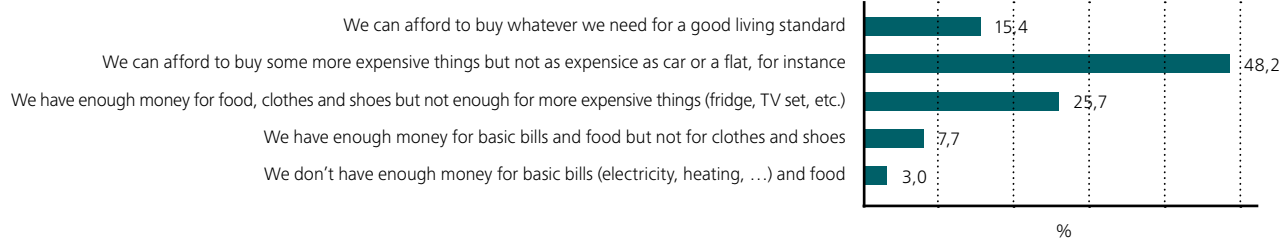


TABLE 1. **Material Property**

	0	1	2	3 or more
House or flat	1.5 %	72.3 %	19.8 %	6.5 %
Mobile phone	.1 %	13.9 %	17.5 %	68.5 %
Computer or laptop	2.5 %	50.6 %	32.0 %	14.9 %
Internet connection	1.0 %	73.0 %	14.1 %	11.9 %
Bicycle	25.1 %	43.4 %	21.9 %	9.7 %
Motorbike	68.4 %	21.9 %	6.9 %	2.8 %
Air-conditioner	44.4 %	39.1 %	11.8 %	4.8 %
Dishwasher	39.9 %	48.5 %	7.6 %	4.0 %
Washing machine	1.6 %	80.7 %	13.7 %	3.9 %
Car	17.3 %	53.8 %	18.9 %	10.0 %







## 4

# LIFESTYLE AND LEISURE

Young people's lifestyle reflects the way they (individually or collectively as a group) prefer to spend their free time and money, or more precisely, it refers to their habits, activities, values, interests and behavioural models.

## LEISURE TIME

Analysis of the survey data by the State Statistical Office (2015: 28) expressed through number of hours and minutes shows that youth aged between 15 and 24 on average spend their free time as follows: sleeping – 8.59, leisure activities – 5.35, household chores – 0.53, employment – 0.49, eating and drinking – 2.18, other personal care – 1.05, travelling – 1.13, schooling – 2.46, voluntary work and assistance – 0.07.

According to the survey findings, young people usually listen to music, spend time with their family, and go out with their friends, and rarely meditate/practice yoga, volunteer for social projects or reside abroad. Young people in the previous Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Youth Study (Topuzovska Latkovikj, Borota Popovska, Serafimovska & Cekikj, 2013) responded likewise that in their free time they mostly listen to music or go out with friends, but the option of "spending time with family" was not included in the previous youth study.

Just like in the previous youth studies in the country, this youth study confirmed that sports are not regularly practiced by youth in Macedonia, regardless of whether these be of a recreational, amateur, or professional nature. According to the Youth Trend Study in RM (Topuzovska Latkovikj, 2014), half of youth (50%) aged between 15 and 29 do not engage in sports or any other physical activity. Only 1% of young people engage in sports professionally, while 7% do so at the amateur level or are members of clubs, go to regular training sessions and/or participate in

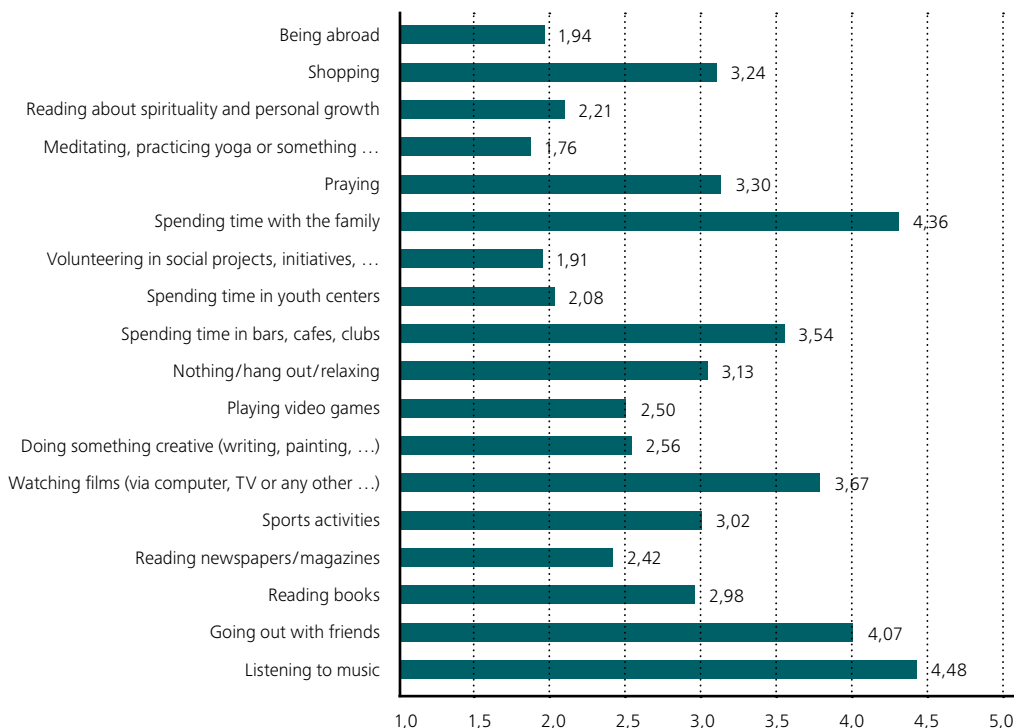
competitions, and 42% engage in recreational sports or physical activity as a hobby.

The check with a non-parametric test to compare the data by gender, with a statistical significance of  $p < 0.05$ , showed that young males more often than young females go out with friends, engage in sporting activities, play video games, spend time in bars, cafes and clubs, volunteer on social projects/activities/initiatives and spend time at youth centres, while young females listen to music, read books, spend time with their families, pray, and go shopping more often than males.

Such results in a way explain the existence of certain gender stereotypes of "typically male and female activities" and vice versa, but at the same time highlight two positive characteristics (volunteering and visiting youth centres) as being more prevalent among males, which together denote active citizenship.

The bivariate analysis confirmed that there is a positive correlation between the number of books in homes where young people were raised and the intensity of activities such as reading books ( $r = .307$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and creative activity ( $r = .355$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating that these positive pastimes among young people are still fostered by their surrounding environment, i.e. in the early developmental stages of their personality.

FIGURE 6: Youth activities during leisure time – mean values on a scale between 1 (never) to 5 (very often)



**How do you usually spend your free time and money and what do you usually do in everyday life?**

“In my free time I do sports, watch series, hang out with friends, and I spend money on expensive mobile phones, clothes and food as well as for household items.” (Mina, 25)

“I usually spend money on electronics and clothes.” (Filip, 27)

“I spend the money I have earned on journeys, books, clothes, and hanging out with friends and my boyfriend.” (Ana, 23)

“I spend money visiting places in Macedonia, buying clothes, food, and drinks.” (Elena, 24)

“I spend my free time doing sports and relaxing (reading books, watching TV).” (Kate, 24)

“I spend money on coffee and cigarettes.” (Petar, 21)

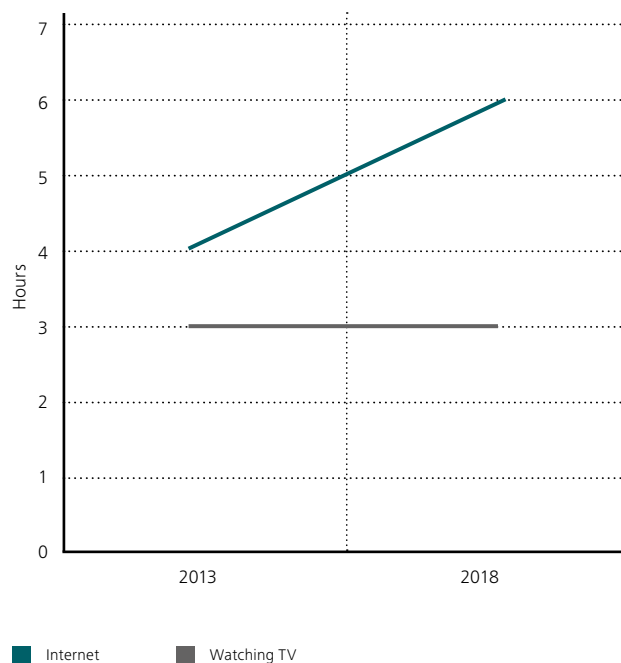
“In my free time, I hang out with friends or my girlfriend, drinking coffee, or doing outdoor activities.” (Teon, 18)

**USE OF THE INTERNET**

A total of 95% of youth have regular access to the Internet, 76.9% permanently, and 18.1% every day or almost every day. This percentage is comparable to five years ago.

Young people on average spend approximately 3 hours per day watching TV and 6 hours on the Internet. It is interesting to note that compared to the 2013 Youth Study, the time spent on the Internet has increased by 2 whole hours, while there has been no change with regard to time spent watching TV.

FIGURE 7: Time series of time spent on watching TV or internet



In terms of the number of friends in the social network they mostly use, different responses were registered, with 42% having more than 501 friends, 23% having between 201 and 500, 15% between 51 and 200, and 15% up to 50 friends. In turn, the answer to the next question, “how many of their friends/contacts on the social network they could consider to be in their

close circle of friends in their everyday life”, indicates that these numbers have plummeted, with answers generally hovering around number 5 and the first five-decade numbers.

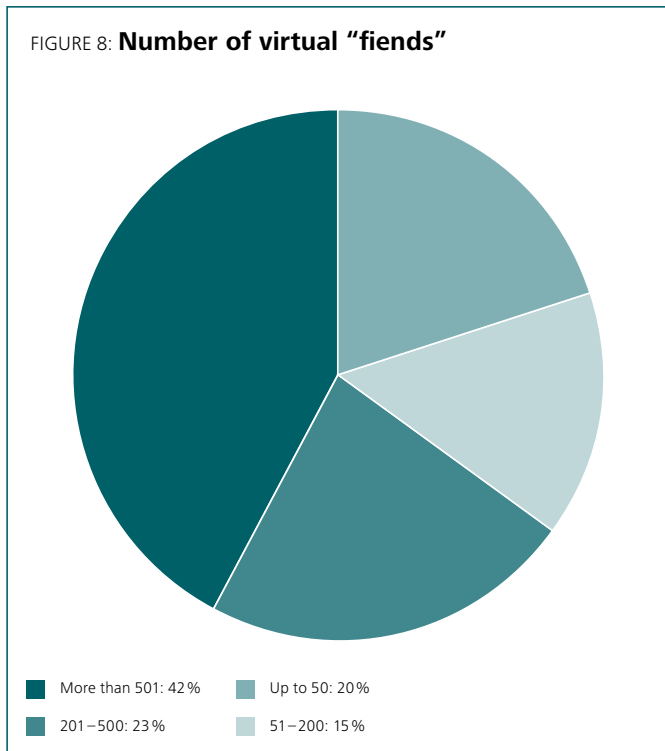
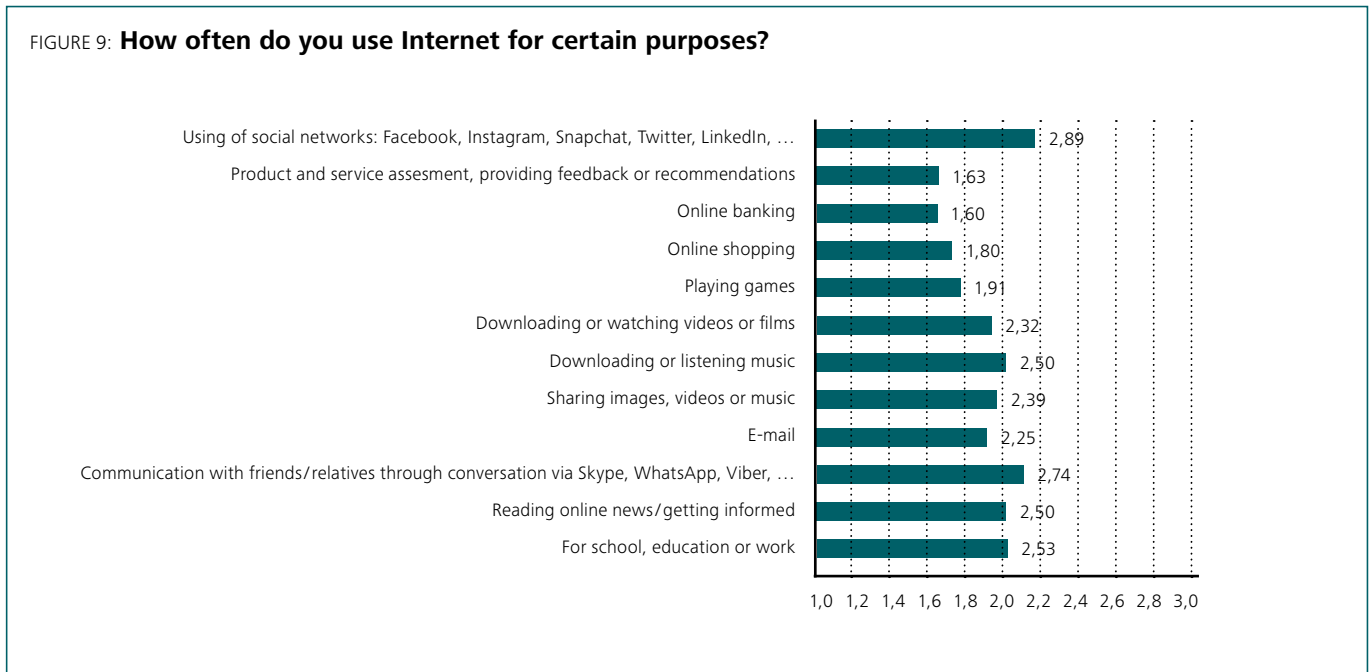


TABLE 2: **Number of friends in real life**

Number of friends in real life	%
5	15.5
10	21.9
15	5.9
20	16.1
30	10.3
40	3.8
50	5.4

Furthermore, young people were asked how often they use the Internet for certain purposes (on a scale from 1 (never) to 3 (often), and the data from the mean value analysis show that youth usually use the Internet for social networks and communication with relatives and friends – which altogether denotes social activities, then for school/education and/or work, and finally and equally for reading online news/getting informed and downloading, and listening to music. Young people use the Internet the least for online banking and valuation of products and/or services.



The mean value of  $m=2.50$  was obtained for the following question: How much do you trust social networks with regard to responsible use of your personal data? (on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all, and 5 is completely). This confirms once again that young people in Macedonia without doubt belong to generations Y and Z. Although they do not trust social networks, they do not mind being part of them, accept-

ing partially known or completely unknown persons as “friends”, and sharing personal data online.

The responses obtained from this set of questions show that young people, members of the two generations most exposed to technological change in history, at the same time live in two worlds: one real and one virtual. Young people mainly perceive the benefits from the Internet as an opportunity for social

interaction and communication, education, obtaining information, and entertainment/amusement.

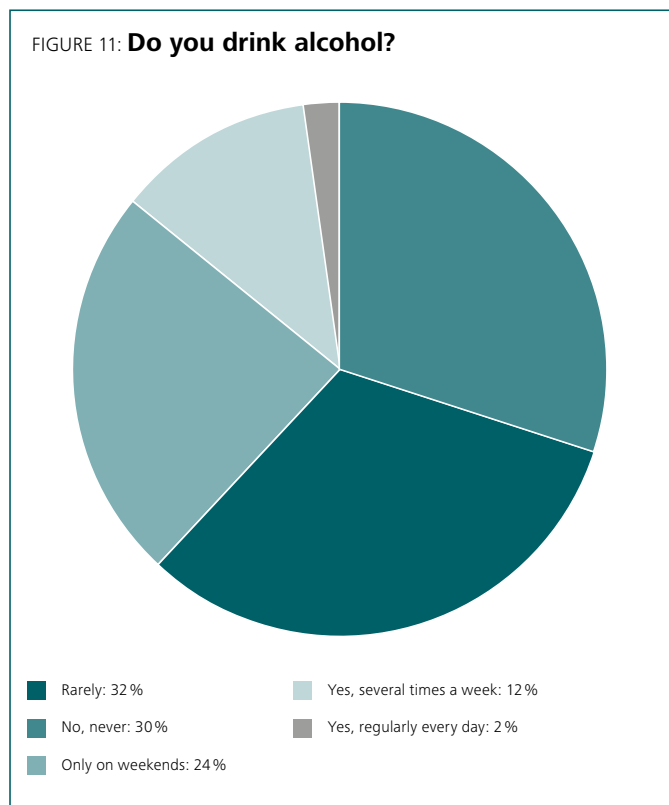
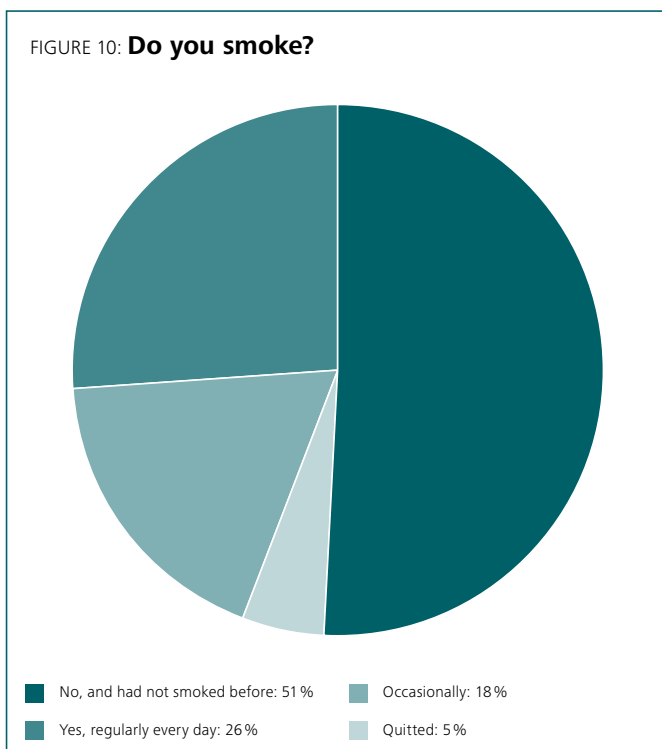
In the context of certain assumptions that stress positive aspects, the Internet also has a negative impact on youth and their success at school/faculty, with the test of the correlation between the time spent on the Internet and school/academic success showing a positive correlation ( $r=107$ ,  $p=0.05$ ), or proportional relationship between the number of hours and marks, meaning that such hypothesis could be rejected.

## USE OF SUBSTANCES HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH

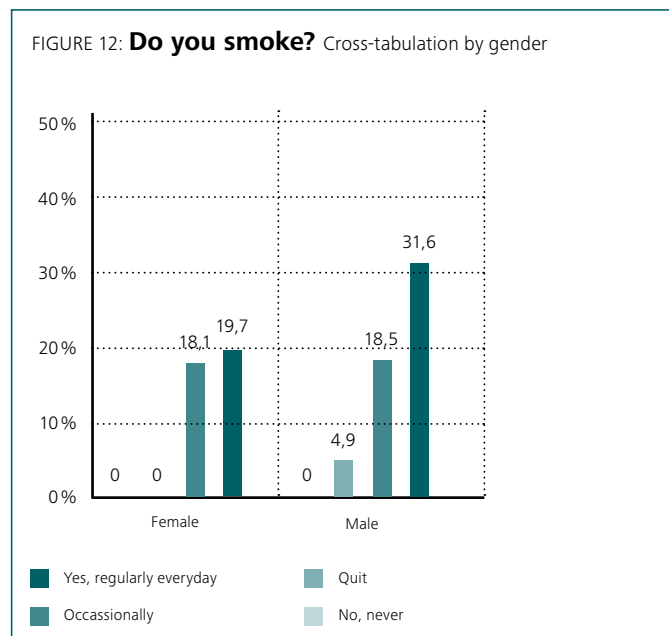
Habits and risky behaviour hazardous to health and life such as smoking cigarettes, consumption of alcohol and psychotropic substances, as well as early involvement in unprotected sexual intercourse are common among young people in Macedonia.

According to the Youth Study findings, 26% of youth smoke cigarettes regularly, 18% occasionally, and 56% do not smoke. These percentages are completely identical to those obtained in the 2013 Youth Study. If the findings of the Youth Trend Study (Markovic, 2014) that 25.8% of the youth aged 15–29 are smokers are taken into consideration, this data for the same target population has been confirmed in three instances.

With regard to alcohol consumption, a slight increase has been recorded among the percentage of those who state that they regularly consume alcohol: 2% (0.6% in 2013), several times weekly: 12% (8% in 2013), and only on weekends: 24% (19% in 2013). A cumulative figure of 62% (73% in 2013) rarely or never drink alcohol.

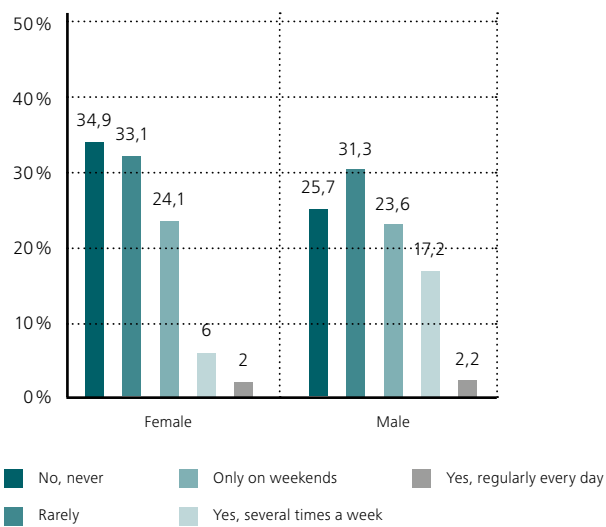


Bivariate analysis with cross-tabulation of data by gender and checking with Chi-square ( $\chi^2=20.403$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) indicates that young males smoke much more than young females.



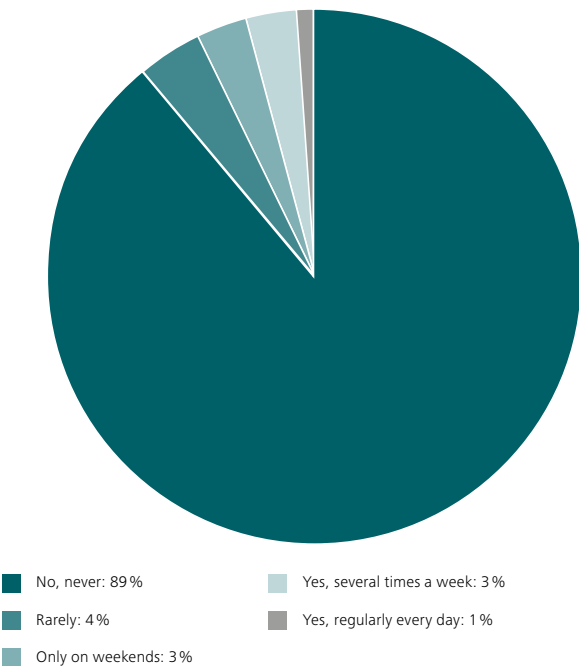
Furthermore, bivariate analysis with cross-tabulation of data by gender and checking the Chi-square ( $\chi^2=34.330$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) indicates that young males consume alcohol much more than young females.

FIGURE 13: **Do you drink alcohol?** Cross-tabulation by gender



Most (89%) young people responded that they do not use soft drugs such as marijuana, while 11% do use them, 3.3% of whom do so several times per week, and 2.6% on weekends.

FIGURE 14: **Do you use soft drugs such as marijuana?**



A statistically significant association has been found in this case as well, with a higher percentage among the male population  $\chi^2=13.906, p<0.01$ .

Since statistically significant differences have been found on these questions for almost all social traits, a cluster analysis was performed for the purpose of creating a profile of young people in terms of the susceptibility to consumption of hazardous substances such as alcohol and soft drugs/marijuana which at the same time pose a danger to general psychosocial health.

The approach was based on Peer Cluster Theory (Oetting & Beauvais, 1987), according to which the members of these groups are emotionally connected, just like in a family. Within these groups, activities mostly involve free time, entertainment and similar. In some cases, however, cohorts develop norms and values that differ from those in families and schools.

The results of the analysis confirm such assumptions, especially in a group with ages between 14 and 19, which coincides with the period of adolescence and secondary education, when young people are more susceptible to negative influences or prone to trying new things. It is at this age, however, that perceptions develop of differences in behavioural models with their cultural values given that Macedonian society is composed of groups of different ethnic and religious affiliations.

The following demographic variables applying to young people were used in the cluster analysis<sup>3</sup>: gender, nationality/ethnicity, level of education, place of residence, and age, with the following questions being posed: Do you drink alcohol and consume soft drugs such as marijuana?

The following youth profile (Cluster No 3) exhibits the biggest tendency towards consumption of alcohol and soft drug such as marijuana: mainly male (but female as well), mainly Macedonians, (and a low percentage of others), having completed primary and secondary education, and generally from urban areas (but with a very low percentage from rural areas) aged between 14 and 19.

FIGURE 15: **Cluster analysis of alcohol consumption**

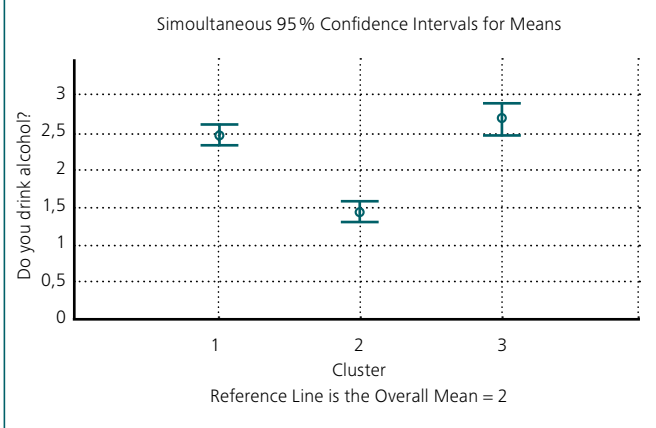
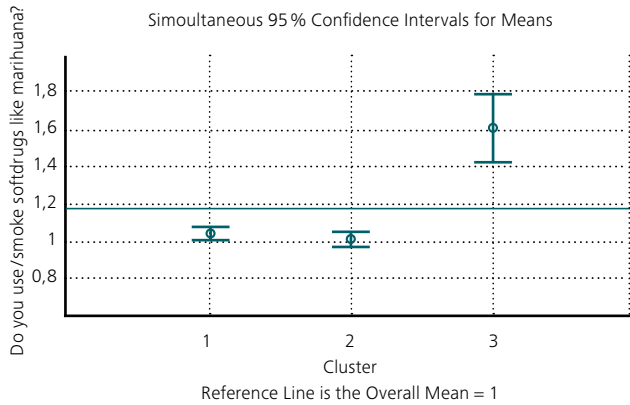


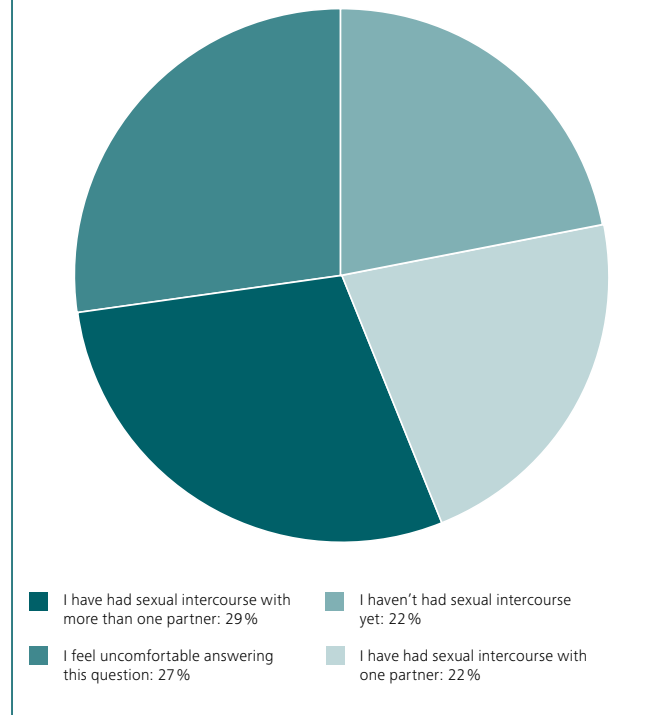
FIGURE 16: Cluster analysis of taking soft drugs such as marijuana



## SEXUAL ACTIVITY AND PROTECTION

In terms of sexual activity, it is interesting that a sizeable portion (27%) of young people feel uncomfortable answering this question, and 15% did not provide any response, indicating that sex is a taboo topic among youth.

FIGURE 17: Which of the following statements best describes your sexual experience?



Almost one-fourth responded that they have not had sexual intercourse yet, while an equal percentage (22%) have had sexual intercourse with one partner, and 29% have had sexual intercourse with more than one partner.

The results of the Youth Trends Study (Markovik, 2014) indicate that sexual intercourse usually takes place for the first time at the age of adulthood (18 years), and the method of birth control used most often is condoms.

TABLE 3. Which of the following statements best describes your sexual experience? Cross-tabulation by age groups

Which of the following statements best describes your sexual experience? Cross-tabulation by age groups				
Age groups	I haven't had sexual intercourse yet	I have had sexual intercourse with one partner	I have had sexual intercourse with more than one partner	I feel uncomfortable responding to this question
14-19	46.6%	15.9%	16.2%	21.2%
20-24	15.3%	20.1%	32.5%	32.1%
25-29	2.1%	31.7%	39.0%	27.2%

After cross-tabulation by age groups, it is apparent that the age group of 25-to-29 is most active sexually, and the least active is the 14-to-19 age group. There is a statistically significant correlation

( $\chi^2=1,963$ ,  $p=0.01$ ) indicating differences among the three groups at the level of the entire target population.

TABLE 4: Which of the following statements best describes your sexual experience? Cross-tabulation by age groups

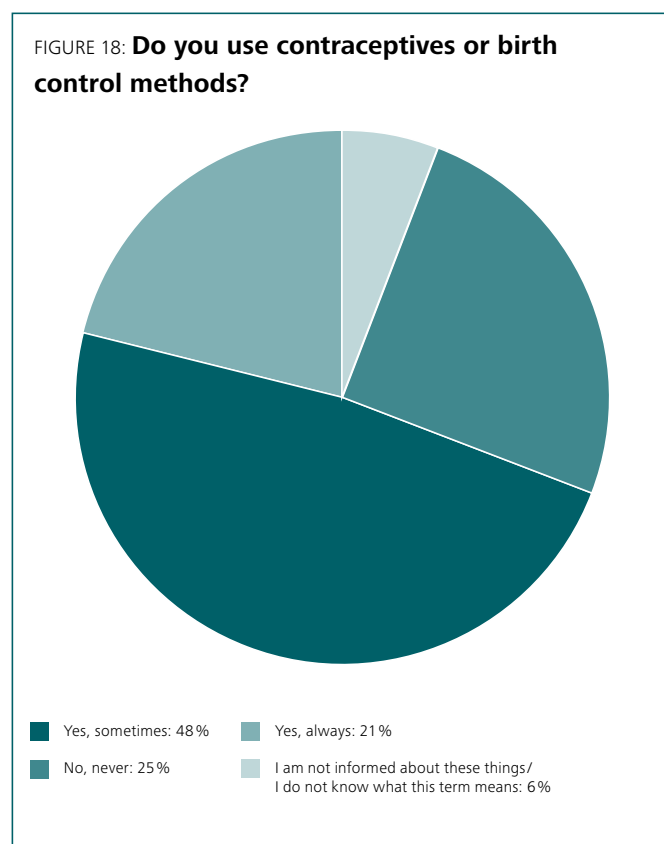
Which of the following statements best describes your sexual experience? Cross-tabulation by gender				
Gender	I haven't had sexual intercourse yet	I have had sexual intercourse with one partner	I have had sexual intercourse with more than one partner	I feel uncomfortable responding to this question
Female	30.2%	26.6%	15.0%	28.2%
Male	14.5%	18.1%	42.4%	24.9%

Cross-tabulation by gender indicates that young males are more sexually active and change sexual partners more often than young females, with the correlation being statistically significant ( $\chi^2=89,823$ ,  $p=0.01$ ).

In terms of sex as a taboo, however, the percentage is similar in all age groups and among both genders.

The calculation of the median values shows that the young females have their first sexual experience at the age of 18 (min=15, max=27), and young males at the age of 17 (min=14, max=24).

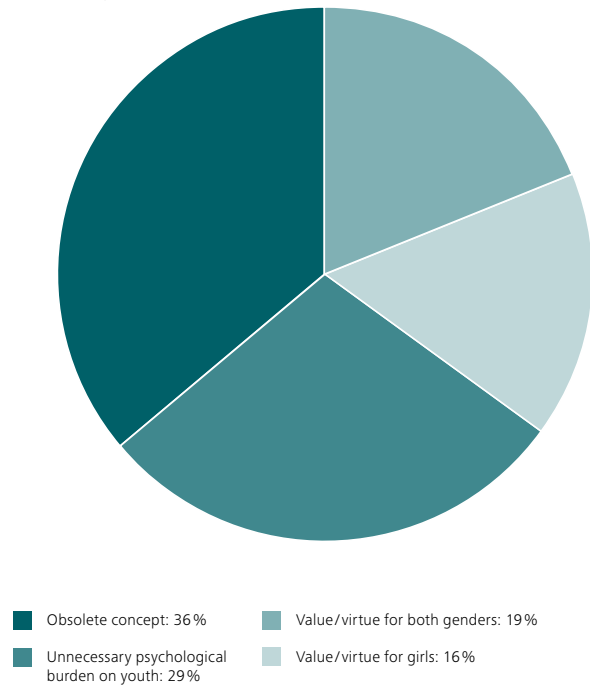
FIGURE 18: Do you use contraceptives or birth control methods?



Almost half of young people (48%) sometimes use protection when having sexual intercourse, 21% always use protection, while one-fourth never use protection (25%) and 6% do not know what this term means/they are not informed.

With regard to sexual abstinence before marriage, young people in Macedonia have divided opinions: 36% are of view that it is an obsolete concept, and 29% believe that it is an unnecessary psychological burden to youth, while for 19% it is a value/virtue for both genders, and 16% think that it is value/virtue for young females.

FIGURE 19: Attitude about sexual abstinence before marriage



## JUVENILE DEVIANCE

For items that are a short version of the Normative Deviance Scale (NDS) with a theoretical range from 7 to 35, a total score of 905 was calculated for respondents who provided a valid response to the question, where the mean value is  $m=12$  (min.=7, max.=29, standard deviation=4.03). Therefore, it could be said that, as a whole, the young Macedonian population displays low values on the Normative Deviance Scale (stealing, inappropriate behaviour at school, abuse of hard drugs, vandalism, assaulting someone). The reliability test indicates a higher internal consistency ( $\alpha=.725$ ) on such a scale.

Other research suggests that peer groups are the main source of deviant and delinquent behaviour among youth, although this might not always be the case. According to the analysis<sup>4</sup>, there are no differences accounted for by age related with regard to deviance on the part of the young Macedonian population, so the hypothesis of peer pressure must be rejected.

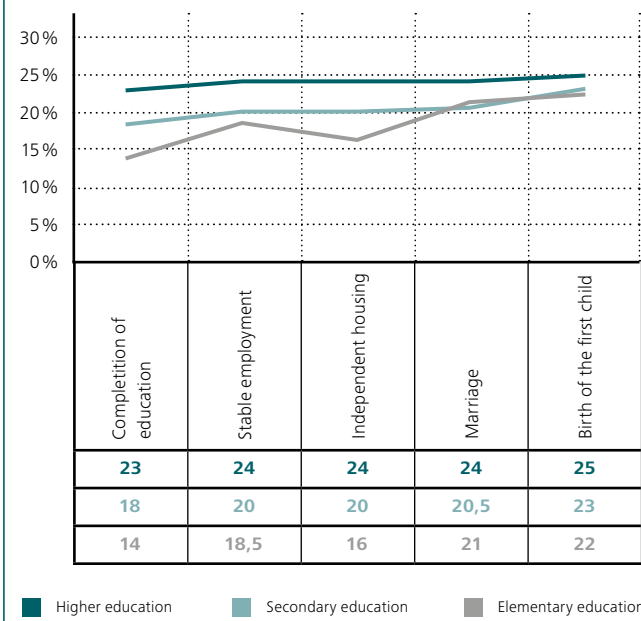
## LIFE COURSE TRAJECTORY AND TRANSITION FROM ADOLESCENCE TO ADULTHOOD

Three periods are key from the perspective of life course: individual time, generational time, and historical time (Price, McKenry, and Murphy, 2000). Individual time refers to chronological age. It is assumed that periods of life such as childhood, adolescence, old age, positions of influence, roles and rights in society are based on culturally shared age definitions (Hagestad and Neugarten, 1985). Generational time refers to the age groups or cohorts in which people are grouped, depending on their age or the period in which they were born. At the same time, historical time refers to the societal context and events and changes (political, economic, technological, etc.) in which people live.

According to Elder (1985), time can be envisioned as a sequence of transitions. A transition is a change or key life event within a life trajectory, whereas a trajectory is a sequence of linked states within a conceptually defined range of behaviour or experience within the course of life. Transitions are often accompanied by certain rituals and ceremonies such as graduation, wedding ceremony and such, and result in a change in status, social identity and role. Trajectories are long-term models of stability and change and can include multiple transitions. The progress of trajectories is age-graded so that some transitions can be viewed as more age-appropriate, while others violate normative social time-tables by occurring too early or too late (Hagestad and Neugarten, 1985). Five key occurrences on the life trajectory within the transition from adolescence to adulthood are considered to be: completion of education, first stable employment, leaving the family home/independent housing, marriage, and birth of the first child. Although these key occurrences have a long-term effect on the future and the life course of an individual, it must be noted that some trajectories may revert to a prior condition such as being unemployed again and returning to the parents' home, or may not imply full independence such as in the case of young people obtaining financial housing assistance and support from their parents. It is usually held that the period of adolescence is between 13 and 18 years of age, and early adulthood from 19–29.



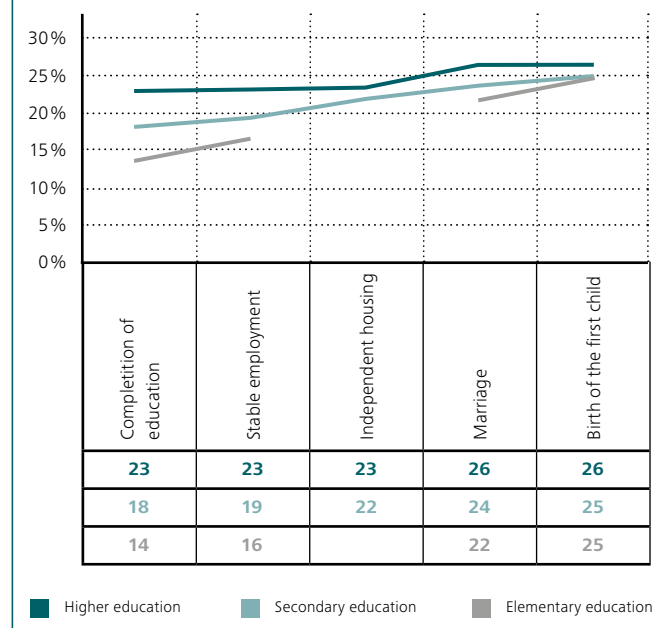
FIGURE 20: Trajectory within the transition of key life events for females



The data analysis employing the median value indicates that young females, depending on their level of education, have different life-course trajectories, key life events occur at higher age due to a higher level of education, and the span of time elapsing for all key events along the trajectory decreases with increasing level of education (primary – 8 years, secondary – 5 years, higher – 2 years). Thus the life-course trajectory with respondents who have completed primary education begins earlier in terms of time than for others, i.e. with completion of primary education at the age of 14 and first employment occurring at the age of 18.5, leaving the parents’ home at the age of 16 – prior to employment and marriage at the age of 21 (which is a different order for the life-course trajectory than the ordinary, established one), with the first child being born one year after marriage – at the age of 22. A different model exists for young females after the completion of their secondary education at the age of 18. Stable employment occurs 2 years after completion of education – at the age of 20, and in the same period – moving out of the parents’ home occurs at the age of 20, and marriage the same year, or six months later – at the age of 20.5, while the first child is born 2 years after the marriage – at the age of 23. In this group, the age of 20 is the key age in three life events related to independence (employment, leaving home and marriage). There is a third model for a life-course trajectory with the third category of female respondents who have completed higher education, similar to the previous one (females with only secondary education) – but with a difference of 4 years, where prolonged independence can be inferred, evidently due to prolonged education (which usually takes 4 years). This group complete their education at 23, and the age of 24 is key for three life events related to independence (employment, leaving home and marriage), with the first child being born at the age of 25.

However, to correctly interpret this type of analysis it must be assumed that the largest portion of these life events had not occurred for most of the respondents, i.e. analysed cases are few in number, while frequency and conclusions cannot be generalised. To be specific: completed education – 67.9% of the cases; stable employment – 22.8%, independent housing – 13.1%; marriage – 13.2%; first child – 9.8%.

FIGURE 21: Trajectory within the transition of key life events for males



In data analysis employing the median value with male respondents, three different models of trajectories were recorded, with key life events occurring at a greater age due to higher level of education, and the span of time spent on all crucial events on the trajectory decreasing by 4 years with increasing level of education (primary – 11 years, secondary – 7 years, higher – 3 years). With those persons who have completed primary education, which ends at the age of 14, stable employment occurs at the age of 16, but there is an interruption along the trajectory relating to independent housing, i.e. this event has never happened (deviating from the ordinary established trajectory), marriage occurs at the age of 22, and the first child is born two to three years later at the age of 25. Among young males who have completed secondary education, which ends at the age of 18, stable employment occurs one year later at the age of 19, independent housing at the age of 22, marriage at the age of 24, and the first child is born at the age of 24. Those persons who have completed higher education constitute an entirely different model, i.e. the age of 23 is key for three life events (completion of education, employment and independent housing), and three years later, at the same age of 26, they get married and their first child is born.

In this case as well, the data analysed is only valid for part of the respondents, but not for all of them, or to be more specific:

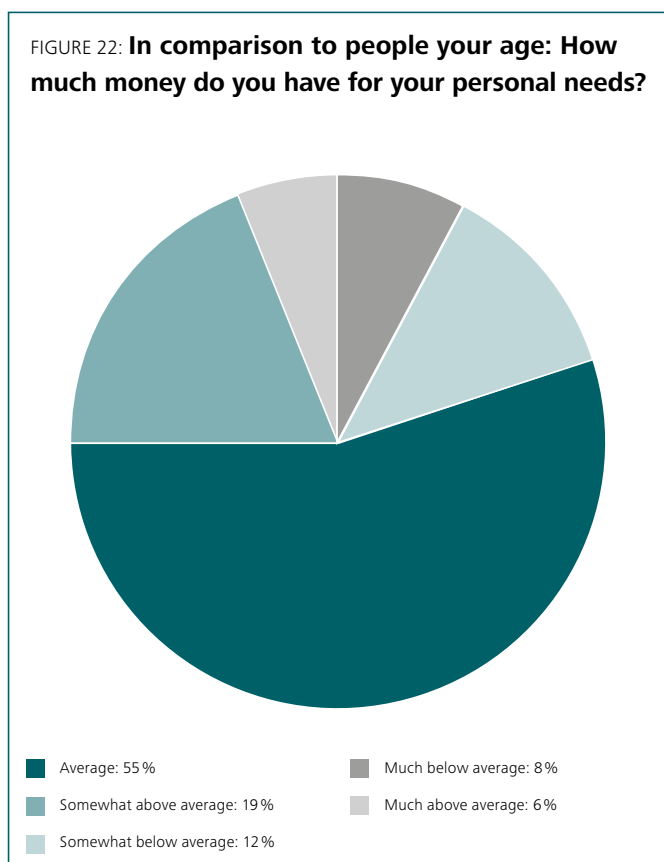
completed education – 67.5 % of the cases; stable employment – 22.6 %, independent housing – 4.6 %; marriage – 7.4 %; first child – 4.4 %.

Such percentages are indicators of conditions relating to the transition from adolescence to adulthood among young males and females in Macedonia, underscoring that independence is a long, prolonged process for young people.

## PERSONAL FINANCE

Asked how much money they have for their personal needs compared to peers, roughly half of the persons surveyed (55 %) responded that they have average, 25 % above average, and 20 % less than average.

FIGURE 22: In comparison to people your age: How much money do you have for your personal needs?



## CONCLUSIONS

- Young people like to listen to music, spend time with their family, and go out with their friends, and rarely meditate/practice yoga, volunteer for social projects, or reside abroad. More often than young females, young males go out with friends, engage in sports activities, play video games, spend time in bars, cafes and clubs, volunteer for social projects/activities/initiatives, spend time at youth centres, while young females listen to music, read books, spend time with their families, pray, and go shopping more often than young males;
- Young people on average spend approximately 3 hours per day watching TV and 6 hours on the Internet. It is interesting to note that, compared to the 2013 Youth Study, time spent on the Internet has increased by 2 whole hours;
- Young people usually use the Internet for social interaction and communication, education, information, and entertainment;
- 26 % of young people smoke cigarettes regularly, 18 % occasionally, and 56 % do not smoke – the percentages are completely identical to those obtained in the 2013 Youth Study. Regarding alcohol consumption, a slight increase has been recorded with regard to the percentage of those who regularly consume alcohol – 2 % (0.6 % in 2013), several times weekly – 12 % (8 % in 2013), only on weekends – 24 % (73 % in 2013). Most of the persons surveyed (89 %) responded that they do not take soft drugs such as marijuana;
- The following profile of young people displays the greatest tendency to consume alcohol and consume soft drugs: young Macedonian males aged between 14 and 19 who have completed primary and secondary education and live in urban areas;
- Young females have their first sexual experience at the age of 18, young males at 17. Young males are more sexually active and more often change sexual partners compared to young females, but a similar percentage in all age groups and both genders regard sex as a taboo subject;
- On the whole, the young Macedonian population display low levels on the deviance scale;
- Depending on the level of education, young females have different life trajectories, with key life events occurring at a greater age due to a higher level of education, and the span of time for all key events along the trajectory decreasing with increasing level of education,
- Three different models of life trajectory can be identified among male respondents as well, with key life events occurring at an older age in correlation with the level of education, and the span of time spent on all crucial events along the trajectory decreasing with increasing level of education;
- Asked how much money they have for their personal needs compared to their peers, half of the young people (55 %) responded that they have an average amount, 25 % more than the average and 20 % less than average.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- To organise and structure younger persons' time as well as prevent them from getting overly involved in the virtual world of the Internet, it is recommended that youth centres be established that offer programs and activities attractive to young people, and that sporting activities be promoted more through competitions, awards, and events.
- It is recommended that socially useful work be introduced through voluntary programmes for youth at the local level where young people live to raise awareness of active citizenship, especially on social projects emphasising personal and social benefits from proactive behaviour.
- It is necessary to encourage creative and innovative thinking with youth using different tools and platforms.
- It is most appropriate to deliver lectures and workshops to raise the awareness of the hazardous health consequences of cigarettes, alcohol and drugs, especially with young people aged 14–19 given their affinity for negative influences.
- It is necessary to introduce sexual and reproductive health subjects/classes in formal education in the last year of primary school or at the very beginning of secondary school to prevent sexually transmitted infections and to remove the taboo from the topic of sex.
- Due to the prolonged transition from adolescence to adulthood and financial dependence on their parents, it is necessary to introduce and maintain measures to assist housing, self-employment, or scholarship programmes that facilitate and support young people in the process of gaining independence and establishing a family, in particular for youth exposed to the risk of poverty.
- To establish a mentorship programme in primary/secondary schooling as well as in communities to prevent growth of juvenile crime, and to encourage greater involvement of young people in voluntary work.



## 5

# MOBILITY

Migration is considered to be one of the most important political issues for a country and is a major challenge in the sphere of creating policies and strategies, while affecting numerous areas, from economic sustainability to national security. Youth migration and mobility are even more important.

## NATIONAL CONTEXT

The youth unemployment rate (consistently hovering around 50%) is twice as great as the general unemployment rate in the country (which is also high), with most of the population living in poverty (21.9%). Furthermore, the percentage of households that are raising children and exposed to a risk of poverty is high (two adults with two dependent children – 20.2%, two adults with three and more dependent children – 51.2%, single parents with dependent children – 37.5%), the average salary in the country is 400 euros, and there is an uneven distribution of income as indicated by a Gini Index of 33.6 (State Statistical Office, 2017; 2018).

## GENERAL YOUTH MIGRATION TRENDS

Research usually assumes that young people are either dependent migrants accompanying their parents, or, like adults, they are economic migrants (Tienda, Taylor, and Moghan, 2007). More and more, educational opportunities are also becoming the motive for migration of youth and mobility. The Bologna process and the programmes of the European Union that support and encourage academic mobility (such as Erasmus, Tempus, Erasmus Mundus and Marie Currie) have contributed to a significant increase in academic mobility in Europe. These efforts have been intensified in the past few years by establishing the priority that “by 2020 at least 20% of graduates of higher education should have had a period of higher education-related study abroad as

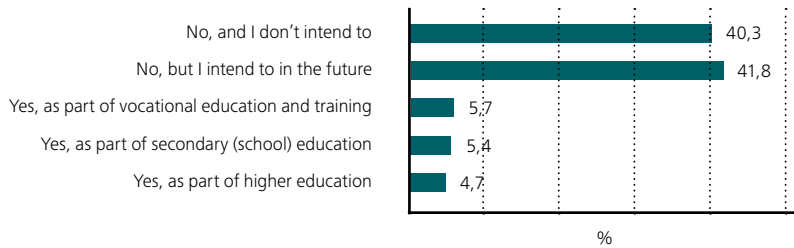
well as setting up of the Erasmus+ programme, which provides for a greater budget earmarking realisation of individual mobility (Bozhinovska, Jakasanovski, and Mirchevska, 2015).

Investing in children through education and labour migration is usually a part of a broader household strategy of diversifying the risk and securing long-term financial stability and family survival (Lauby and Stark, 1988; Stark and Bloom, 1985). The difference is that when labour opportunities are the motive for migration, families often have realistic expectations of quick returns on their investment (Massey et al., 1993; Stark and Bloom, 1985; Todaro, 1969), while the parents of educational migrants are supposed to support a costly, multi-year period of investment.

The primary model of internal migration among developing countries is for youth from rural areas to migrate to urban areas, while the external migration model calls for youth from less-developed countries to migrate to more developed countries. In both cases, an uneven distribution of resources and opportunities influences the flow of migrants (Piore 1979; Todaro 1969). Many factors encourage youth to migrate, including direct motives – a desire for employment and education – but these motives may also be embedded in ideological matrixes such as cultural and psychosocial factors (Massey et al. 1993; Punch 2007).

## EXISTING FINDINGS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Over the past few years, the issue of emigration of young people from Macedonia has been receiving more attention than ever before in the public debate. Research results from the previous Youth Study (2013) by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung prompted efforts to look more closely at this phenomenon. According to research findings of the study (Topuzovska Latkovikj, Borota Popovska, Serafimovska & Cekikj, 2013: 56), every other young individual in 2013 was planning or had thought about leaving the country. In the Youth Unemployment Study for Macedonia

FIGURE 23: **Have you ever stayed in a foreign country for studying or training purposes?**

(Topuzovska Latkovikj, Borota Popovska & Starova, 2016), also conducted by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung on a population of unemployed youth, this rate was even higher, with an overwhelming majority (80%) of unemployed youth in 2016 contemplating or planning to leave the country. In both studies, the most significant reasons for this was the financial situation and standard of living, or unemployment and poverty in the country compared to better conditions for education, employment, and life abroad.

According to the results of the qualitative Youth Study (Topuzovska Latkovikj et al, 2016), young people can imagine spending their future in their motherland if they can earn sufficient amounts to pay their basic costs of living, travel around the world and go on summer/winter holidays, and live in a secure, safe, unpolluted, and progressive society.

Findings from the research on youth imply that young people perceive emigration as an opportunity to acquire financial independence from their parents and purchase their own home since they are not able to realise this through employment in their motherland. According to the research, 80% of young adults still live in the homes of their parents (Topuzovska Latkovikj, Borota Popovska, Serafimovska & Cekikj, 2013).

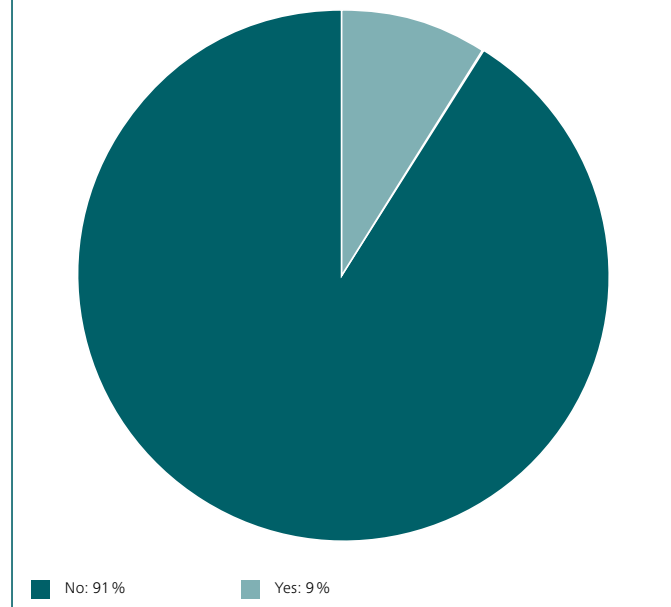
In spite of the importance of this issue for society, specific data on how substantial this trend are lacking. On the official website of the Macedonian State Statistical Office, the MAKSTAT Base, just like in the SSO publication Migrations, contain official data showing that 140 young people permanently moved out of the country in 2016 (aged between 15 and 29), whereby this number is not much different than those for other years of the last decade. There is no official data on student mobility/number of students who have studied/study abroad (Bozhinovska, Jakasnovski, Mirchevska, 2015).

According to the World Economic Forum's (2017) Global Competitiveness List, Macedonia, is ranked 129th in the world in terms of its capacity to retain young talent (with an average level of 2.24 on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 = the best and most intelligent people leave the country and make use of opportunities abroad, and 7 = the best and most intelligent remain in the country ...).

## EXPERIENCE STAYING ABROAD IN TERMS OF PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT AND FOR A LONGER PERIOD

A large cumulative percentage of youth have not stayed in a foreign country for the purpose of studying or training (82.10%), but 41.80% of them intend to do so in the future, and 40.30% do not have any such intention at all. A cumulative affirmative response was provided by 15.80% of respondents, while 5.70% had resided in a foreign country as a part of vocational education and training, 5.40% in secondary education, and 4.70% in higher education.

91% of youth have not even resided in a foreign country more than 6 months.

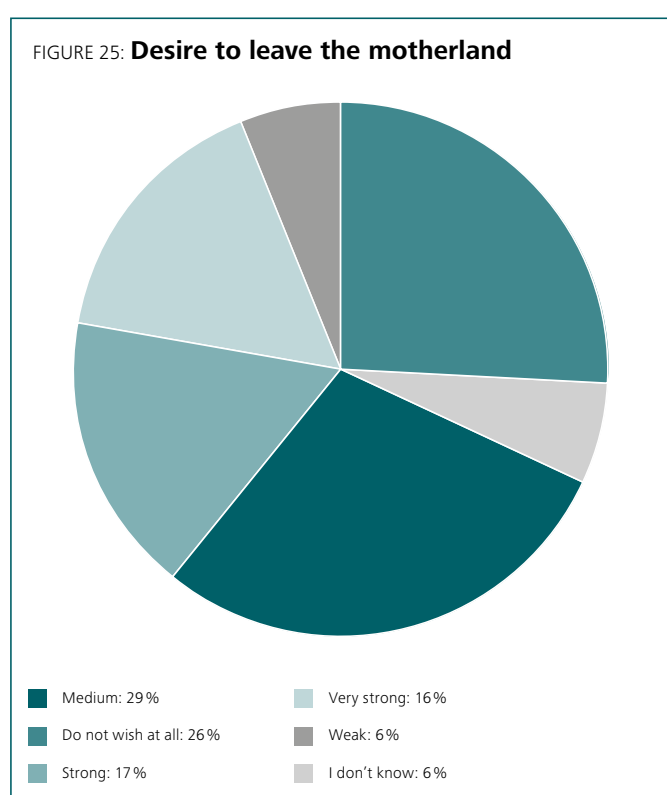
FIGURE 24: **Have you ever been abroad longer than 6 months?**

If the low mean value provided in Chapter 1 (Lifestyle and Leisure) of this study is taken into consideration in terms of the question as to how often young people stay abroad  $m=1.94$  (on a scale from 1 – never to 5 – very often), it can be concluded that generally the young people of Macedonia have rarely travelled outside of the country, and have hardly ever stayed abroad for longer periods for the purpose of studying and training, which

means that their expectations regarding living abroad are not based on personal experience.

## DESIRE FOR MIGRATION

Regarding their desire to migrate, young people can be divided into three groups: one-third of them have a strong desire to leave their motherland, one-third expressed a medium-level desire to migrate, and one-third do not wish to migrate at all. On a scale from 1 = I do not intend to emigrate, to 5 = very strong desire for migration, the arithmetic mean is  $m=2.91$  ( $stand.dev.=1.422$ ), which is located in the negative interval on the axis near average value, so it can be concluded that generally speaking migration tendencies on the part of the young Macedonian population as a whole are not strong.



### What keeps you/would make you stay in your native country in the future? (Or, if you are sure that one day you will leave the country, please describe your expectations of the desired host country)

"What keeps me here are my parents, and as an only child I would never leave them alone." (Ana, 23)

"My family, networks that I have already built, and a desire for prosperity in my native country are what still keep me here" (Tara, 23)

"I live in Macedonia because of my family, and the freedom that the citizens have." (Elena, 24)

"My family currently keeps me here, and to stay here in the future, an increased salary that will enable me to have a better life." (Mina, 25)

"The comfort I have influences me to stay in the country, the support of my family, love of the country, the fact that I know my city and the people in it. If I decide to leave the country I would do it for my professional advancement abroad." (Kate, 24)

"I would stay in Macedonia if salaries for all professions increased, and if all professions would be valued equally, and not to praise those with a university diploma, and undervalue those without a degree." (Simona, 19)

"What keeps me in Macedonia is that I was born and I grew up here. The Macedonian mentality suits me, and I would like my children to live here." (Bojan, 25)

"So far my family has kept me in the country, and a higher standard of living would keep me longer, but I would go to some of the EU countries where I would expect to find employment, have a higher standard of living, and a better quality of life." (Filip, 27)

"I am still here because of close people (family and friends). But I would go abroad to seek an opportunity to have an international career with a desirable job." (Teon, 18)

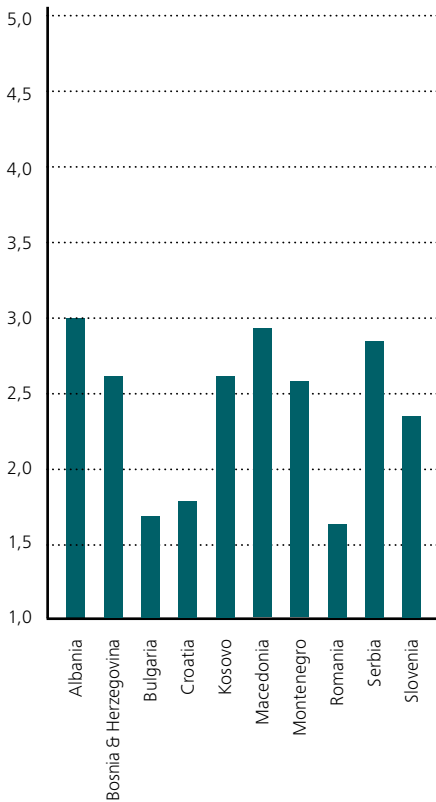
Comparative analysis of the data from all the youth studies in the SEE region in the FES project has established that Macedonia in terms of the young people's desire for migration does not differ much from countries like Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia, but a difference can be seen when compared to the EU Member States, where this tendency is less marked.

In the previous Youth Study from 2013, the question was not formulated on a scale. Instead, respondents were asked whether they planned to leave the country – with the possible answers being: yes; no; maybe; probably not; consequently, the data is not comparable in terms of methodology.

One possible method for comparing data from two different periods is to compare the number of those who stated that they neither have any desire nor any plan to leave the country, 25% of the 2013 Youth Study and 26% of this study (with 6% in both studies responding with "I do not know"), indicating that there has not been any change in young people's position.

With reference to the time they plan to stay in the host country, it is interesting to note that virtually the same percentage in this

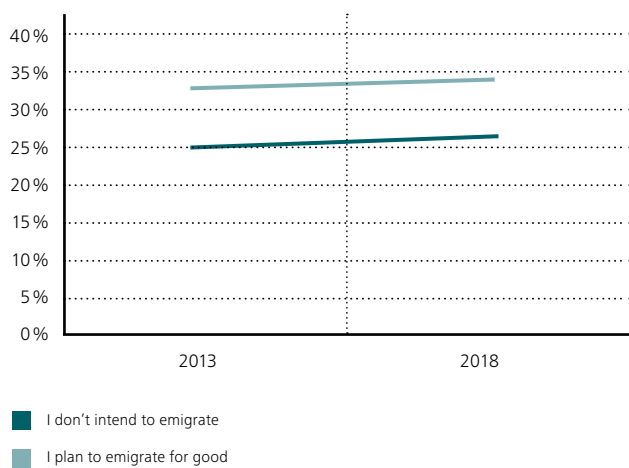
FIGURE 26: **Cross-national analysis: Desire for migration in SEE countries – comparison of mean values**



study (33.80%) and the 2013 study (33%) stated that they planned to stay in the desired country forever.

Some correlations relating to the migration desire variable and analysed at a bivariate level are presented below.

FIGURE 27: **Time series of migration plans**



The analysis shows that there is a statistically significant correlation between the migration desire variable and several variables relating to socioeconomic status<sup>5</sup>.

There is a negative correlation between the desire to migrate and the variables reflecting the financial status of young people

– money for personal needs ( $r=-.103$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and the financial situation of the household ( $r=-.095$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), with the less the financial means, the greater the desire to migrate. There is a negative correlation between desire to migrate and the employment variable by profession, with the greater the values (from 1 – I work in my profession to 4 – I am not trained/qualified for any profession), the greater the desire to migrate ( $r=.111$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

Furthermore, there is a negative correlation between the desire to migrate and satisfaction with: family life ( $r=-.071$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), circle of close friends ( $r=-.092$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), education ( $r=-.130$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), job ( $r=-.143$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and life as a whole ( $r=-.093$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). The lower the satisfaction, or the greater the dissatisfaction, the greater the desire to migrate.

The third correlation matrix shows that there is a positive correlation between personal projections about the future and the desire to migrate ( $r=.086$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), and a negative correlation between the forecast for the future of the country and desire to migrate ( $r=-.073$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). This means that the more young people who have a more positive expectation regarding their personal future, the greater their desire to migrate, while the more likely they are to have more negative expectations regarding the future of the country, the greater their desire to migrate.

It is interesting that there is not any connection between the desire of young people to migrate and personal self-perception or identification as citizens of Europe and the world; there is, however, a negative correlation between the desire of young people to migrate and personal self-perception or identification as citizens of: Macedonia ( $r=-.251$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), the region ( $r=-.216$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and the place of residence ( $r=-.205$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). The less young people perceive themselves as citizens of Macedonia, the region, and their place of residence, the greater their desire to migrate.

The analyses did not show any statistically significant correlation between the level of education and academic success on the one hand and the desire to migrate on the other<sup>6</sup>.

A cluster analysis was conducted to describe the profile of young people who display the greatest tendency to migrate, with a number of variables denoting youth demographic traits being

FIGURE 28: **Cluster analysis of migration desire**

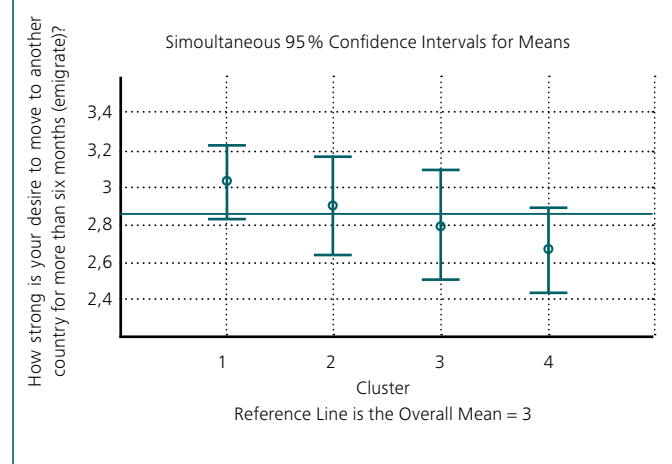
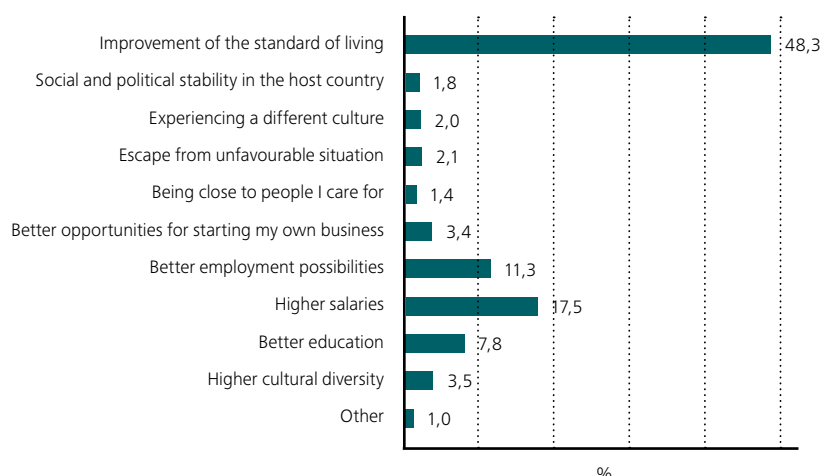




FIGURE 29: Concrete activities taken to move



included, such as age, ethnicity, educational level, and place of residence, as these relate to the variable “desire to leave the country”<sup>7</sup>. Cluster 1 shows the greatest migration tendency, namely among the following group of young people: mainly Macedonians, much fewer Albanians and other persons aged 14–19 who have completed primary and secondary education, who generally come from urban areas as well as rural areas.

## REASON FOR MIGRATION

In investigating young people’s attitudes in terms of their reasons for migration, or why they want to leave the country, they were offered several possible reasons as well as an open-ended option: “other”, requiring them to choose one main reason for a potential move.

For most of the respondents (48.30%), the main reason for migration is a better living standard, followed by a higher salary for 17.50%, better employment opportunities for 11.30%, and a better education for 7.80% of the respondents. The other reasons were chosen in less than 5% of the cases, and included: social and political stability in the country, getting to know different cultures, escaping an unfavourable situation, moving closer to people I care for, better opportunities to start my own business and greater cultural diversity.

## What are the biggest problems that young people face in modern Macedonian society?

“The biggest problems in the country are the limited opportunities for work and prosperity.” (Teon, 18)

“The main problems facing young people in the country are job opportunities and low wages that are insufficient for an independent life.” (Irina, 19)

“The biggest problems are unemployment and low wages – if a young person manages to find a job at all.” (Filip, 27)

“In addition to the problems any young person faces regardless of the country they live in (such as the pressure to succeed), I think that many young people in Macedonia face prejudice and discrimination, whether this be related to gender, nationality, sexual orientation, or financial opportunities.” (Dritan, 17)

“The struggle to find their place in society is in my opinion the biggest problem facing young people today. Since Western Civilization, to a great extent through Hollywood movies and social networks, influences notions of what an ideal life would be, Macedonian youth only attempt however they can to get their hands on material goods without making any real efforts with the sole goal of presenting themselves on social networks, and not because of any real incentive to invest their time and resources in something that would promote their personal advancement or lead to an improvement in the society in which they live.” (Bojan, 25)

“Problems that young people face include financial constraints, an education that fails to provide a practical base allowing them to feel confident about possible job choices, a local culture that does not allow them to think outside of the box, etc.” (Kate, 24)

“The biggest problem is that after completing university studies, young people cannot find jobs fitting their qualifications. As a result, they work anywhere they can for a very low wage. All this contributes to their being unhappy, demotivated and depressed and they attempt to escape the country.” (Mina, 25)

## PREFERRED DESTINATION

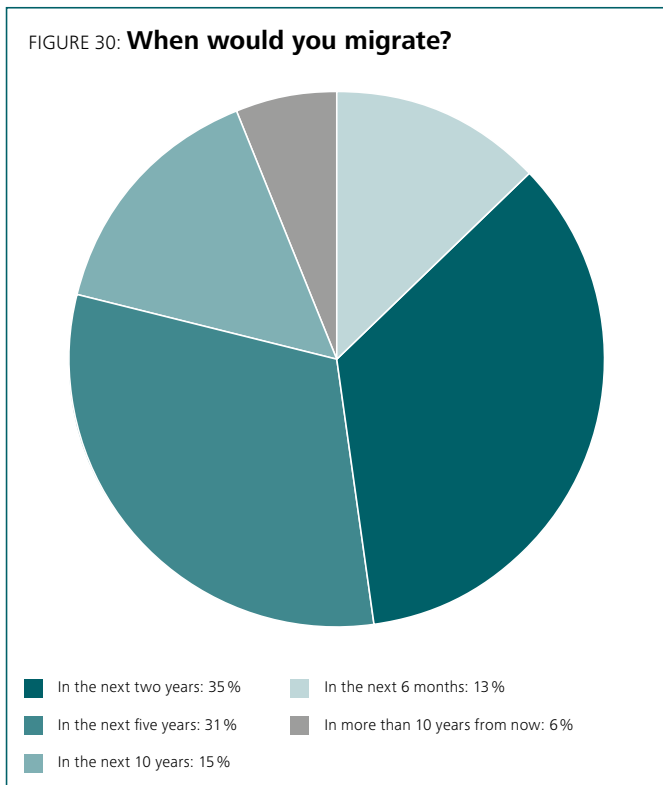
Germany is ranked first as a desired destination for young people to move to – for 23.1 % of the young people, Germany is also ranked second with 13.1 %, and Switzerland is ranked third with 10.5 %.

TABLE 5. Preferred destination for migration

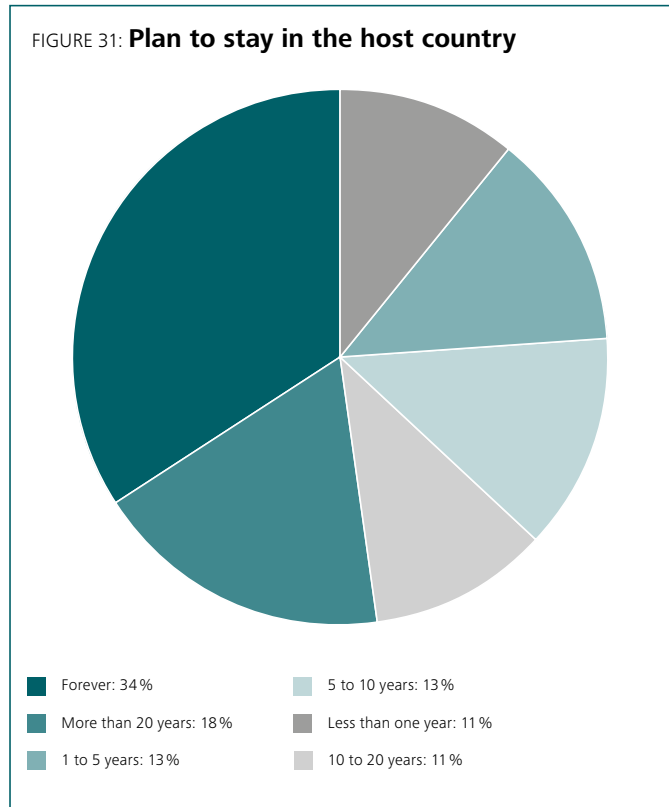
Preferred destination for migration	
First place:	Germany
Second place:	Germany
Third place:	Switzerland

## MIGRATION PLAN

The largest percentage (35 %) of young people who have a certain desire to migrate responded that they would migrate in the next two years, while a similar percentage of 31 % stated in the next five years, a lower percentage (15 %) responded that they would leave the country in the next ten years, 13 % in the next six months, and 6 % in more than ten years from now.



Most young people would leave the country forever (33 %), and a cumulative percentage of 24 % would stay abroad for up to 5 years.

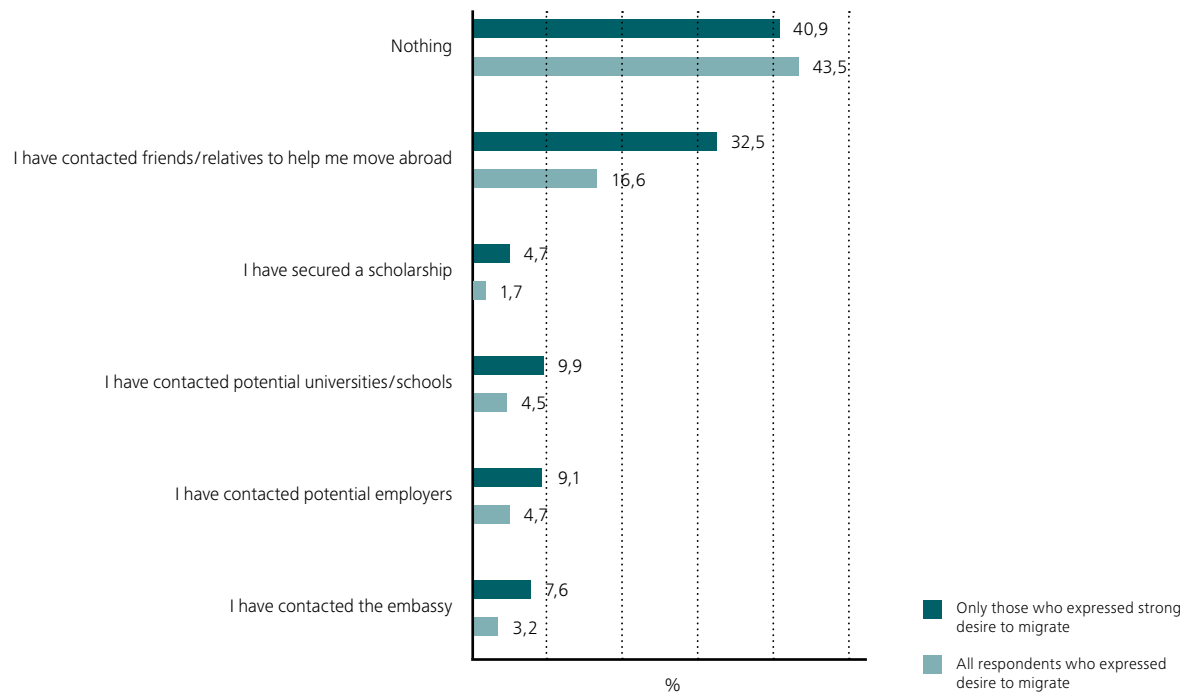


## ACTIVITIES ASSUMED FOR MIGRATION

Among the sub-sample of youth who show a certain tendency to leave their motherland, the percentage of respondents who have not undertaken anything to this end is very great (43.50 %), while 16.60 % have contacted friends and/or relatives from whom they expect help in moving to the desired country, only 3.20 % have contacted the embassy of the preferred country, 4.70 % have contacted potential employers, 4.50 % have contacted potential schools/universities, and only 1.70 % have obtained a scholarship. These percentages are slightly higher with a selection of respondents who only circled 4 (a strong desire) and 5 (a very strong desire). The cumulative percentage of those who have undertaken some kind of action cannot be established since this is multiple-choice question.

Such results indicate a dearth of proactive young people, or few concrete activities being taken to move out of the country, which casts doubt on their seriousness/determination to take such a step.

FIGURE 32: Concrete activities taken to move



## GETTING INFORMED ABOUT MIGRATION OPPORTUNITIES

Young people, in addition to failing to take any action to move, display a low level of knowledge/information on opportunities for emigrants to the preferred country. According to the analysis

employing a calculation of an arithmetic mean (on a scale from 1 – not at all, to 5 – very much), all mean values obtained are below three, or in the negative interval on the axis. Mean values with those respondents who have a strong desire to migrate are slightly above 3 for all items.

FIGURE 33: Level of information on opportunities for emigrants

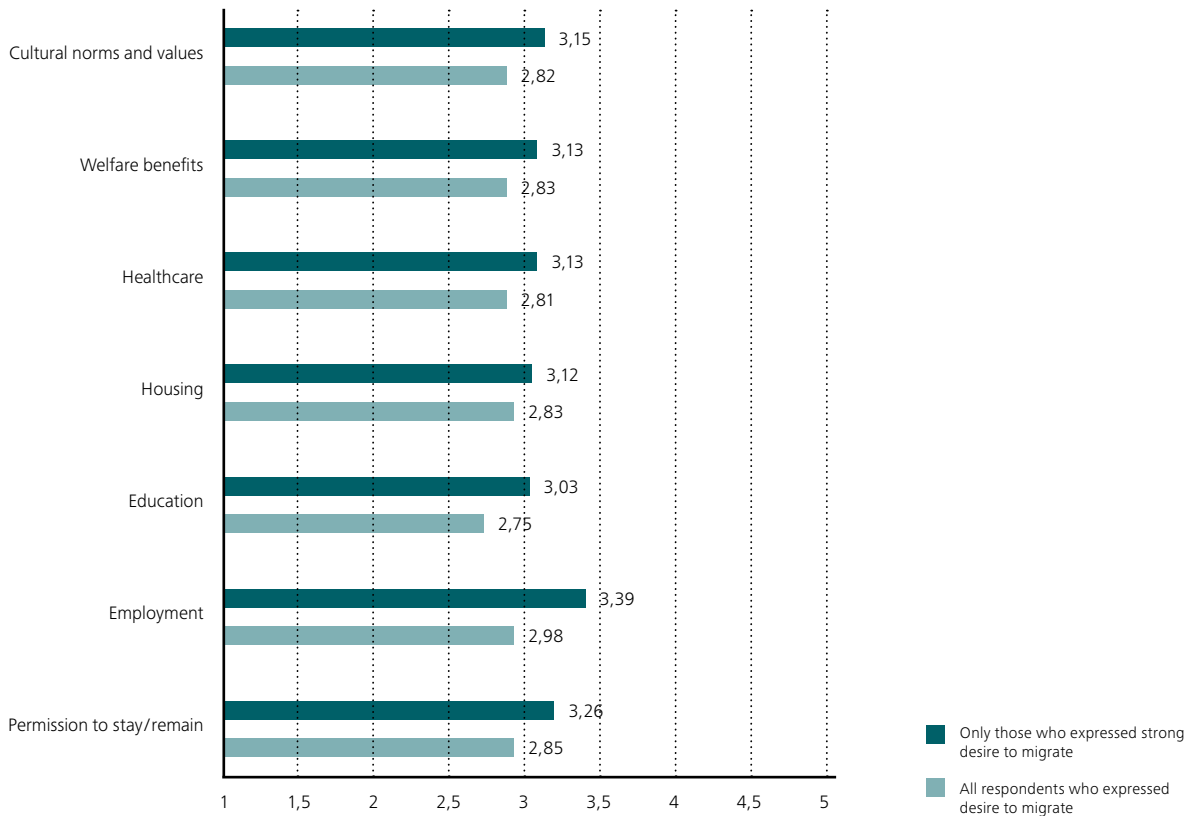
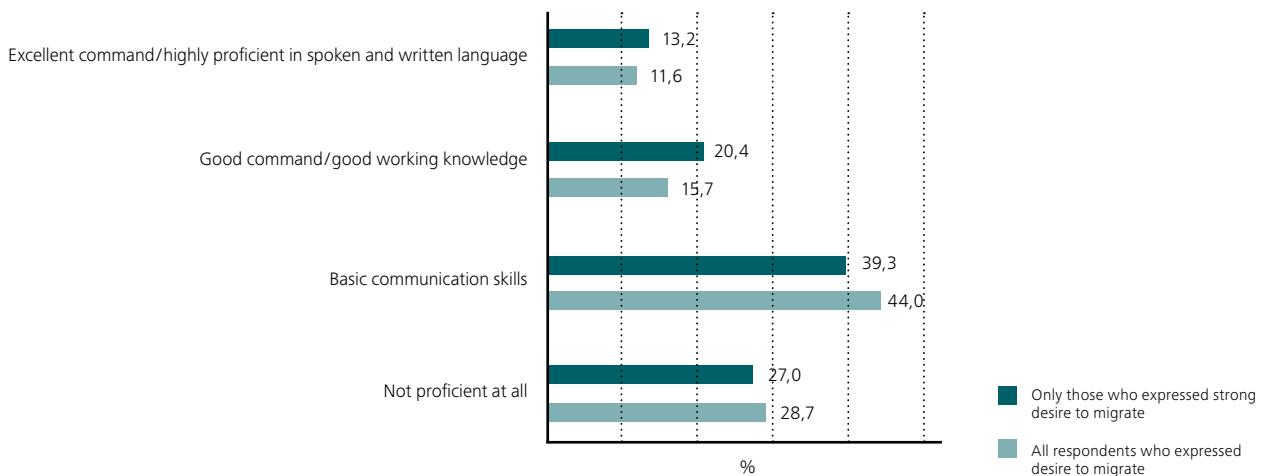


FIGURE 34: Level of knowledge of the official language in the desired country



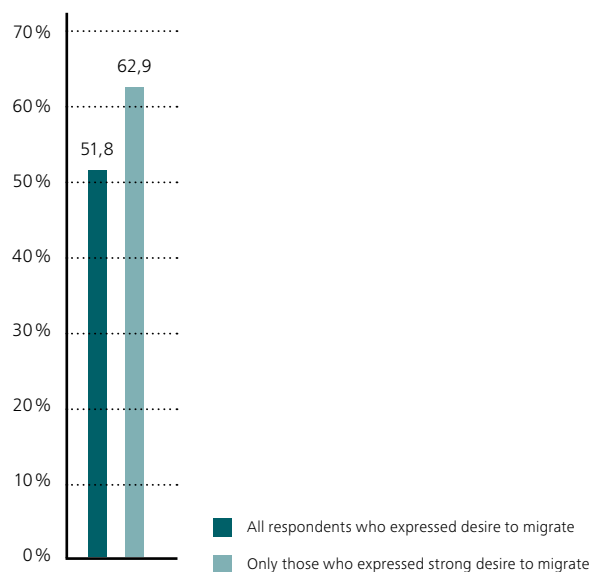
## KNOWLEDGE OF THE LANGUAGE

Most of the young people (44%) said that they have basic communication skills in the official language in the desired country, 15.70% have excellent knowledge, 11.60% a great proficiency, and 28.70% cannot speak the language at all. There is no significant difference in the answers of those who have a strong desire to migrate.

On a scale from 1 to 5, with a mean value of  $m=3.66$  (stand. dev.=1.151), young people are willing to learn the language used in the preferred country, indicating a certain readiness to apply themselves.

Half the young people who have a certain desire to migrate have an invitation from someone living in the preferred country, the percentage is higher (62.90%) among those respondents who expressed a strong desire to migrate, which means they also rely on friends/relatives/acquaintances in this regard (just like for employment).

FIGURE 35: Invitations by someone living in the preferred country

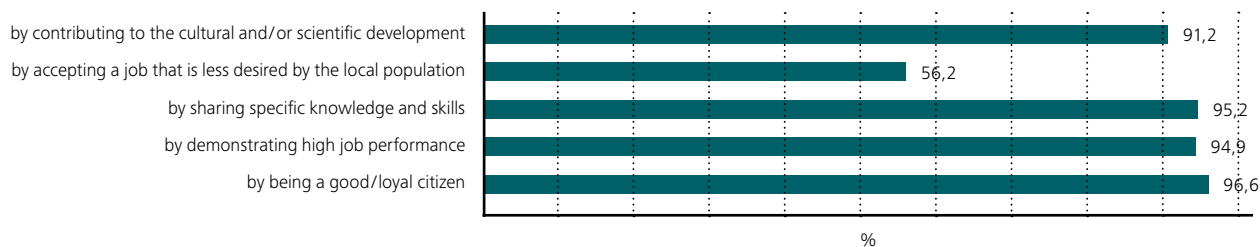


## POTENTIAL BENEFITS FOR THE HOST COUNTRY

Percentages for distribution of responses relating to the potential contribution to the development and prosperity of the desired host country are high (over 90%). Specifically, almost all young people who have a desire to migrate responded that they would contribute to their host country through: cultural and/or scientific development, share of special knowledge and skills, demonstration of a high level of performance and

accountable and loyal citizenship. Only the percentage of affirmative answers (56.20%) is lower (but not low) for the option to accept a job which is not preferred by the local population. This means that every other young person from Macedonia would not accept just “any” work abroad, which corroborates recent findings for youth in the country that they hope for a well-paid job in their profession and for a well-established company that offers rapid career development, privileges and benefits, etc., and this should be “promised” by the preferred host country.

FIGURE 36: Potential contribution to the development and prosperity of the desired host country



## CONCLUSIONS

- An overwhelming majority (91 %) of youth have not resided in a foreign country for more than 6 months. If the low mean value provided in Chapter 1 (Lifestyle and Leisure) for this study is taken into account in terms of the question as to how often young people stay abroad  $m=1.94$  (on a scale from 1 – never to 5 – very often), it can be concluded that generally speaking young people in Macedonia have rarely travelled outside of the country, which means that their expectations regarding living abroad are not based on personal experience;
- Regarding their desire to migrate, young people can be divided into three groups: one-third of young people have a strong desire to leave their motherland, one-third expressed a medium-level desire to migrate, and one-third do not have any such desire at all;
- The comparative analysis of data from all youth studies in the SEE region carried out within the framework of the FES project found out that Macedonia in terms of the desire of youth to migrate does not differ much from countries such as Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia, but differences are evident when comparing this to EU Member States, where this tendency is less pronounced;
- 25% of respondents in the previous study and 26% in this study (with 6% of responses stating “I don’t know” in both studies) responded that they did not have any desire nor plan to leave the country, either, which means that this attitude among youth has not changed;
- With reference to the time they plan to stay in the host country, it is interesting that an equal percentage of 33.80% compared to the 2013 study (33 %) responded that they planned to stay in the desired country for good;
- There is a negative correlation between the desire to migrate with variables reflecting youth financial status – money for personal needs and the financial household situation, with the lower the assessment of financial status, the greater the desire to migrate. There is a negative correlation between the desire to migrate and employment variable by profession, with the greater the values (1 – I work in my profession, 4 – I am not trained/qualified for any profession), the greater the desire to migrate;
- The following profile emerges among young people who display the greatest tendency to migrate: mostly Macedonians aged between 14 and 19 who have completed primary and secondary education and mainly live in urban areas;
- For most young people (48.30%), the main reason to move is a better living standard, followed by a higher salary (17.50%), better employment opportunities (11.30%), and better education 87.80%);
- The most desired destination for migration among young people is Germany;
- The results indicate low levels of proactive action on the part of youth, or few concrete activities being taken to move away

from the country, which casts doubt on their seriousness/determination to take this step;

- In addition to failing to take any concrete actions to move, young people display a low level of knowledge/information about opportunities available for emigrants in the preferred country;
- Half of the young people who have a certain desire to migrate have been invited by someone living in the preferred country. This group accounts for a higher percentage and is 62.90% for those respondents who expressed a strong desire to migrate, which means that they also rely on friends/relatives/acquaintances regarding this question (similar to employment);
- Every other young person from Macedonia would not accept “any” job abroad;
- A factor that to a great extent keeps young people in the country is undoubtedly their families.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The central government, including the Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility, and the Agency for Youth and Sport, should create a nationwide campaign to propagate opportunities offered through such programmes as ERASMUS for applications to these types of programmes
- More frequent visits outside of the country should be organised by educational institutions to establish and maintain exchange programmes for students at the international level
- It is necessary to record and map youth educational and work mobility to obtain useful data on trends (demographic, socio-economic and educational youth profiles on what types migrate; their geographic destination, educational/work organisations that accept them; duration of their stay and such). The objective is to foster mobility, i.e. temporary migration, while reducing the risk of making it permanent. For this purpose, a holistic approach and formal cooperation between all institutions/stakeholders involved is required.
- To analyse measures and effects of the National Strategy for Networking, Cooperation and Reduction of the Outflow of Higher Educated and Professional Staff 2013–2020, to revise the strategy if need be or to create a new one.
- To create an online platform with all the necessary and useful information for the most desired countries, where young people can and should inform themselves before they make a decision to migrate.
- To create programmes with partnership by CSOs from the EU countries that rank high on youth-involvement indexes, or which promote an exchange of “best practices”, “policy recommendation”, and “implementation” curricula







## 6

# INDIVIDUAL: YOUNG PEOPLE'S VALUES, ATTITUDES, AND BELIEFS

This part includes three sections, the first being dedicated to young individuals, their values, attitudes and beliefs, including their fears and concerns about the future, the second being dedicated to young individuals in the social sphere, focused on their relationships, confidence in other people as well as their perception of inequality in society, and the third addressing marriage and family<sup>8</sup>.

## INDIVIDUAL: YOUNG PEOPLE'S VALUES, ATTITUDES, AND BELIEFS

### Young people's values in Macedonia

Values are the guiding human principles: the broadest human motives that have an impact on their attitudes and shape them as well as how they act in the environment. The research conducted so far reveals that values influence human political beliefs, human preparedness to participate in a political action, choice of career and human feelings of personal welfare (Schwartz, 2011). "Values are used to characterise cultural groups, societies and individuals, to pave the societal change over a period of time, and to explain the motivational basis of the attitudes and the behaviour." (Schwartz, 2012).

Part of this Youth Study on Macedonia 2018 was dedicated to the question of what is important to young people, with responses ranging on a scale from 1 ("not at all important") to 5 ("very important"). The analysis indicated that for 5 of 16 values (31 % of the values), the arithmetical mean is above 4.50; and for 8 of 16 (50 %) values, the arithmetical mean is between a score of 4 and 4.50; and for only 2 of 16 values (only 19%), the arithmetical mean ranges from a score of 2.4 to 3.2. The most important values for young people are: "to be faithful/loyal to one's partner", "to be independent", "to be faithful/loyal to friends", as well as "to have a successful career" and "to assume responsibility". The least important issues for young people are: "to be politically active" and "to participate in civil society activities/initiatives".

Like in some previous studies (see Jakimovski et al., 2014), it was seen that some values are consistently important to youth, such as "to build a successful career", "to be a good parent", "to have a successful marriage", and "to have a suitable (love/life) partner". This trend toward attaching importance to individual values relating to family life, friendship, and decreased importance of some general values such as "interest in politics" and "civil society initiatives" is also noticeable in some other European countries (YOUTH 2010: the social profile of young people in Slovenia); however, there are also local reasons for this that are to be found in the social-political sphere in Macedonia.

FIGURE 37: Values of youth in Macedonia (in arithmetical means)

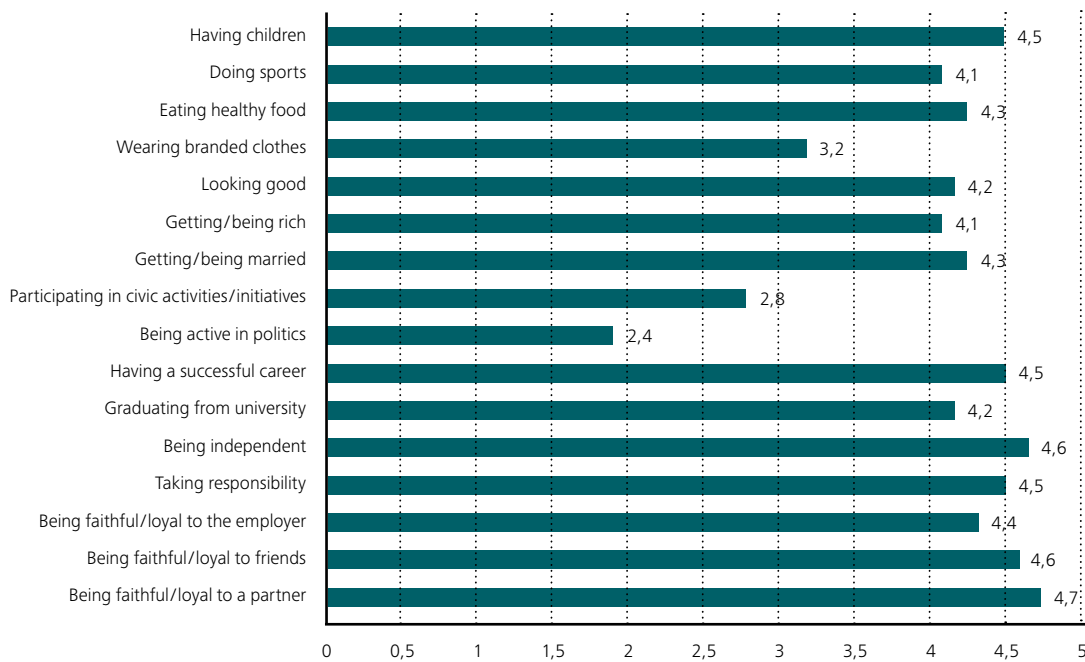
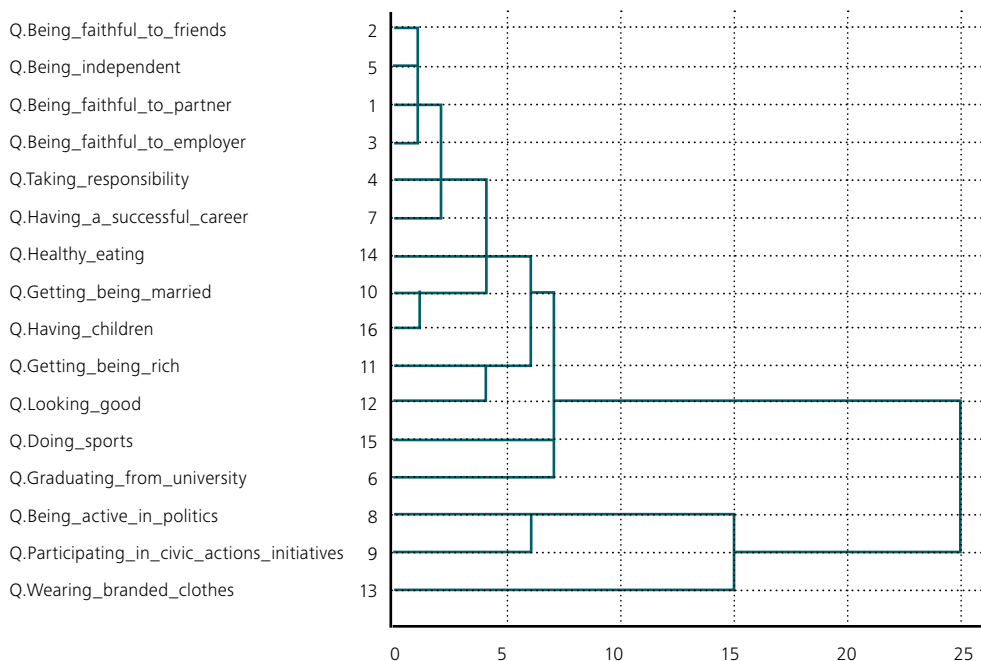


FIGURE 38: Value cluster dendrogram Dendrogram using Average Linkage (Between ...) Rescaled Distance Cluster Combine



This cluster dendrogram analysis only visually highlights the value clusters that are more or less important to young people in RM. The first cluster includes the previously mentioned most important values that are more personal and relate to individuals and their family and circle of friends: “to be loyal to partners, friends and employers” and “to be independent”. Another important cluster is the one revolving around family values (“to get married” and “to

have children”). The least important cluster for young people is “to be politically active” and “to participate in civil society activities and initiatives” (hereinafter referred to as: Social Action Cluster).

Gender variables are important predictors of certain values<sup>9</sup>: Values such as “loyalty to partners/friends/employers”, “assuming responsibilities”, “university diploma and career” as well as “good appearance” are more important to female respondents (com-

pared to males), while values such as “being politically active”, “wearing branded clothes”, and “doing sports” are more important to male respondents. The other values are equally important to both genders. Looking at the variable of age: more important values for the cohort aged 25 to 29 compared to other age categories are: “being loyal to others”, “own independence”, “assuming responsibilities” and “family values”, while, as was to be expected, “wearing branded clothes” is most important to the youngest respondents (14 to 19). The other values are important to all age categories. Nationality: Almost all values are more important to Macedonians compared to Albanians aside from the Social Action Cluster (which is more important to Albanians), while values such as “having a university diploma”, and “consuming healthy food” are equally important to both ethnicities.

It was interesting to see how certain values correlate<sup>10</sup> with the Parenting Style Scale (Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen & Hart, 1995)<sup>11</sup>. The Authoritative Subscale correlates with all values (positively) except for the Social Action Cluster and material wealth and appearance cluster (“to be rich”, and “to wear branded clothes”). This means that young people raised in the spirit of respecting authority assign greater significance to all values other than the above, especially to the first cluster: “to be loyal and faithful to partners/friends/employers” and “to be independent”. On the other hand, the Authoritarian Subscale is positively correlated with values relating to material and extrinsic values (which would indicate that “to get rich”, “to look good”, and “to wear branded clothes” are more important to young people raised in an authoritarian manner), and stand in a negative correlation with the value of “assuming responsibility”. Permissive parenting style is negatively correlated with values such as “loyalty to a partner and friends”, and positively with the Social Action Cluster, which means that “to be politically active” and “to participate in civil society initiatives” is more important for young people raised by parents who adopted a permissive parenting style, and they assign less importance to “loyalty to partners and friends”.

### Youth Expectations/Projections for the Future

Two questions were asked in this study addressing young people’s expectations/projections relating to their own future and the future of Macedonian society for the next 10 years. A graphic depiction of percentages of respondents’ answers to the two questions are provided below.

The analysis clearly shows that respondents are far more optimistic when their future is concerned compared to when the future of Macedonian society is concerned. A certain discrepancy is normal and to be expected for issues that depend on us and we can influence and for issues that do not depend on us and we cannot influence. However, this is a large discrepancy that may also indicate that most young people are ready to leave the country and believe that they will live a better life in another country. This is an issue warranting discussion, especially because the data in Graph 40 indicates that to some extent this is an unrealistic

FIGURE 39: Personal future projections

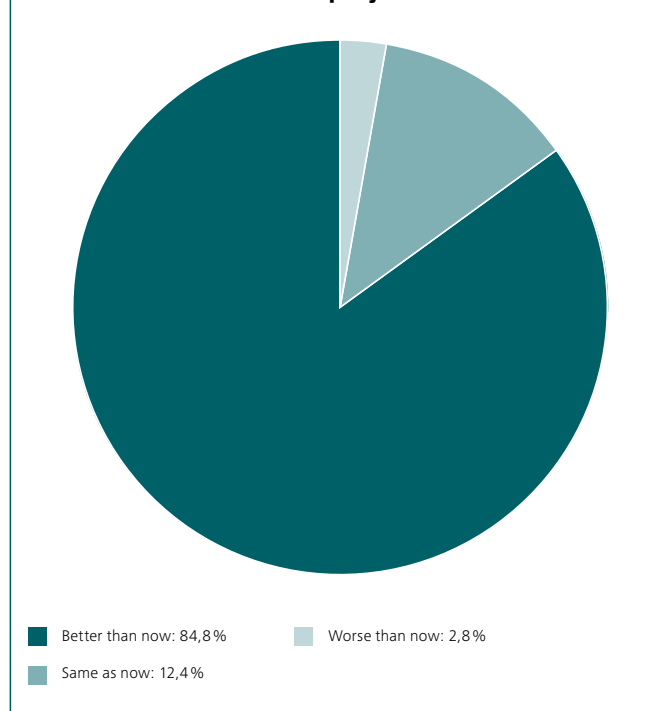
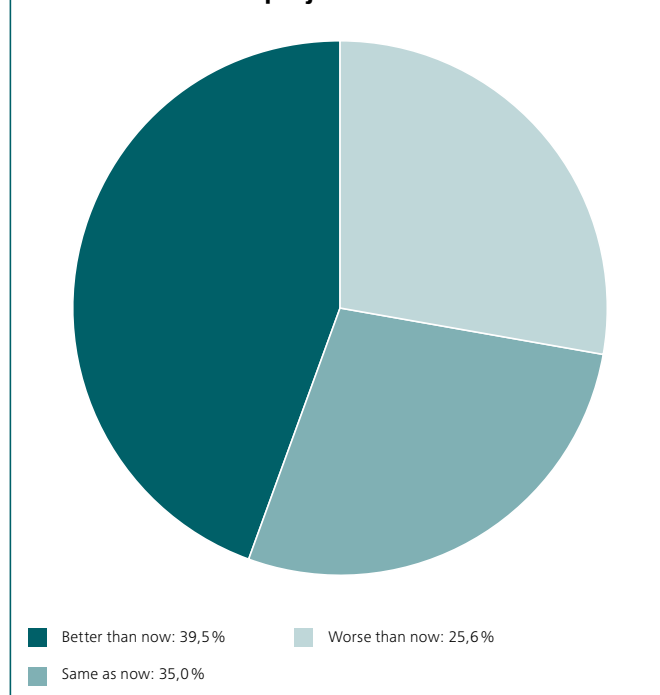


FIGURE 40: RM future projections



attitude given Macedonian conditions, and is quite different from the data obtained 5 or more years ago, when certain research data generated by the Institute for Social, Political and Judicial Research (Ss Cyril and Methodius University) showed that youth have optimistic but realistic attitudes (in the given Macedonian context) with regard to whether they will manage to satisfy their life goals and plans, whether they believe that they will earn enough to pay for their preferred lifestyle (Jakimovski et al., 2014; Latkovikj et al., 2016)<sup>12</sup>, with barely 10% dreaming “to escape from here one day”<sup>13</sup>.

Several correlations<sup>14</sup> were checked to explain this data, which only corroborated the hypothesis. When the focus is moved to young people's outlook on Macedonia's future, those respondents who have a greater desire to move to another country are the ones who want to stay there forever and see the situation in Macedonia in the next 10 years becoming worse than today. That is why they would probably leave. When the focus is on a forecast of their own future, the respondents who have a greater desire to move to another country are the ones who believe that their future will be better in the next 10 years than it is at present.

Several more important correlations for future outlooks are provided below.

- Those who are more satisfied with the quality of education in RM and do not fully agree with the statement that grades "are bought" have a more optimistic forecast for the state in the next 10 years.
- Those who perceive themselves as "more right-wing" have a more positive outlook regarding their personal future, and a more negative forecast for the future of Macedonia.
- Respondents who believe in the institutions of the country and are satisfied with the state of democracy in the Republic of Macedonia also tend to believe that both their own future and the future of Macedonia will be better in 10 years.
- Respondents who believe more in immediate and extended family members, in friends as well as in people with different religion and nationality tend to be the same ones who believe that they will be more personally happy in 10 years. Respondents who believe more in immediate and extended family members, in friends, neighbours, schoolmates/colleagues and political leaders are those who believe in a better future for Macedonia in 10 years' time.
- Personal experience with discrimination correlates with the "darker" projection of personal future in the next 10 years

### How and where do you see yourself in the Republic of Macedonia in 10 years?

"I see myself as a successful psychologist and psychotherapist working in HRM industry regardless of whether I am in the Republic of Macedonia or not, and I would like to see Macedonia in the European Union with a higher standard and progress, but I don't expect/hope that this will happen." (Ana, 23)

"I see myself as a successful woman building a career outside of Macedonia, and the Republic of Macedonia in a worse situation than now." (Tara, 23)

"I see the Republic of Macedonia at the same place as today, and I see myself in the same organisation, but in a higher position, married with one or two children, in a home separate from my parents." (Mina, 25)

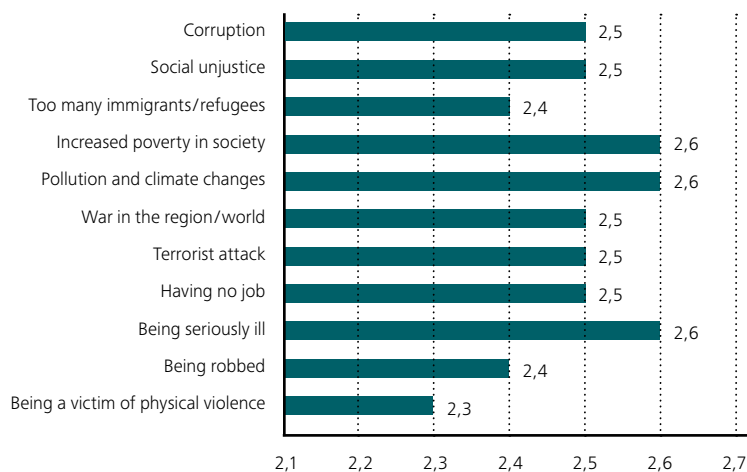
"I see myself as a successful businesswoman whose aim is to fix things in our dysfunctional state, while I see the Republic of Macedonia as a better state and better place to live in, as a Member State of the EU, and with European standards." (Simona, 19)

"In 10 years, I see myself working and living in the Republic of Macedonia together with my family, but I cannot say where I see Macedonia in 10 years because I cannot predict this, especially given the drastic growth in numbers of young people leaving the country seeking better conditions for work and life in general, which means that there is a danger that the size of the population will decline. There is also a trend toward young people with a higher education leaving the country in search of a more advanced vocational training because Macedonia does not offer this." (Bojan, 25)

"I see the country becoming a member of the EU and I see myself working in the public administration as an official." (Filip, 27)

"I still do not know where I see myself, but I see myself in a successful life, and the Republic of Macedonia, I don't know... definitely not successful!" (Petar, 21)

FIGURE 41: Young people's fears regarding social phenomena (arithmetical means)



### Fears, concerns, and priority problems of Macedonian youth

On a three-degree scale from 1 to 3, the following answers are offered: "not at all", "to some extent", and "very much", with young respondents being requested in the study to answer the question as to how much they are frightened or concerned with regard to 11 potential security and political-economic problems. The graph below clearly shows that the arithmetic mean is no lower than 2 for any of the answers provided, which is rather worrisome. Young people are at any rate mostly concerned (which was expected and in line with pollution problems and related health effects <https://www.iph.mk/aerzagaduvanjeta-vo-republika-makedonija/>) about "pollution and climate change", "catching a serious disease", and an incessant problem over the past 15 years – "poverty". These are followed by fear of "corruption", "social injustice", "military and terrorist attacks" and fear of "losing one's job".

All further analyses<sup>15</sup> show that young female respondents compared to male respondents are more concerned about all of the problems in society and beyond, except for the first-ranked on the graph – corruption – with both male and female respondents being equally concerned about this. Macedonians are more concerned than Albanians regarding all the problems in society offered except for social injustice – where Macedonians and Albanians are equally concerned. In terms of age, the data show that all ages are equally anxious regarding all problems in society.

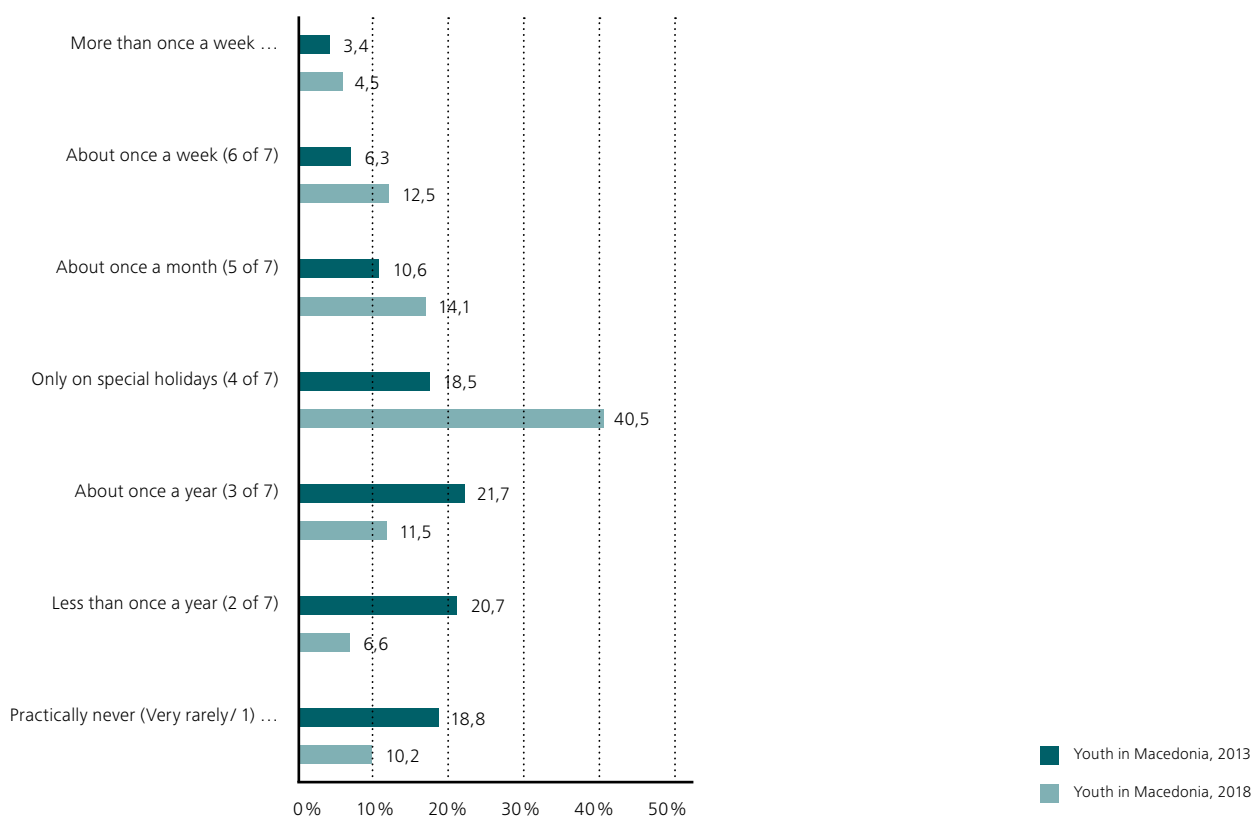
The greater the concern about corruption, increased poverty and lack of jobs go along with a lower tendency to accept (or very rarely accept) behaviour such as: tax evasion, receiving or giving bribes and using ties to find a job, which is certainly a desirable attitude. On the other hand, general speaking the young population very rarely condones tax evasion (the arithmetic mean is 2.47 on a scale of 1/never/ to 10/always/), giving and taking bribes (M=2.26), and somewhat more (more often) condone use of connections to find a job (M=3.85), and use of connections to perform certain activities (in hospital, for example – M=4.38).

### Young and religion

In addition to being a system of beliefs and values, religion has an integrative function that can relate to the individual or society, or to be more precise, to society as a whole or its separate levels – individual, cultural and social. Barbara Hargrove (1989) has explored the integrative function of religion, and her definition, in addition to elevating a functional view of this social phenomenon, posits that religion is a human phenomenon that performs the function of unifying cultural, social, and personal systems into a meaningful whole. Hence the importance of research of young people's attitudes in relation to religion.

The part dedicated to research of youth religiousness commenced with the question about religious affiliation or youth identification. Given the national structure of the population, religious affiliation is expected among the majority of respondents (over 66% of respondents who are members of the Ortho-

FIGURE 42: Percentage of young people attending religious services

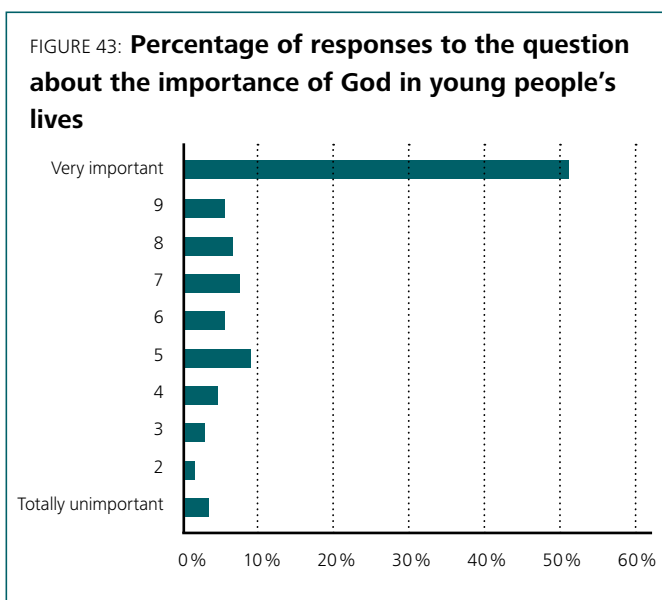


dox religion) and approximately 25 % of the respondents who are Muslims.

It was interesting to see how often (except for weddings and funerals, which have a more cultural and social dimension) youth attend religious services, and to compare the results with those from the 2013 Youth Study<sup>16</sup>.

The biggest change is to be seen in the percentage of youth (40 %) who only attend religious services for special (big religious) holidays in 2018. One possible reason for this is the different specification of the 4th question in both studies. Nevertheless, there is undisputable evidence of an increase in the percentage of young people who have practiced religion often in the past 5 years.

Interesting data is provided below on how important God is in young people's lives (the analysis only refers to those young people who stated they are members of one of the religions).



Although only 40 % attend religious services on major religious holidays, God is important to 78.6 % of young people, and is very important to 51.2 %.

The following served as predictors of religiousness in this study as well as in the other studies mentioned above (see Latkovikj et al., 2016; Cvetanova et al., 2016): Nationality (God is more important to Albanians and on average they practice religion/attend religious services often); gender within nationality (for Macedonians God is more important to the female respondents, but there is no difference between women and men in the frequency of attending religious services, while among Albanians, the situation is the opposite – there is no difference in terms of how important God is to women and men, but male respondents attend religious services more often); how urban the environment is where they live (God is more important to respondents from rural areas, and they attend religious services more often); perception of parents' religiousness (God is more important to those respondents who perceive their parents as more religious, and they attend religious services more often); respondents' education is important to pre-

dicting the frequency of attending religious services (the higher the level of education, the lower the attendance of religious services), but not how important God is in their lives as well as their parents' education (both parents' education is a predictor for assigning importance to God, and the mother's education is correlated with the frequency of attending religious services, whereby this tendency is to be expected; the higher the level of education, the less importance is assigned to God and the less religious services are attended).<sup>17</sup>

The importance of God in the life of an individual correlates with many aspects of individual lifestyle as well as his/her values, fears and beliefs<sup>18</sup>, so it can be stated that the respondents who attach more importance to God in their lives:

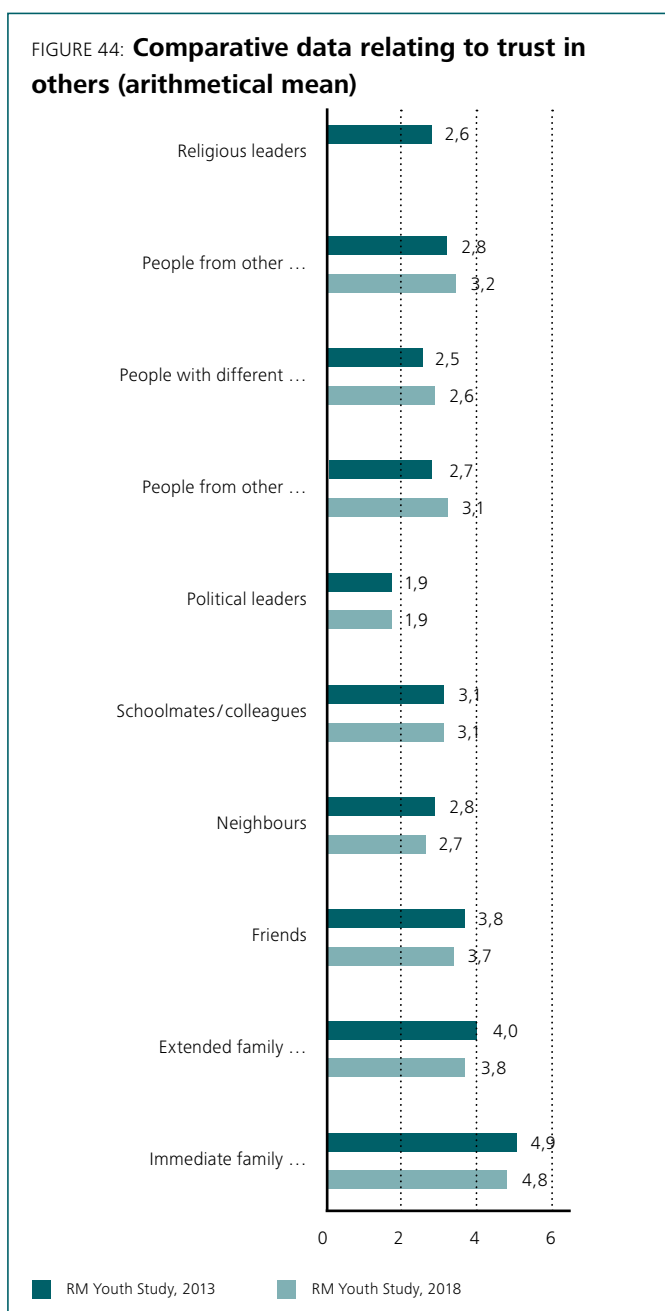
- spend more time praying and more time with their families, and less time reading newspapers/magazines, engaging in creative work, playing video games, relaxing, spending time in bars/cafes, spending time at youth centres, volunteering for social projects/initiatives, going abroad and sports activities;
- express greater confidence in immediate or extended family members, and less trust in people with different political convictions;
- express greater satisfaction with family life, with their circle of friends, and with life as a whole;
- express greater faith in a better future for themselves;
- are more apprehensive with regard to all the above possible reasons for fear (see Graph 43).
- prefer local family neighbours with a lot of children, group of students or a family from the western Balkans, and are much more closed toward homosexual persons or couples, drug addicts and former prisoners.

It was also interesting to see how religiousness<sup>19</sup> correlates with some important behavioural patterns among young people. The regression analysis showed that more religious young people get along better with their parents and would raise their children in the same manner as their parents did, allow their parents to interfere in their important life decisions, and want and are planning a large family; when choosing a marriage partner, their religious convictions are important, as are approval by the family, virginity and nationality; they also tend to prefer the public rather than private sector for employment. Religiousness does not stand in a positive correlation with the strong youth desire to move out of the country, but it is related to a greater interest in political issues and better opportunities to accept a political function.

## RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS: YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE SOCIAL SPHERE

### Youth and social relationships/confidence in others/acceptance of others

In the context of interest in how young people establish themselves in the social sphere, one question was asked as to how much they trusted different people from their closer and more extended environment. The responses on a scale from 1 (“not at all”) to 5 (“very much”) are provided below and juxtaposed with responses provided by young people in the 2013 Youth Study<sup>20</sup>.

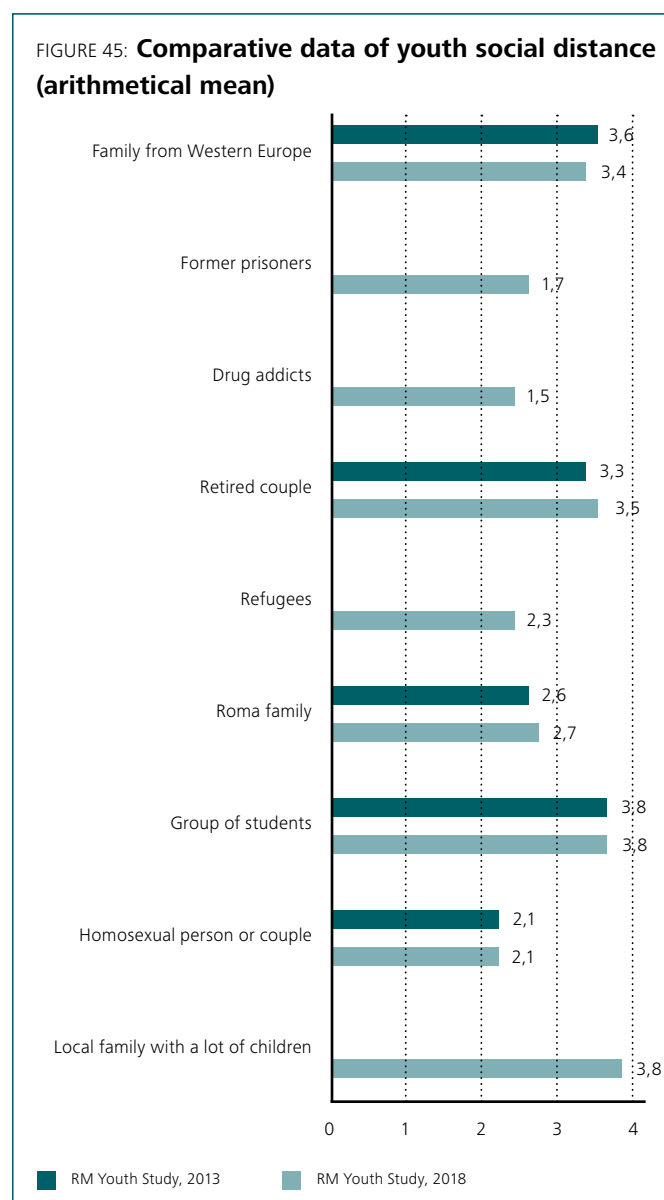


As it can be noticed, young people both now and five years ago (Latkovikj et al., 2013; see also Jakimovski et al., 2014) have the greatest trust in their immediate and extended family members

and friends, while they have the least trust in political leaders. Mean values for some groups of people are almost the same, with some being quite close, and there is only a statistical difference for two groups of people – people from other nationalities and different religions. Hence it can certainly be demonstrated that Macedonian and Albanian citizens in 2018 trust each other less than they did in 2013.

Young people were also asked whether they have friends who have a different social status, and almost 88% responded yes – they had, which only confirmed the fact that there is no orientation toward social domination in Macedonia (Serafimovska, 2006). To put it more precisely, there is no marked individual preference for hierarchy with higher social classes having a standing above groups with a lower social status (Sidanius et al, 1994).

A particular variation of Bogardus’ Social Distance Scale was used in this study to research young people’s strength of feeling about a certain type of family or group moving into their neighbourhood. Such a scale was also part of the 2013 Youth Study (see Latkovikj et al., 2013). The results of both studies are provided below.



Given that the groups formed for the social distance evaluations in 2013 and 2018 are not entirely identical, this graph only shows those social groups that were the same in both years, and those only formed in this 2018 Study. The comparison produces almost equal results. However, it showed worrisome social distance toward refugees, homosexuals, and in particular, former prisoners and drug addicts. The data can be discussed in relation to the consequences of living in a society experiencing social crisis, where there is a growing lack of trust in other persons considered to be an “out-group”, while there is a growing trust in others who are considered to be an “in-group” (Serafimovska, 2006). One reason for such a distance can certainly be a self-perception as being different from others, while this perception always has two sides: a perception that “we are different from them” and a perception that “they are worse than us” (Cvetanova et al., 2016).

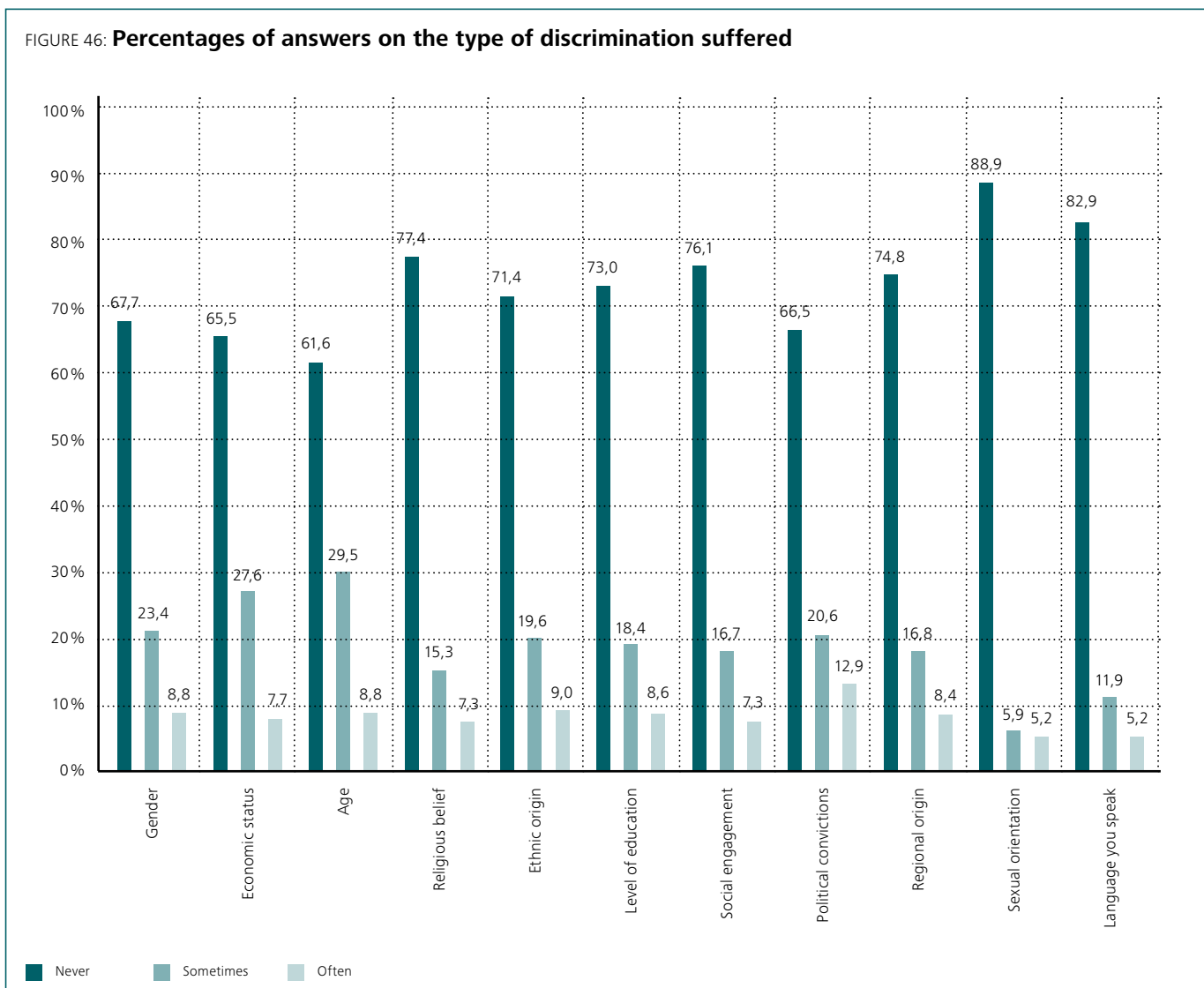
## Perception of discrimination/inequality in society

If in the past social or class affiliation was the dominant basis for the presence of inequality, political mobilisation is taking place today above all along the lines of cultural affiliation in the form of racial, ethnic, religious and linguistic social groups falling under this term (Blondel, 1995; Kymlicka, 2004; Smith, 1991 according to Hristova and Cekikj in Hristova et al., 2014).

The question as to whether they have suffered discrimination for different reasons was posed to respondents in this Youth Study. The responses are provided below.

As can be seen from the results (which are almost identical with those of 2013 – see Latkovikj et al., 2013), sexual orientation<sup>21</sup> and the language spoken by young people is the least commonly stated reason for discrimination, while political beliefs and ethnicity are the most frequent reasons given for discrimination. This data (on political beliefs as a source of discrimination) might be also understood in the context of young people considering political affiliation of citizens to be the most significant factor in privileged treatment in society (Hristova et al., 2014).

FIGURE 46: Percentages of answers on the type of discrimination suffered





### Is there discrimination in Macedonia and where do you see it?

"Discrimination exists, and I see it in job announcements that discriminate on the basis of gender and age. I see it at schools and in organisations, where people discriminate against people with disabilities, people from other nationalities, etc. In Macedonia, anyone with a different opinion, attitude, or appearance is discriminated against ..." (Ana, 23)

"Certainly, in many areas even, society is not informed enough in numerous spheres, which allows discrimination to be present at a higher level." (Elena, 24)

"Maybe I'm not well informed about this topic, I haven't noticed. But discrimination exists for sure in other countries in Europe and America, Africa and Asia, so the world must change on this issue in order for us to see some changes in our country. In my opinion, this will hardly take place in the near future, but compared to Africa and Asia, we are not so bad." (Kate, 24)

"I see discrimination in social networks due to intolerance on the part of the majority towards the largest minority in terms of numbers." (Bojan, 25)

"Discrimination exists, it is ever present, starting with education (children with disabilities, homosexuals, different nationalities) and ranging to everyday life and the simplest things, such as going to the supermarket (insulting words, whispering behind someone's back due to some diversity). Literally any diversity that deviates from the accepted norm is subject to discrimination." (Dritan, 17)

"Yes, there is discrimination in Macedonia. It can be perceived both in the public and private sectors. In the public sector, it takes place in the domain of employment and the submission of documents, while in the private sector it is also concerned with employment, particularly for the Roma population." (Filip, 27)

"I don't believe there is any discrimination." (Petar, 21)

## FAMILY AND MARRIAGE

Changes in the global social system also necessarily cause relevant changes in the family demography domain. Changes in family composition are very apparent in the marked reduction in the family size, while taking into account the average number of family members. The nuclearisation processes being experienced by families in Macedonia as a result of global changes has intensified the reduction process among so-called large households composed of seven, eight and more members and other scales of families as well. In this light, the number of large family structures has been decreasing on a permanent basis, while the number of nuclear families only composed of parents and children, usually four members, has been constantly increasing (Matilov in Lazarovski et al., 2005).

New data on family and household structure in the EU Member States ([http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Being\\_young\\_in\\_Europe\\_today\\_-\\_family\\_and\\_society](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Being_young_in_Europe_today_-_family_and_society)) underscore some important findings:

- In most northern and western EU Member States, on average young people leave home in their early twenties, while in southern and eastern EU Member States the average age for leaving home is the late twenties or early thirties;
- Men below the age of 30 do not leave the nest in many southern EU Member States;
- New family models can be perceived: getting married is no longer the only way for partners to live together. The average age for a first marriage has increased in the course of the past two decades in all EU Member States. Based on research conducted in the EU Member States with data available in 2015, the average female age for the first marriage was 29.9, and 32.4 for males. In 1995, the average age (simple average again based on available data) for the first marriage was 25.7 for females and 28.3 for males.
- Transition to maturity: On average, young men leave the family home later than young women.
- Transition from childhood to maturity is characterised by a large number of key steps such as leaving the parents' home for study or work, material independence, moving in with a partner or marriage, and having children or not. However, the path to independence is not clear-cut and youth face a range of challenges that may result in them staying longer in their parents' home or returning to it;
- People who live alone and couples without children constitute more than 50% of all households in the developed world.
- The portion of households with children is decreasing in the EU.

### Youth household profile in Macedonia

In this part of the analysis, an attempt was made to create a profile for the average youth household in Macedonia, while considering the following analytical criteria: household number and structure (how many persons and who lives in a household); housing type (parents' home/inherited flat (house)/purchased flat (house)) and reasons for such; getting along with one's parents; decision-making processes in a family and who influences these decisions; projections/ideas for young people's future relating to: their marital status (best age for marriage and how to choose a marriage partner), desire for children (number of children desired), and methods of parenting<sup>22</sup>. The cluster analysis indicates that 84% of young people live in a four-member household: two parents and two children living in the parents' home. The analytical data are provided below.

### Number and structure of a household

In terms of the number and structure of a family, the results indicate that an average family in Macedonia consists of four members (two parents and two children). In fact, the average number of family members is 4.4. When reviewing this basic data in terms of the urban environment, it can be said that the average number of members in a family is 4.26 in urban, and 4.67 in rural, areas. In terms of nationality, the average number in an Albanian family is 5.14, and in a Macedonian one 4.12.

A little more than one-sixth of respondents (or 15.4% of young people) say that their family is in an excellent financial state (they can afford whatever they need), and 10.7% state that they live on the edge of poverty. The others have assets to satisfy basic life needs without luxury.

### Type of housing

With regard to the type of housing, the results show that most young people live in their parents' home: 77.3% live in their parents' home, and 62.5% of them do so because it is the simplest and most comfortable solution. This data is likely to be a little contradictory in the context of statements by young people on how important it is for them to be independent and take responsibility (on a scale from 1/not at all important/ to 5/very important/, with the mean value "assume responsibility" being 4.50, and "being independent" 4.63);

Except for spending time with their family, those respondents who live in their parents' home compared to those who do not live with their parents tend to more often: listen to music, go out with friends, spend time in bars/cafes. Respondents who do not live in their parents' home more often read books/newspapers/magazines, read about spiritual and personal development, do creative things, meditate (yoga, etc.), and more often travel abroad.

### Parenting, getting along with parents and parents' influence

In terms of parenting and how well they get along with their parents, analysis of the data showed that young people get along well with their parents, although sometimes they have different opinions: 54.4% responded that "they get along well with their parents", and 37.7% of them stated that "they get along well with their parents, although sometimes they have differences of opinion".

Young people in Macedonia more often state that they are raised in the spirit of honesty and respect for authorities, and less in the spirit of unconditional obedience to authority (strict punishment) and permissiveness (few requests and expectations on the part of parents). An authoritative style is the dominant parenting style on the Scale of Parenting Style. (The authoritative subscale has an arithmetic mean of  $M=12.1$ ; The authoritarian subscale is  $M=9.38$ ; and permissive subscale  $M=8.08$ ). Young people raised with an authoritative and permissive style of parenting tend more to agree with the statement that "What young people need is strict discipline from their parents".

While still being focused on family life, with a scale from 1 (very unsatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied), 64.4% chose number 5, and only 21.2% number 4 – an interesting result.

In terms of parents' influence on young people's decisions, the data show that young people make their decisions together with their parents, with the mother having a slightly greater influence than the father (the mother's influence is more salient in urban areas than in rural areas): 46.4% of young respondents stated that their father had the biggest influence on important decisions,

and 54.6% their mothers. More than half of the respondents (58.9%) stated that they made decisions in life together with their parents. The greater the confidence in immediate family members, the higher the level of inclusion of parents in making decisions important to young people.

### Youth attitudes about marriage

When youth ideas/projections and attitudes about marriage are at the focus of interest, several sets of data are interesting: youth believe that men should get married at the age of 27–28 and even up to 30, and women at 25–26, or to be more precise, the average year for marriage for women is  $M=25.59$ , and for men is  $M=27.64$ ; young people (this data has also remained constant compared to the previous 2013 study) believe that they should have their own family in the future: 91.3% of young people said that they see themselves married with their own family. On a scale from 1 (not important at all) to 5 (very important), 74.4% of young people chose 5 as a response to the question "How important is it to have a spouse in life"; next to being married, loyalty to one's partner is most important for young people in Macedonia, with the arithmetic mean being  $M=4.66$  (on a scale from 1 to 5) for the level of importance to the statement: "Being loyal to one's partner", with the three most important issues for the youth – when choosing a marriage partner – are "the partner's character", "mutual interests" and "religious beliefs" of the partner. For 35.6%, sexual abstinence before marriage is an "outdated concept", for 29.4% it is "an unnecessary psychological burden", and for 19.4% it is a "value for both genders". For 15.6% of respondents it is a "virtue". On a scale from 1 (never) to 10 (always), young people have an arithmetic mean of  $M=2.89$  in response to the question as to what degree homosexuality should be tolerated.

### Projections for children and parenting

It is very important to young people in Macedonia to have 2, possibly 3 children, the first child when the wife is 26 and the husband 28, or to be more precise: 56% of youth want to have 2, and 30.8% want to have 3 children. The average desired number of children among youth is  $M=2.61$ . On a scale from 1 (not important at all) to 5 (very important), 78% of young people chose 5 as a response to the question "How important is to have children in life" ( $M=4.45$  on the same scale).

Young people want to raise their children almost in the same manner as their parents raised them: 52.3% of young people responded "almost the same" to the question "Would you raise your children like your parents raised you?". Albanians (compared to Macedonians) are more likely to choose the alternative "the same" to the question "Would you raise your children like your parents raised you?". Macedonians, on the other hand, more often select the category "almost the same" in response to this question.

On a scale from 1 (never) to 10 (always), young people display an arithmetic mean of  $M=3.69$  regarding the question of to what extent abortion should be tolerated.

### What are the reasons why most people, and after the age of 18, still live with their parents?

"The culture in the country and the upbringing (in years past) make it necessary to live with their parents until they get married." (Ana, 23)

"Lacking sufficient assets – low salaries, high bills, big rents." (Tara, 23)

"Insufficiently stable financial state, increasingly lower potential for an improvement, the desire and fear of becoming independent and starting a new life with greater obligations." (Elena, 24)

"The main reason, in my opinion, why young people today still live with their parents is the parenting style since their early age. Parents who "spoil" their children too much by doing their duties for them, allowing them an abundance of free time, rewarding them with money without explaining its value, what it means to earn money, and that material items do not translate into happiness in life. They protect their children too much and do not allow them to make their own decisions regardless of whether they make proper decisions or not – that is how you learn from own mistakes. In our country, young people live with their parents until the age of 23–24, and after that they start working and obtain practical experience, while youth in other countries begin to work/practice/study much earlier and they have an opportunity to go to college and acquire self-discipline and responsibility for supporting themselves both with money and household tasks" (Bojan, 25).

"For financial reasons, tradition, and the great dependence of children on their parents (great concern with how they will live alone)" (Petar, 21)

## CONCLUSIONS

- The most important values for young people are the following: *to be faithful/loyal to one's partner/friends/employers; to be independent; to have a successful career and to take responsibility*. The least important issues in life for young people are: *being politically active, and participating in civil society activities/initiatives*. Gender, age and ethnicity are significant predictors of values. Parenting style is in a correlation with certain values, while most desired in terms of highlighting specific values are authoritative parenting, and to some extent, permissiveness.
- The respondents were far more optimistic about their future than they are when it comes to the future of Macedonian society. Optimism about one's personal future stands in a positive correlation with self-perceived right-wing orientation, trust in immediate and extended family members, friends and people of other religions and nationalities. A "darker" projection of one's own future in the next 10 years is correlated with personal experience of discrimination. Optimistic attitudes toward the future of Macedonia go along with trust in institutions of the system, democracy in Macedonia and in political leaders in the country.
- Young people in Macedonia are frightened by almost everything, in particular, pollution, climate changes, and poverty, while female respondents and Macedonians are more concerned about most of these phenomena.
- Use of ties and acquaintances to find a job and to satisfy other needs is still a factor among youth in their everyday lives.
- Young people are more religious today compared to 5 years ago. A large percentage now and 5 years ago only attend religious services on important religious holidays.
- Religiousness goes along with traditional attitudes and interest/involvement in politics.
- Just like 5 years ago, young people mostly trust their immediate and extended family members and friends, while they feel that leaders deserve the least trust.
- Macedonians and Albanians trust each other less in 2018 compared to 2013.
- Social dominance does not exist as a personal preference.
- Young people showed a worrisome distance toward refugees, homosexuals and in particular former prisoners and drug addicts.
- Young people's attitude is that sexual orientation and the language they speak is rarely a reason for discrimination, while political affiliation and ethnic background are the most common reasons for such.
- An average family is composed of 4 members among Macedonians and 5 among Albanians: two parents and their children.
- Young people want to be independent and take responsibilities; most of them, however, live in their parents' home. Reasons they cite include lack of sufficient financial resources, fear of becoming independent and cultural norms.

- Family members get along well with each other.
- Both parents involve themselves in their children's decisions.
- Young people see themselves married with two children in the future.
- Young people are raised to respect their parents and they would like to bring up their children in the same manner.
- Defeating the urban mafia in the construction industry.
- Economic measures to increase employment, and development of entrepreneurship.
- Preventive and remedial measures prepared by medical workers.
- Finding measures to reduce affective social distance, which is associated with prejudices, hate and violence. This is possible by openly combatting:
  - privileges in employment, the judiciary and police;
  - laws that do not apply equally to everyone;
  - susceptibility to corruption and crime.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- *A balanced parenting style* needs to be promoted in terms of relevant permissiveness, democracy as well as respect of authority (instead of an authoritarian style), consistency, and parenting based on principles. This can and should be done by means of: the media (publicising educational programmes, emphasising good practice, debate programmes over parenting styles in Macedonia); education (at all levels through revision of curricula and contents), participation in NGOs (in promotional actions of that type, sustainable projects at the local level, etc.).
- Development of government policies mainly in the sphere of education: practical (steeped in practice) education, education that develops life and social skills other than classic competences, and education that develops critical and creative thinking as well as moral reasoning.
- Developing confidence in the institutions of the system, especially the judiciary and the police, since the feeling that we live in a fair world can serve as the foundations for optimism and constructive behaviour.
- Investing in personal and professional self-training programmes in order to develop a feeling of personal competence and positive attitude toward the future.
- Developing an environmental awareness in education, including through the middle levels, and inclusion of the non-governmental sector.
- Conscious and focused change away from stereotypes in thinking and learning in self-regulation models – conscious and directed activity that results in behaviour promoting diversity, and not discrimination; development of critical and creative thinking; development of moral principles and values.
- It is necessary to focus activities on efficient implementation of inclusive education at all levels of the educational system, starting with pre-school, to overcome prejudices against diversity, and especially to promote interethnic schools and classes.
- Political parties should offer platforms and programmes attractive to young people, while it is recommended that decision-makers include young people in decision-making processes (especially on topics affecting youth), to restore confidence in politics and to urge active youth participation in political processes. Along these lines, it is also recommended that active and functional youth councils be formed or reintroduced in all municipalities at local level.
- Additional training is required for teachers and professional staff in primary and secondary schools to tackle and act in cases of discrimination involving school students on any grounds.





## 7

# EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Education in Macedonia is in a continuous process of reform. Such a situation of continuous reform does not leave room for evaluation of the effects of specific educational models and their effectiveness, which narrows the space for all stakeholders to encourage the process. It is particularly difficult to distinguish between positive and negative effects for direct users of this process, i.e. youth.

## NATIONAL CONTEXT

- The percentage of students included in the educational process is one of the highest among participant countries in the PISA Research project, totalling 98.6%. (OECD (2016), PISA Results 2015)). Such a situation, among other things, is due to 2008 legislation. Since then, in addition to primary education, secondary education has been mandatory as well.
- Education in Macedonia is organised by the International Standard Classification of Education – ISCED, devised by UNESCO and classified in the Macedonian Classification Framework.
- According to the 2017/18 statistical reports, there are 989 primary schools, and the student/teacher ratio is 10.5 (19,2448 students/18,291 teachers). In the same period, Macedonia had 43 “special primary schools” and 12 “primary schools for adults”.
- According to the 2017/18 statistical reports, there are 131 secondary schools, and the student/teacher ratio is 9.5 (71,458 students/7,445 teachers).
- A tendency toward a reduction in the total number of students both in primary and secondary education is evident due to demographic change.
- Macedonia has 14 universities and 5 universities of applied science. In 2016/17, 58,083 students were enrolled in all institutions of higher learning. Most of them (86.6%) were enrolled at state institutions of higher learning, while 13% were enrolled at private institutions of higher education. Student/professor proportion was 20.3 (58,083 students/2,854 professors<sup>23</sup>).
- According to the PISA Testing, the perception of teachers regarding the physical capacity of primary and the secondary schools is satisfactory.
- Teachers’ professional advancement (in primary and secondary education) is low, accounting for 16% of teachers who attended some kind of professional advancement programmes within the three months prior to the PISA Testing.
- PISA Testing results (OECD (2016), PISA Results 2015) (Test for practical application of knowledge: reading, mathematics, natural sciences) showed in the first test in 2000 that 15-year-old Macedonian students were ranked among the last. In the testing conducted in 2015, the results were even worse for Macedonian pupils in all categories. The objective of the European strategy for smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth (ET 2020) is to reach a percentage of lower than 15% for 15-year-old pupils achieving low scores (the result for our country is 62.9% for science, 70.2% for math, and 70.7% for reading).
- Many studies relating to education, youth and employment have come to the common conclusion that education in Macedonia is inappropriate when it comes to preparing university/secondary school students for the labour market.

## EDUCATION QUALITY SATISFACTION

The quality of education is assessed at an average score of 2.61 (stand.dev=1.179) on a scale from 1 – not satisfied at all, to 5 – very satisfied), where 43.6% are located on the dissatisfaction part of the scale, with 35.6% expressing medium satisfaction, and 20.8% stating that they are satisfied. This result is in line with the results obtained from previous studies. In general, the quality of education in the other studies is given an average mark: “good but needs solid reforms”.

### How do you evaluate the quality of education? What is positive, and what is negative?

“I think that the quality of education in Macedonia is not at a high level, while the buildings and furnishings at the institutions located in the capital are somewhat OK. However, when it comes to staff, from pre-school to higher education, I think that the quality is at a very low level (with certain exceptions, perhaps 15–20%). This can be improved by having the employees at educational institutions attend seminars, training programmes on how to give lectures, interact with their school/university students, etc., develop better curricula as well as better monitor and evaluate teachers and professors. Not much is needed to make a better educational system, but it is precisely these details that contribute to the low quality of the educational system.” (Kate, 24)

Linear regression analysis of education variables showed a correlation with a strength of  $R=.499$ ;  $R\text{ square}=.245$  for the following variables that make the greatest contribution to quality of education in the country: “Work adapted curriculum” variable, where 70% are of the opinion curricula are not properly adapted, ( $B=.990$ ;  $Beta=.411$ ;  $p<.001$ ) and the variable “how easy it is to find a job after completing education”, where only 16% are of opinion that it is easy to find a job ( $B=.299$ ;  $Beta=.317$ ;  $p<.001$ ).

To put it simply, it would be expected that young people’s subjective perception of how satisfactory education is in the country would improve if curricula were adjusted to the work environment and if young people could easily find a job after completing their education.

“I believe that subjects like the natural sciences are lagging behind in practical/lab training – and this leads to an abundance of unnecessary theory. That prevents young people from learning about the real nature of these sciences and there is a sense of repulsion immediately. One positive aspect that I would single out is that the material is “chewed” many times over, leaving it up to students to get by with what they have learned and what they know. This may not sound particularly positive – but, it has helped me develop a stronger and more self-confident nature and way of working, where I do not expect things to be easy or for everything in life to come with an operating manual.” (Dritan, 17)

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND BUYING GRADES

One indicator of quality of education is also “the phenomenon of buying grades”. On a scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much) the mean value is  $M=4.12$  (stand.dev. 1.161). The age category 20 to 24, mainly from urban areas, more Macedonians than Albanians, as well as other age groups believe that grades are bought.

A comparison of extreme values (“not at all” and “yes, very much so”) in both years of research shows that the phenomenon of buying grades has been on the rise over the last few years. In 2018, the percentage of “yes” responses was twofold the level of 2013 (54.9% compared to 26%).

FIGURE 47: There are cases where grades and exams are ‘bought’ in institutes/universities in Macedonia

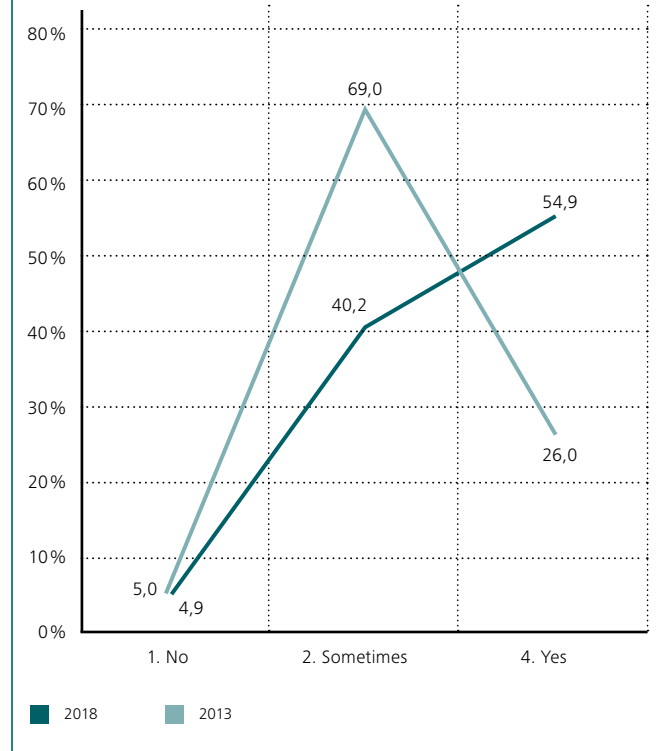
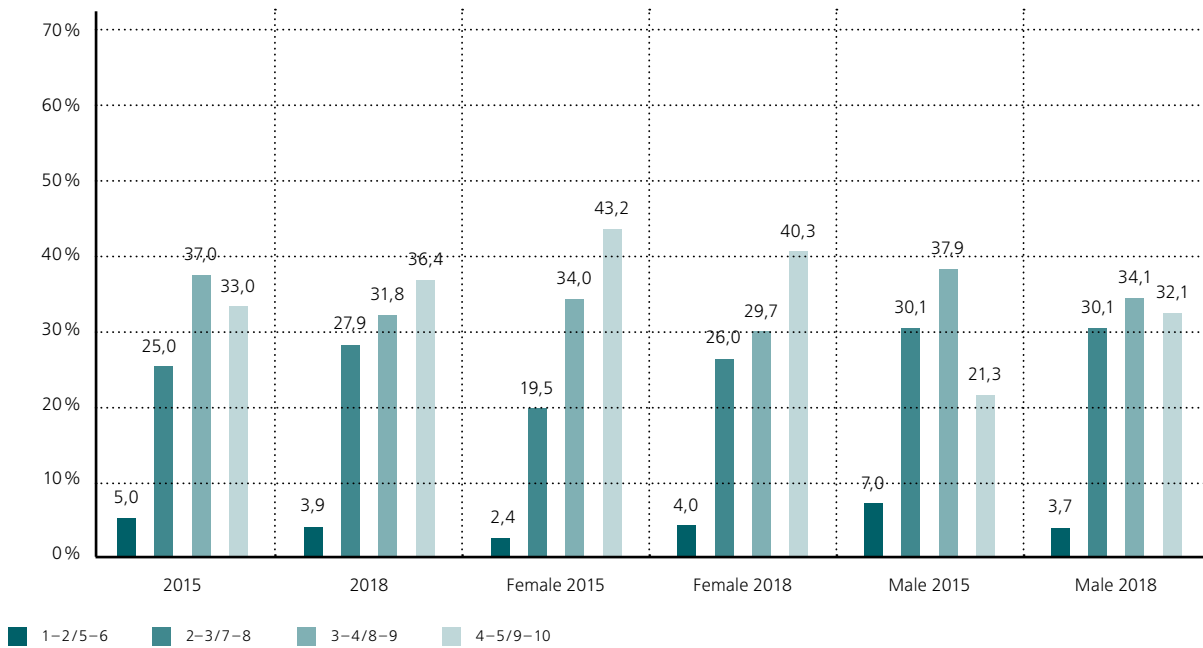




FIGURE 48: Grade average 2013/2018



### GRADE AVERAGE

The mean value of average grades is 3.01, or between 3 and 4 with secondary school students and between 7 and 8 with university students. The comparison of the mean value of the grade average between the two years showed that there is no difference. In 2018, just like in 2013, girls have a slightly higher average than boys.

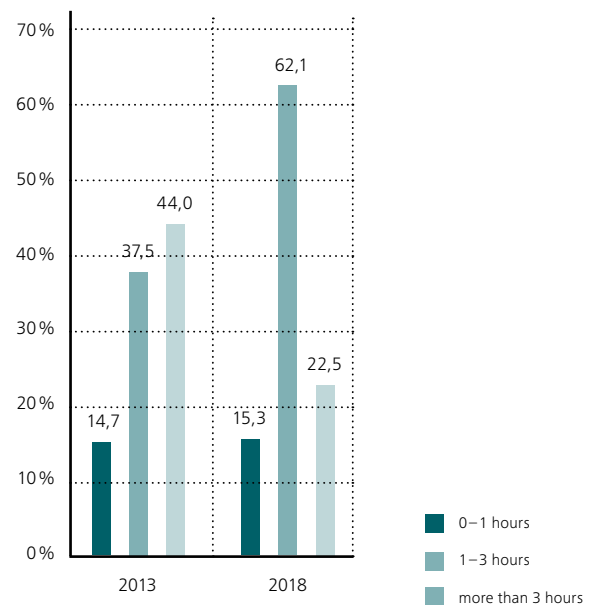
### HOURS DEDICATED TO STUDYING

To achieve those grades, the young people study an average of 2' two hours per day (M=2.61). Time dedicated to learning in secondary school and faculty is longer compared to that spent in primary school, and young females (M=2.74) study harder than young males (M=2.47). There is a comparative difference in the number of hours spent studying in both years of research. The average number of hours dedicated to learning has been reduced in 2018 compared to 2013, in particular the percentage of those studying more than 3 hours (from 44% to 22.5%).

Parents' education did not appear statistically significant in relation to the hours spent studying; however, it did appear statistically significant that in households with more than 30 books, children study harder. In terms of socioeconomic status emanating from the Post Hoc Test, it is evident that households can be divided into two groups. The first group includes children from "households that lack money to satisfy basic needs (electricity, heating, food, etc.)" and spend the least number of hours studying (m=1.76). The second group consists of households encompassing four categories ("enough money for basic bills, food, footwear and

clothes", "enough money for basic needs, but not enough for more expensive items", "can afford more expensive items, but cannot afford to buy a flat or car"), with children in households that "can afford everything necessary for good living" studying the hardest (m=2.82).

FIGURE 49: Hours dedicated to learning 2013/2018



Roughly two-third of respondents (72.1%) perceive a typical day at school as hard and stressful, which is 14% more compared to 2013.

FIGURE 50: **Everyday life at school/faculty 2013/2018**

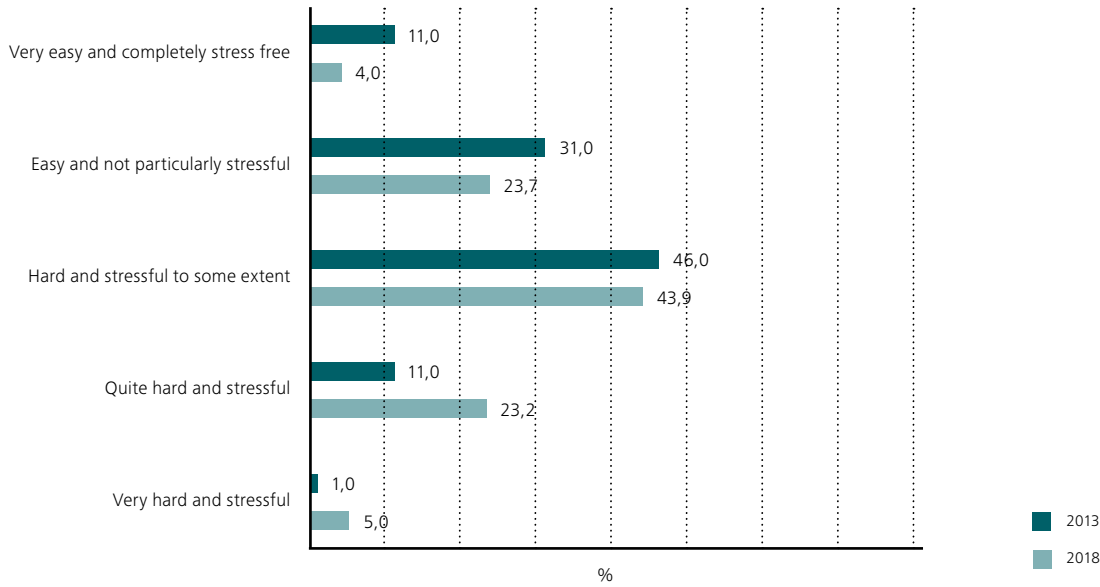
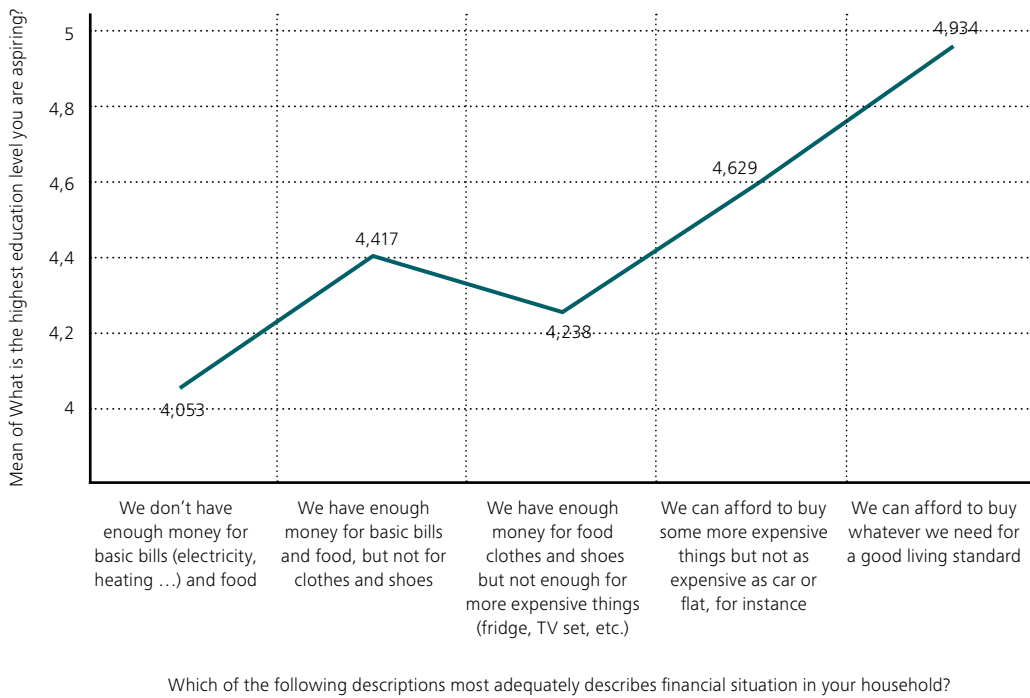


FIGURE 51: **Socioeconomic status and youth aspiration for the desired level of education**



## ASPIRATIONS AND INVESTMENT

In the study *“Youth Trends in the Republic of Macedonia”* (Jakimovski, J et al 2014), with reference to youth’s general position towards education, 45% of the young population stated that education is the most important issue in life, that it fosters much more good than bad in an individual, makes a person a better citizen, shapes individual traits and helps them enjoy life, time spent studying is not wasted and experience acquired at school helps in life.

This also aligns with findings relating to young people’s aspirations as to the level of education they want to achieve. On the seven-degree scale provided, the mean value for the answers is  $M=4.55$  (4 – bachelor university degree, 5 – university of applied science degree, 6 – master, 7 – doctorate), with 80% of respondents aspiring to achieve university education. With regard to the aspiration of respondents with regard to the level of education, a statistically significant correlation was detected with respect to the level of significance  $p<0.01$  according to: place of residence

( $r=.099$ ), age groups ( $r=.170$ ), socioeconomic status ( $r=.165$ ), parents' education (mother  $r=.234$ , father  $r=.273$ ) and number of books in a household ( $r=.264$ ).

Respondents who live in the city ( $M=4.64$ ) have higher aspirations than those living in rural areas ( $M=4.36$ ). Aspirations of the 25-to-29 age group who have completed a university education ( $m=5.38$ ) are higher than and differ from the other age groups of persons who have completed secondary education ( $M=4.17$ ) and primary education ( $M=4.41$ ). Aspirations related to the level of education are influenced by the mother's and father's education, with the higher the parents' level of education, the higher children's aspirations with regard to the level of education. Socioeconomic status also influences youth's aspiration for the desired level of education. The category of children from households who "can afford more expensive things but cannot afford to buy a flat or car" ( $M=4.63$ ) as well as those who "can afford everything they need for good living" ( $m=4.93$ ) have greater aspirations than children from the other households. The number of books once again shows a positive correlation with educational aspiration, with the aspiration of higher education being registered for groups of households that have more than 50 books ( $M=5.01$ ) and more than 100 books ( $M=5.31$ ).

More than two-thirds of respondents are convinced that they will achieve the desired level of education ( $M=4.21$ ). The greatest confidence is shown by those with a better socioeconomic standing.

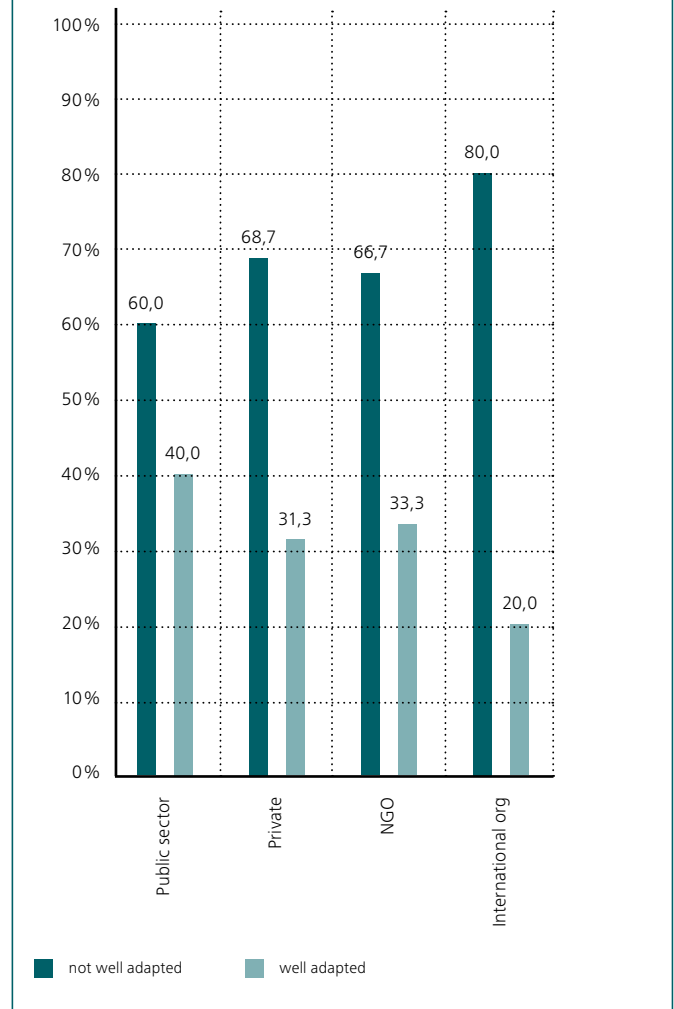
## EDUCATION AND EMPLOYABILITY

The employers' conclusion that certain vocations are lacking or that university/school students are hard to employ also add to the negative evaluation of the quality of the education process. The term employability means "able to work" in terms of possessing skills, knowledge, understanding and knowledge of business which will allow graduates to contribute productively to the organisation promptly after being employed. (Mason, G. 2009).

Key problems relating to the youth position in the labour market cited in all studies analysed are: insufficient quality of education outcomes; irrelevancy of education outcomes in terms of labour market needs; a still-weak relationship between industry and working environment; career orientation is not yet integrated into secondary school curricula.

Two-thirds of respondents are of the opinion that curricula are not adjusted to job requirements (69%), while (31%) believe the opposite. A slightly higher percentage (40%) of those employed in the public sector state that curricula are in line with the job sector.

FIGURE 52: **Do you think that training, school and university education are well adapted to the current world of work or not?**

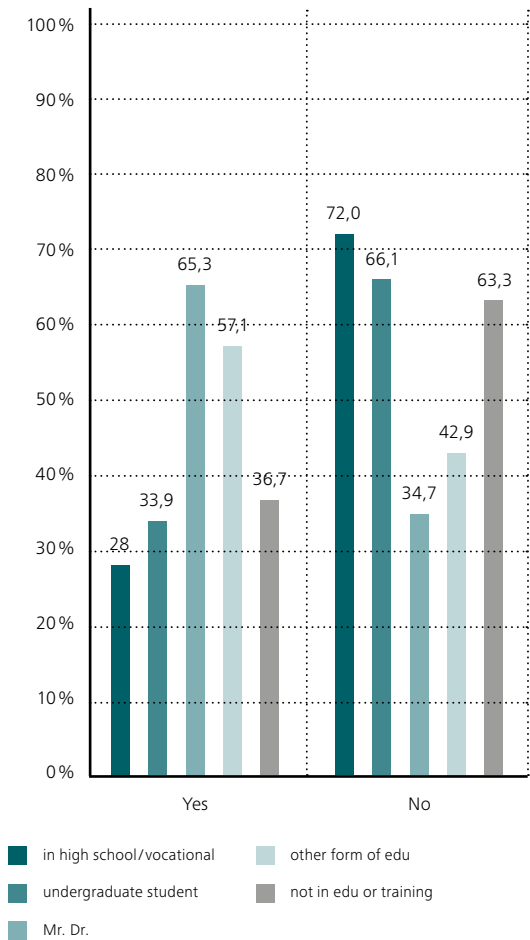


In terms of internships, only 36% of respondents stated that they performed practical work during their education. The finding that less than one-third of full-time school and university students performed some type of practical work during their education is cause for reflection.

In 2013, the percentage of those who performed practical work in secondary school is 2% higher compared to 2018 (28%). A comparison with current university students is a source of concern: in 2013, 50% of the respondents stated that they had performed some kind of practical work, while in 2018 this figure was only 33.9%.

Regarding student internships (university students), the Law on Higher Education (LHE, 2008) provides for the establishment of student practice programmes. Since the Law, which has undergone multiple amendments since 2008, contains gaps and omissions, student practical work is mainly of a formal nature (student do not perform practicals, instead submitting to faculties documents stamped by their close friends who own their own businesses as evidence of a practical semester).

FIGURE 53: **Have you ever performed a practical internship/having current relevance in terms of education**

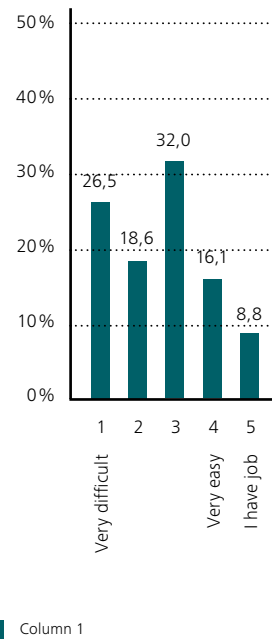


**How do you assess the quality of education in Macedonia? What is positive, and what is negative?**

“One positive aspect is that young people prefer to be highly educated and study harder, and a negative one is that teachers/professors kill their motivation largely by presenting knowledge in theoretical terms and without interaction with school/university students. All young people with or without a diploma leave school illiterate in terms of practical knowledge, but with clear theoretical knowledge and results obtained through learning by rote.” (Bojan, 25)

Only 16.1% of respondents are of opinion that they will find a job easily after completing their education.

FIGURE 54: **How easy will it be to find a job after completing education?**



Grouping based on current educational status reveals an interesting finding.

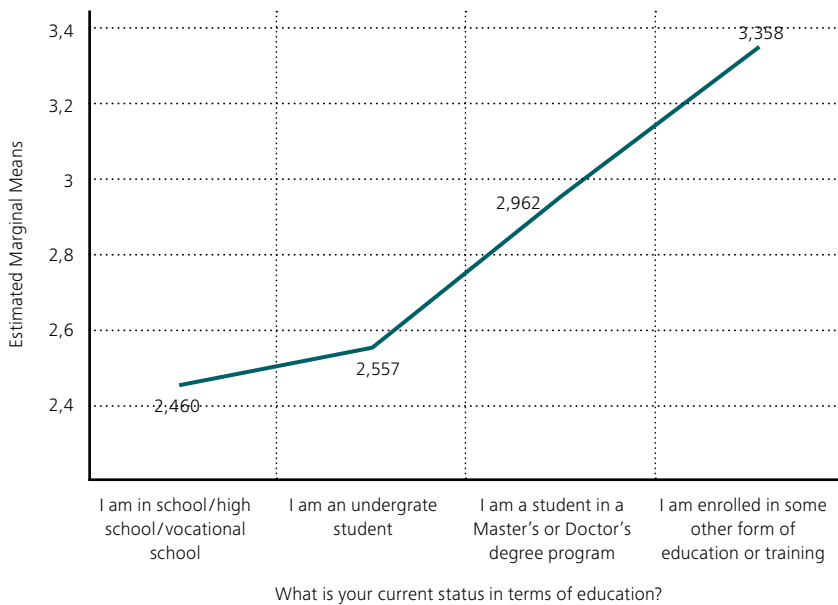
Those respondents “involved in some other type of education or training” (M=3.36) believe that they will find a job, and their opinion differs from those attending “secondary education” (M=2.46) and “university” (M=2.56).

This finding is in line with modern tendencies toward life-long learning as an aspect enhancing the modern economy, which is an important part of EU strategies, in which informal modes of learning become particularly important. Involvement in informal modes of learning affects perceptions of finding a job. Provision of adult education is still at a low level (in both quantitative and qualitative terms) in Macedonia, and the system is not based on competences connected to the work environment; opportunities for life-long learning are few and far between for persons who have not been able to benefit from an education.

The analysis of documents, research, and studies relating to this topic distinguish between the following reasons for youth unemployment in Macedonia: a difficult transition from school to job; lack of practical work under real conditions; a disjuncture between educational experience acquired and real needs in the labour market; acceptance of undeclared work, low salary level.

The sample of respondents in this study reflects the real situation of youth employment in Macedonia. According to the State Statistical Office, youth employment (15–24) in the country is exceptionally low (around 16%). Looking at the situation in 2015, employment according to age was: 5.8% (15–19), 27.1% (20–24), and 47.3% (30–34). We also see a change in preparation for school.

FIGURE 55: **Estimated Marginal Means of How easy will it be for you, in your opinion, to find a job after you finish your formal education?**



In the period 2006–2015, the number of young (15–29) employees with a low level of education went down by 44.1%, while second-

ary education increased by 10%, and the percentage with regard to higher education doubled.

TABLE 10: **What is your current employment status?**

What is your current employment status?	Number of cases	%
I have a permanent full-time employment contract	121	13
I have a permanent part-time employment contract	12	1.3
I have a temporary full-time employment contract	133	14.3
I have a temporary part-time employment contract	71	7.6
I have occasional job(s)	72	7.7
I am self-employed	42	4.5
I am in occupational training	13	1.4
I have no job, but I am actively looking for a job	160	17.2
I have no job and I am currently not looking for a job	293	31.5
Total	931	100

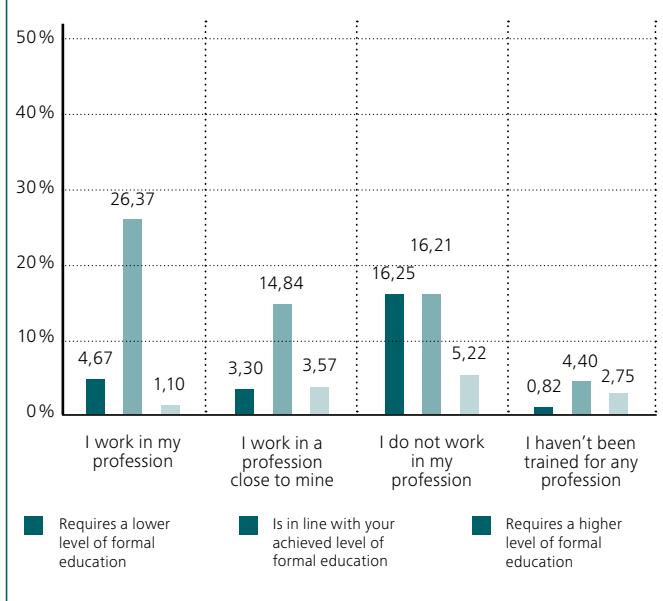
The share of informally employed young persons is significantly higher among youth aged 15–24, totalling 38.6%. Youth aged 15–29 working part-time account for one-fourth (25%). In terms of economic status (employed, self-employed, employer, unpaid family worker) the most prevalent group in the category of unpaid family workers are youth aged 15–29, or about 20,000 persons.

In 2018, the average weekly number of working hours is 37, compared to 31 hours in 2015. One-third of those who have a job, work in their occupation, and every fifth employee have a job very close to their profession. However, 42.6% are not employed in line with their qualifications. For 62% of respondents, their current

job is in line with their level of formal education. One-fourth of respondents stated they had a job requiring a lower level of education than their's.

“The biggest problem is that after finishing studying, young people cannot find work in the profession of their schooling. Therefore, they work anywhere for very low salaries. All this contributes to young people not being happy and being demotivated and depressed and looking for salvation outside of our country.” (Mina, 25)

FIGURE 56: Profession/job requirements and formal education



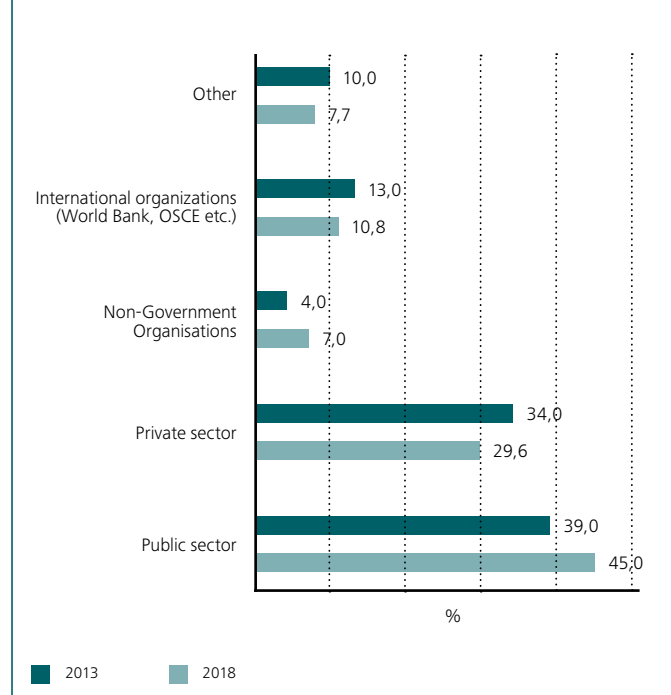
Young people are predominantly employed in the private sector (61%). According to the data provided by the State Statistical Office, the greatest number of jobs for young people (15–29) are to be found in the following sectors: agriculture (18.8% of the total number of young employees), manufacturing (18.4%), trade (18.1%), construction (7.0%), hotels and catering (6.1%). Young people are mainly employed in the following job positions: agriculture, manufacturing and construction, where the lowest-paid jobs are also to be found (70–75% of the average monthly salary, which amounted to MKD 22,000 in March 2018).

Of those respondents who work, a small number of cases “could not get a job due to low grades” (10%), “could not get a job due to insufficient level of education” (19%), or “moved because they do not have an adequate job in the region where they lived” (12%).

## PREFERRED JOB

Young people would prefer a job in the public sector (45%). In 2018, the percentage of respondents who want to work in the public sector increased by 6% compared to 2013, while the percentage went down by 5% for those who would like to have a job in the private sector. The percentage distribution in other sectors is similar in both years.

FIGURE 57: Which of the following sectors would you most like to work in?



In 2018 there is no statistically significant difference relating to gender, place of residence, or ethnicity compared to 2013.

## FACTORS IN FINDING AND CHOOSING A JOB

Three important factors in finding a job can be identified: firstly “ties and friends”, secondly “connections with powerful people”, and thirdly “luck”. These are followed, fourthly, by “expertise”, fifthly “level of education”, sixthly “party membership”, in seventh place “education and foreign experience”, and lastly, “region”. A partial comparison is made with 2013, which is inconsistent, since only 5 factors were offered that year compared to 8 in 2018. However, it is evident that the factor of “luck” in 2018 is ranked in the third highest position, whereas in 2013 it was ranked fifth out of 5 factors offered. Responses placing luck among the first three factors that matter in finding a job confirm the hypothesis that young people live in an environment that does not make it possible for them to realistically assess opportunities to exercise their rights, pursue their interests and needs, and seek to improve their socioeconomic position.

The environment in which they live exhibits several problems that have an impact on youth employment and a feeling for what is required to find a job: the general economic situation in the country resulting in lack of adequate jobs in terms of scope and quality; young people do not possess the skills and competences

in demand in the labour market; short-term isolated interventions to overcome youth unemployment; a general atmosphere of resignation and lack of motivation among youth caught up in a process of (self-)employment; insufficient support for youth entrepreneurship. (*"National Youth Strategy 2016–2020"*)

TABLE 11: **Range of factors in finding a job**

Range of factors in finding a job	2018	2013
Acquaintances (friends, relatives...)	1	1
Connections with people who are in power	2	2
Luck	3	5
Expertise	4	4
Level of education	5	3
Party membership	6	
Education or foreign work experience	7	
Origin (your region)	8	

Out of eight factors offered, young people found the following to be most important: "job security without fear of being fired", second "salary" and third "enough leisure time outside the job". These were followed by: fourth "career opportunities", fifth "feeling of achieving something", sixth "doing something important for society", seventh "working with co-workers you like" and eighth "working with people". A significance correlation with socioeconomic status was found, i.e. with income of the household. It can be concluded that there is a difference between those having high and low incomes. The following factors are more important for respondents from households with the highest income: "career opportunities, "feeling of achieving something, "doing something important for society", "enough leisure time besides the job", compared with those respondents from households with the lowest income.

"The Youth Study in the Republic of Macedonia 2016" (Topuzovska Latkovik, M et al., 2016) as well as the findings of this research have confirmed the realisation that, with regard to work, the Macedonian Millennial Generation have the same traits as millennials from Europe and the USA. They expect a good salary, flexibility, career opportunities, opportunities to prove themselves, and appreciation of their investments.

In view of the high level of unemployment in the country, particularly high youth unemployment, young people work mainly in the informal sector in a situation of underemployment and at jobs in sectors with salaries under the national average, so it is not surprising that "secure job without fear of being fired" is ranked first in importance is choosing a job along with a job in the public sector.

## VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering is an action based on one's own free decision, involving an investment of one's own free time, with the goal being to introduce new aspects and values in other people's lives without expecting any material benefit, or investments that do not pay off (Wilson, 2000; Puljiz et al., 2005).

When young people volunteer, there are multiple benefits. In addition to being a source of help for certain categories of people in society, it is a form of "education by experience" for young people by playing an active civic role in the development of a democratic society. It is a way of preparing for the labour market since it enables learning and acquisition of experience and new skills, especially teamwork, communication, initiative, and decision-making.

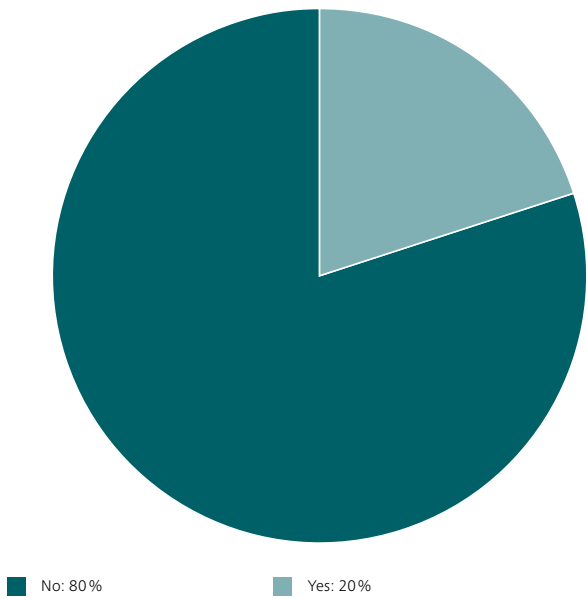
The degree of youth inclusion in voluntary activities increased slightly in 2018 and is 20% among youth who have volunteered in the past 12 months compared to 2013, when this percentage was 12.8%.

The main finding is the very low level of involvement in voluntary/unpaid activities. There is no significance in terms of gender, ethnicity, age categories, place of residence, or health. There is significance in terms of school preparation, with respondents who have achieved secondary education scoring highest in voluntary activities compared to those with primary and university education. Socioeconomic status, or income in a household, reveals a difference between the richest (those who can afford everything) and are in a separate group exhibiting the least inclination toward voluntary activities, and the other group, where those persons with the lowest income (who do not have enough money for basic needs) engage most in voluntary activities.



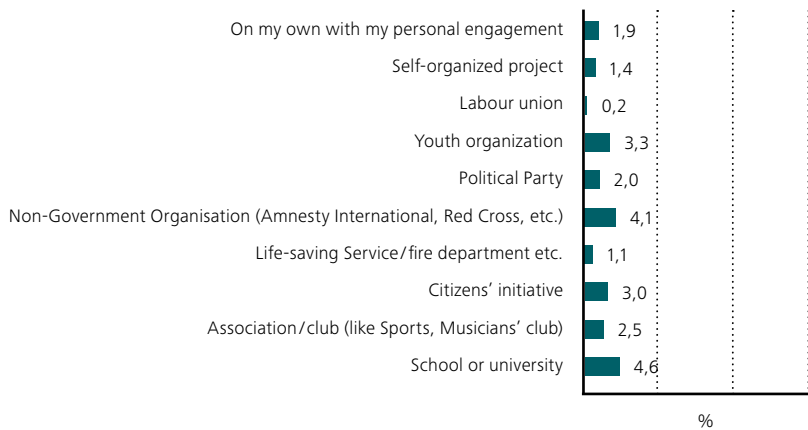


FIGURE 59: **Have you participated in voluntary activity in the past 12 months i.e. have you done any unpaid work voluntarily?**



Although the percentage of persons engaging in voluntary activities is insignificant, it was interesting to identify the organisations where such activities took place. Most of the respondents (4.6%) volunteered at a school or university, 4.1% at NGOs and 3.3% at youth organisations. ---These are followed by, at a very low percentage (under 2%): civic initiatives, sports and music clubs, political parties, personal engagement, independent projects, the Red Cross and others.

FIGURE 60: **Organisations where such activities have taken place**



## CONCLUSIONS

- One aspiration relating to the preferred level of education applying to more than 80% of youth is to complete university education. Aspirations are higher with youth from urban areas, with better-educated parents, in households with better socioeconomic status, in a household with more than 50 books. Most ambitious is the 25–29 age group;
- More than two-thirds are convinced that they will achieve the desired level of education (M=4.21);
- The number of hours dedicated to learning is lower than in 2013, particularly the percentage of those studying more than 3 hours, dropping from 44% to 22.5% in 2018%. The socioeconomic status of households has an impact on the hours devoted to studying;
- Two-thirds of respondents perceive the typical day at school as hard and stressful.
- The prevalence of buying grades has increased in the past few years;
- Almost half of the respondents are dissatisfied with the quality of education. They are particularly dissatisfied when it comes to alignment of curricula with work and opportunities to find a job after completing school;
- Those “involved in some other type of education or training” (M=3.36) believe that they will find a job easily, and their opinion differs markedly from those attending “secondary education” (M=2.46) and “university” (M=2.56).
- Less than one-third of full-time school and university students have performed some type of practical work during education;
- Young people prefer a job in the public sector (45%);
- One-third of those who have a job work in their occupation, and every fifth employee has a job very close to his/her profession. Young people are predominantly employed in the private sector (61%);
- Citation of “luck” among the first three factors in finding a job (first place: “ties and friends”, second “connections with powerful people”) supports the hypothesis that young people live in an environment where rules are ambiguous and do not apply equally to everyone. This does not allow them to really assess opportunities to exercise their rights, interests, and needs in order to be able to improve their socioeconomic position;
- Out of eight possible factors, young people chose the following as most important: first “job security without fear of being fired”, second “salary”, and third “enough leisure time besides the job”.
- Only 20% of young respondents have volunteered in the past 12 months. Respondents with secondary education have the highest score with regard to voluntary activities compared to those with primary and university education. The richest (those who can afford everything) have engaged in the fewest voluntary activities.

## Main problems detected in the educational system and employment:

- A low level of PISA Testing scores for reading, mathematics and the natural sciences;
- A low level of employability and self-employability or education is unsuited for preparing university/school students for the labour market and self-employment;
- Corruption in education and employment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- If the results of the PISA tests are to serve as an indication for steps to be taken, this entails defining and undertaking measures to improve the quality of education and hence improve students’ performance. The need for a thorough analysis is inevitably related to experience in schools that will apply to all stakeholders.

The analysis needs to answer the following questions: *Why do Macedonian primary/secondary school students turn in poor results in PISA testing? How can the percentage of 15-year-old primary/secondary school students with low achievements be reduced to under 15% (the European target)?* This is to be an integral part of the strategy and the action plan.

- Strengthening the connection between education and labour market, or connection between competences at work and study results in educational programmes.

Priority should be assigned to the provision of quality education taking into account the three basic levels defined by the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF): Qualification levels for which students are educated; institution/school level; national level.

The process has already started and is being facilitated through the following documents: “Law on National Qualifications Framework”<sup>24</sup>, “Guidelines for Qualifications Development for the National Qualifications Framework”<sup>25</sup>, “Methodology for Development of Occupational Standards”<sup>26</sup>. However, there is not a specific harmonised system for monitoring and obtaining information on the adequacy of alignment between education and the labour market<sup>27</sup>.

It is necessary to identify and determine employers’ actual needs for vocations and adequate qualifications in terms of skills, competences and knowledge. These needs should then be transformed into standardised outcomes (study results) in educational programmes.

There is a need to refresh and move the process up to speed with a systematic approach, where first institutional competencies are clarified, to then be followed by clear determination and revitalisation of the roles all stakeholders as well as the manner and the level of their communication, strong leadership by one institution and a strategy to be developed with an action plan. Estab-

lishing uniform and clear criteria for attaining competences to be achieved by students after completing their education will result in adequate qualifications for certain vocations. To obtain these, it is necessary to create and improve tools that ensure quality and bear relevance to qualifications.

### **Such an approach would allow:**

- Transparent interconnection of study results achieved in all educational institutions in the country as well as their international appraisal and acknowledgement.
- This approach requires that educational programmes be bolstered with supplementary training, practical work, and use of know-how.
- A reduction in corruption in education along with the aim of ensuring a fair evaluation.

### **To achieve this, it is necessary to:**

- Strengthen the interconnection between educational institutions and: the Council of Vocational Education and Training, boards for cooperation and trust with the business community (although these currently exist as required by law, they do not have any impact on curricula or the strategic objectives of educational institutions and do not influence the quality of the process for creation of vocations and qualifications);
- Review curricula, particularly in vocational schools, emphasising study results and the needs of the labour market;
- Introduce informative campaigns to eliminate negative stereotypes at secondary vocational schools for students, and particularly for parents, through which they are informed of employment opportunities;
- Review textbooks;
- Increase the level of training for teachers and dedicate much more attention to their pedagogical capacity, while reducing the scope of administrative duties and tasks;
- Improve conditions at schools, especially those that provide training and practical application of the knowledge acquired, as well as the availability and provision of teaching aids;
- Increase the level of practical work and mobility. It is necessary to additionally regulate practical work, especially in higher education. Develop dual education system programmes, particularly in secondary vocational education;
- Increase the number of school/university students in international mobility for education and training. International mobility mainly focused on European countries will allow young people to acquire valuable experience and obtain a clear picture of conditions in those countries, which will additionally influence their decision to migrate;
- Introduce programmes for monitoring talented students;
- Render evaluation methods uniform through systematic measurement of the quality of educational outcomes and creation of clear requirements at the national level to obtain adequate educational qualifications.

- In addition to regulation of minimum salary, wage subsidies are required for young employees in the private sector in the form of certain requirements and/or possibilities for companies. Subsidies to raise youth salaries in tandem with initial subsidy lines for companies as support for investments in new technologies. Such an approach will help strengthen the economy;
- Increase numbers of youth volunteering by reinforcing interconnections between schools, NGOs and local self-government. This should be valued and recognised to serve as a stimulus for greater voluntary activities by youth;
- Improve the accessibility, quality, and quantity of informal and formal education, particularly for young people. Enhanced offer of subjects/areas to help improve employment and self-employment skills while reducing social exclusion of youth;
- Making financial resources available for young people to start their own businesses;
- Simplified laws governing self-operated businesses that are clear and apply equally to everybody (zero tolerance of corruption).



# 8

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# POLITICS AND DEMOCRACY

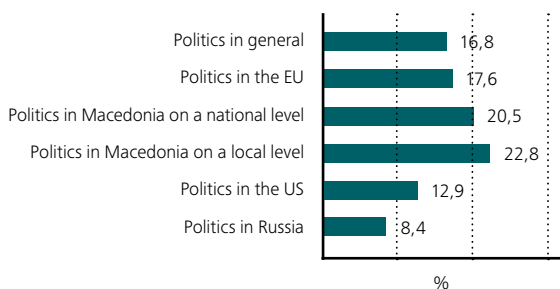
Research in Western democracies in the past decades has registered low levels of interest in politics among youth and low levels of political engagement, particularly in terms of formal political participation such as voting in elections. Due to dissatisfaction with political leaders/parties, young people are increasingly turning to other, more unconventional forms of political participation (Norris, 2003; Henn and Foard, 2012). In new, unconsolidated democracies, citizens' engagement in politics is generally lower, and authoritarian values tend to prevail, particularly when countries lack prior experience with democracy (Howard, 2002; Sisenic, 2010; Novak and Hafner-Fink, 2015; Dolenjec, 2013). This is also the case with the young population (Taleski et al., 2015). Trust in institutions that fail to deliver what citizens expect is low, as are different measures of the quality of democracy such as rule of law, freedom of media, corruption, etc. The aim of this study is to examine these aspects through several sets of questions. The results have been analysed at univariate, bivariate, and partially multivariate levels, with only statistically significant differences then being analysed and explored.

When analysing the results, the political context also needs to be taken into account since Macedonia has endured a period of intensive political crisis. During the crisis (2015–2017), when scandals involving political corruption and interference in the media and judiciary during the 10-year rule of the coalition government led by the centre-right VMRO-DPMNE were uncovered, young students took the initiative in civic protests, triggering greater mobilisation of the broader citizenry as well. The period following early parliamentary elections in December 2016 and the election of a new government were accompanied by extreme levels of insecurity and a complicated (constitutional) crisis. In addition, distrust in the political parties/elites has been widespread for many years, so the study findings also need to be viewed in this light.

## INTEREST IN POLITICS

Compared to the 2013 Youth Study, which showed that about 50% of young people were interested in political events in Macedonia, with interest in international politics only being half that amount, youth's interest in politics decreased significantly in the 2018 study. Young people are mostly interested in domestic politics, with interest in local politics (22.8%) being slightly higher than national politics (20.5%), followed by interest in EU politics (17.6%) and interest in politics in general (16.8%). The lowest interest is in US politics (12.9%) and Russian politics (8.4%).

FIGURE 61: Interest in politics (% of answers "interested" and "very interested")

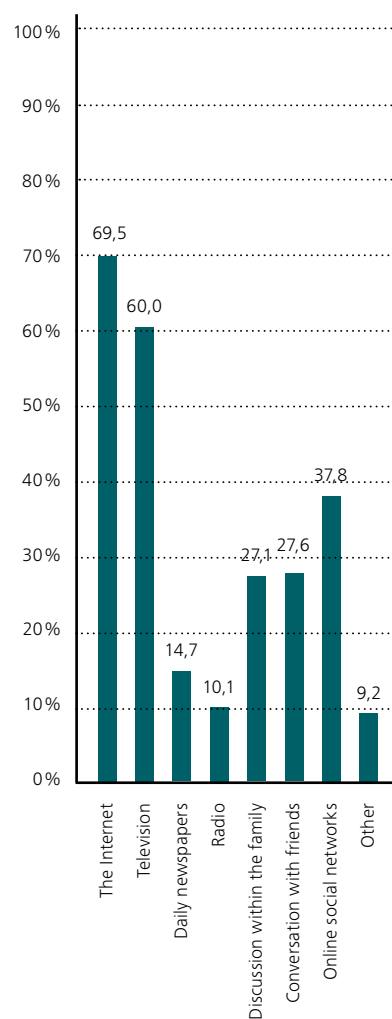


Such a drastic fall in interest, mainly in national politics, is a consequence of the above-mentioned political crisis, which, although involving a significant scale of action on the part of the young population (mostly in the capital of Skopje), has probably fuelled disenchantment and revulsion among youth due to the complexity of problems that have not disappeared with the political compromise and change in government. Political cynicism, which young people are particularly prone to (Bovan and Širinić, 2016), is potentially high-level in Macedonia.

According to the bivariate analysis, young male respondents are more interested in politics than young female respondents, with higher levels of education and greater age also being positively correlated. In terms of ethnicity, the greatest interest in politics is attested by members of the smaller ethnic communities, Albanians, with Macedonians being at a lower level. Household income only has a positive impact on interest in local politics. The father's level of education is positive correlated with interest in EU politics.

Young people inform themselves about political events mainly from the Internet (69.5%) and television (60%), followed by social networks (37.8%). (The Internet has taken the lead ahead of TV compared to the 2013 Study). This is followed by discussions with the family and friends. Young people are less likely to be informed about political events from traditional media such as daily newspapers (14.7%) and the radio (10.10%), where political issues are examined more in-depth and in a broader way. However, we lack detailed information on the quality of political information through each of these media, especially considering that, for instance, printed media have Internet versions as well.

FIGURE 62: Information on political events



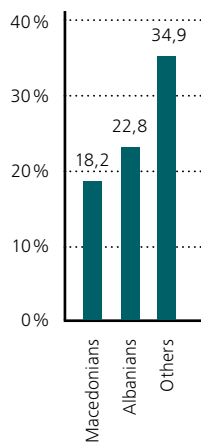
We have also determined a decline in discussions about political topics – only 26.1% of young people stated that they usually or very often discuss politics with their families and friends. By comparison, as much as 66% of youth in the Youth Trends Study responded that they discuss politics with their parents sometimes or often, and 74% with peers and friends (Cekikj 2014:62). In terms of discussions about political topics, parents' education is relevant in addition to the above-mentioned variables, which exert an influence in an identical direction. Thus, young people whose mothers and fathers have a higher level of education more frequently discuss political issues with them.

47.2% of young people selected the highest values on the scale measuring similarity with their parents' political views. An additional 25.1% chose the neutral value of the scale. This percentage was only slightly higher in 2013. There are only differences in the case of family income: young people from families with higher income display a greater similarity with their parents' political views.

Only 20.9% of young respondents are of the opinion that their interests are well or very well represented in national politics, which coincides with findings in the 2013 Study. Young people

from smaller ethnic communities and Albanians feel that they are better represented than Macedonians. This is the first of the group of questions where, like in the 2013 study, we registered more favorable/positive opinions among ethnic minorities than among the ethnic majority population. Actually, youth from urban areas feel that they are better represented than young people from rural areas as well as youth living in families with higher income.

FIGURE 63: **Satisfaction with representation of young people's interests in politics**

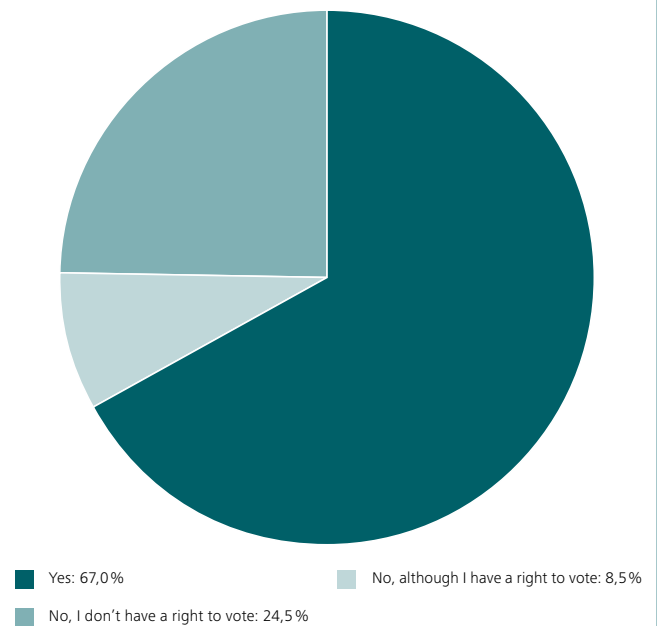


## POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT: VOTING IN ELECTIONS AND HOLDING A POLITICAL FUNCTION

While interest in politics and participation in formal types of political participation among youth in European and neighbouring countries is relatively low or decreasing (Hen and Foard, 2012, Kirbiš and Flere, 2010), an extremely high percentage of youth in Macedonia vote in elections. 67% of the respondents in this study voted in the latest elections, and only 8.5% did not even though they had a right to vote. The remaining 24.5% are not entitled to vote yet. Furthermore, out of those respondents who have the right to vote, 88.7% responded that they exercised this right, and only 11.3% responded that they did not vote.

83.6% of youth responded that if parliamentary elections were to be held today and they were entitled to vote, they would do so, which is the highest percentage among the countries in the study. This extremely high percentage is significantly greater than interest in politics and discussion of political issues as well as the official turnout, which is usually around 60%. Given that only 20.9% of youth are of opinion that their interests are well or very well represented in politics, the fact that they still decide to go to election polls in such percentages is surprising. One of the reasons for such a high percentage can probably be found in the high level of politicisation, or to be more precise, "partization" of society. Young people, similar to the general population, perceive political parties as guarantors of employment and other benefits, while a portion of them probably vote in elections in expectation of some upcom-

FIGURE 64: **Voting in elections**



ing benefits promised by party activists who agitate for that purpose. Numerous public scandals indicate that this is not an isolated occurrence, but rather very frequent. Research on discrimination indicates that citizens consider party affiliation to be the first basis for discrimination (Hristova & Cekikj, 2014; MCMS, 2011).

### Do you vote in elections (parliamentary, presidential, and local)? What are the reasons that motivate you to vote?

"I always vote, hoping for a change, and I always get disappointed" (Ana, 23)

"Yes, I do vote. The positive programme and projects for the future development of the country offered by a particular party motivate me to vote." (Ilina, 19)

"I sometimes vote, sometimes not. The reason, regardless of how sad and miserable it is, is usually for either of my parent to remain in the office that he/she would lose if the party in which he/she is a member lost the elections." (Tara, 23)

"I don't vote because, realistically speaking, there is no option, in fact the best option is not to vote at all. We have two options, and both are controlled by higher-placed "experts" from the West and their intentions are based on manipulation of the common people." (Kate, 24)

"Yes, I vote in elections. I am motivated because I hope that my vote will change something." (Simona, 19)

"Yes, I do, and what motivates me is that I want progress in my country, and to have equal standards like in the EU Member States as soon as possible." (Filip, 27)

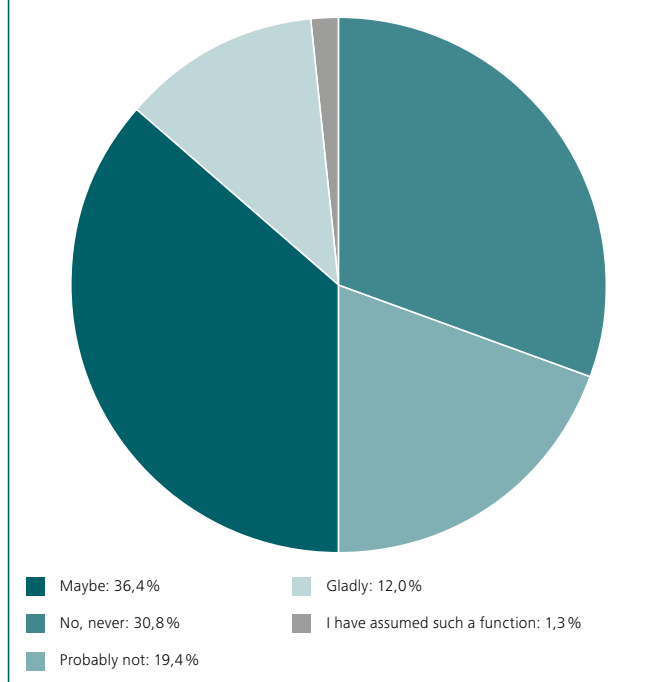
"Yes, I always vote. Everyone's opinion is important and should be taken into consideration" (Petar, 21)

Some responses to the additional interviews indicate that these reasons are valid, but also that young people vote in great numbers, as they want to change something.

Readiness to vote in elections is in a correlation with the level of education – youth with the lowest levels of education rarely vote in elections. Older age is a good predictor of voting; greater family income increases probability of voting, with the highest correlation being at the highest level.

As to the question of whether they would be willing to assume a political function, most of the youth responded with maybe (36.4%), and an additional 12% stated that they would be pleased to accept such a function, which are relatively high percentages given the findings cited above, and might be an indication that youth are prepared to change something. 30% responded that they would never assume such a function, however, and an additional 20% stated that they would probably not accept such an office. 1.3% of the youth responded that they have already assumed such a function.

FIGURE 65: **Would you be willing to take on a political function?**



Young males are more prepared to hold office compared to young females as well as youth from smaller ethnic communities, followed by Albanians and then Macedonians. It is interesting that younger respondents are more often prepared to accept a political function.

The percentage of young people who responded that they would be pleased to hold office or have already held a political office is high in the category of youth whose father has completed higher education. There are also differences according to family income, with more young people from families with higher income willing to assume a political office compared to young people from families with lower income. Those findings, just like

in the case with discussions about politics, illustrate the importance of social origin and family environment for political socialisation and participation of youth in politics.

## TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS AND SATISFACTION WITH DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

Trust in the institutions of the country is at a very low level both among the general and youth populations. According to several research projects performed in the past two decades, citizens have more confidence in international institutions (or in other types of institutions such as banks and religious institutions) than in national political institutions (Taleski et al 2006:14–15, Markovic et al 2011:15, Topuzovska-Latkovikj et al, 2013).

According to this research, youth generally have little confidence in any of the institutions offered, with the mean values of responses ranging under the neutral value on the scale. Findings indicate that youth have the most trust in the army and religious institutions and, for the first time, in voluntary movements, possibly due to the importance of protests in the recent political crisis. The European Union, banks, and other international organisations only come in after this, which is a change compared to the prior research. Civic organisations this time obtained somewhat greater trust, with the lowest trust once again being placed in national institutions (the President, Parliament, government, judiciary) and political parties.

FIGURE 66: **Trust in institutions**

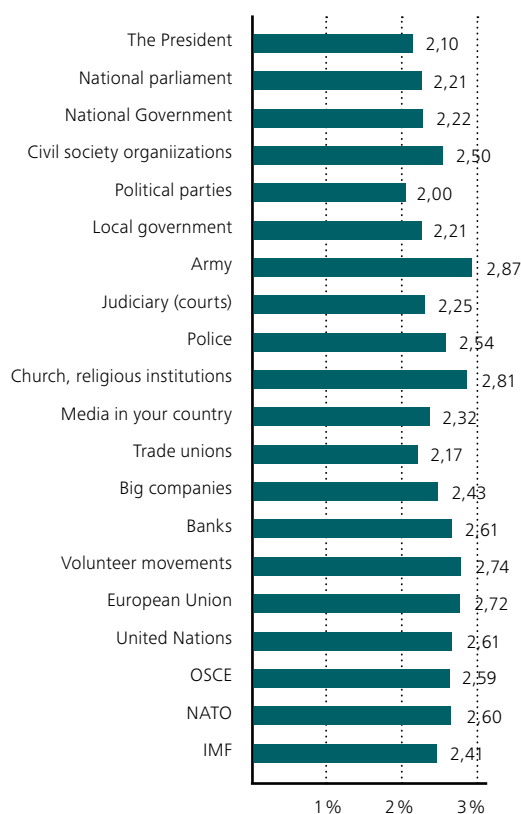




FIGURE 67: Ideological positioning: left-center-right

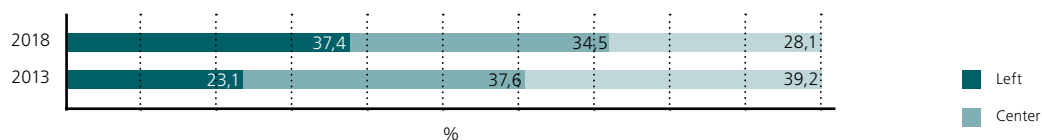
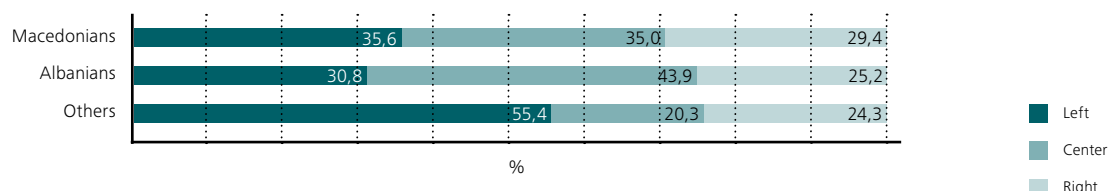


FIGURE 68: Ideological positioning: left-center-right (2018)



There are statistically significant differences depending on respondents' gender. Young male respondents have more confidence than young females in national political institutions/actors (the president, government, political parties, local authorities, trade unions) as well as in NATO and the IMF. Female respondents only have more confidence in banks. Regarding ethnic affiliation, youth from smaller ethnic communities have the most confidence in all institutions, except for the EU, which Albanians trust the most. On the other hand, Macedonians in comparison with smaller ethnic communities and especially Albanians trust the president the most.

On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is very dissatisfied, and 5 is very satisfied, satisfaction of young people with the state of democracy in Macedonia is 2.54, which is a decrease compared to the previous study, in which this figure was 2.74. In percentage terms, only 20.1% of youth are satisfied or very satisfied with the state of democracy.

Differences according to ethnic affiliation of respondents, similar to the 2013 study (in which Albanians were more satisfied than Macedonians), indicate that, atypically, the ethnic majority population is more dissatisfied with the state of democracy in Macedonia. However, given the political context in which the political conflict mainly took place in the Macedonian ethnic bloc, the finding in this case is not that surprising. Youth from smaller ethnic communities are in fact most satisfied and on the positive part of the scale ( $M=3.20$ ), followed by Albanians, whose score is on the negative part of the scale ( $M=2.60$ ), and is little higher than that for Macedonians ( $M=2.42$ ). The older the age and the higher the level of education, the lower the satisfaction with the state of democracy in Macedonia.

## IDEOLOGICAL ORIENTATIONS

Moving from interest in politics and voting in elections to other forms of political knowledge and participation, in this study we also researched ideological orientations of youth. First of all, it should be emphasised that there is a low level of knowledge of political ideologies among citizens of Macedonia (Hristova, 2011). According to the 2013 Youth Study, this is also the case with the young population, with 38% of youth not knowing/not positioning themselves ideologically on a scale from left to right (Topuzovska Latkovikj et al 2013:105). In this study, almost 50% of youth responded with "I don't know" or did not want to provide a response to this question (22.9% responded with "I don't know" and 26.6% did not respond).

Of the responses obtained, on a scale from 1 to 10, from extreme left to extreme right, the mean value for all respondents who provided an answer is near the centre ( $M=5.16$ ). When answers are grouped in three categories 1–4 left, 5 and 6 centre, and 7–10 right, 37.4% opted for left wing, 34.5% for the centre and 28.1% for the right wing. These are significant changes compared to 2013, when 23.1% opted for the left wing, 37.6% for the centre and 39.2% for the right wing.

Since we lack additional information, it is difficult to interpret these realignments; however, one of the reasons might be voters' tendency to lean toward the current ruling party. While it is difficult to ideologically position the Albanian and other minority parties, in the Macedonian bloc, though not always consistent, particularly with regard to economic-social policies, left and right wings have stable representatives in the guise of the SDSM and VMRO-DPMNE, which are also leading parties in broad government coalitions. A transfer of power from the right to left wing has taken place in the period between the two studies.

Ideological positioning is in a correlation with some elements of the economic-social status of respondents. The greater the family income is, in accordance with the literature, the more

toward the right youth is oriented, although differences are only statistically significant at a 0.05 level, and the correlation is not very strong ( $r=0.094$ ). Furthermore, also in line with literature, young people whose father has a higher level of education lean more toward the left wing ( $r=-0.108$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) (the mother's education does not have any impact).

Considering that, with few exceptions, voting in Macedonia takes place along ethnic lines, we analysed the findings according to ethnic affiliation. Youth from smaller ethnic communities mostly opted for the left wing, followed by Macedonians, for whom the distribution between the left and right wings is almost equal. Albanians for the most part positioned themselves in the centre, followed by the left wing and the right. This is a drastic change compared to 2013, when even 50% of Albanians were positioned on the right. The right wing still has highest level of support among Macedonians. There has been movement toward the centre-left in all ethnic categories compared to 2013, with this change being more drastic among smaller ethnic communities and Albanians.

The following series of questions examine in more detail the declared political orientation by exploring the ideological left-right orientation along the economic-social dimension as well as liberalism-conservatism dimension by means of questions about attitudes toward acceptance of abortion and homosexuality.

It should be mentioned that the largest political parties in Macedonia and their loyal voters aside from their ethnic affiliation do not have clear social, and in particular, class-based convictions (Dragovic, 2011). They share leftist/socialist attitudes along the economic-social dimension, while differences along the liberal-conservative dimension above all relate to attitudes towards the communist period (Hristova, 2011). The findings of this study also confirm similar attitudes among youth, but with some significant exceptions.

Young people express leftist attitudes, or to great extent agree that the state should assume greater responsibility for supporting

everybody (even  $M=4.41$  on a scale from 1 to 5), that income between rich and the poor should be more equal ( $M=4.07$ ), and that state ownership of enterprises should increase ( $M=3.93$ ). Furthermore, young people largely disagree with the idea that competition is bad ( $M=2.85$ ) and are of opinion that, in the long run, hard work brings a better life ( $M=3.87$ ), which shows that they are ready to take the initiative and assume responsibility without relying entirely on a state intervention. This also suggests that expectations from the state are not due to personal passivity, but rather that this is an authentic ideological attitude.

Bivariate analysis indicates that young female respondents have somewhat more leftist attitudes than young males, as do youth from urban areas and younger respondents. Macedonians are more leftist oriented than Albanians and smaller ethnic communities. Young people who have completed secondary education share more left-wing values, while the father's education is also significant, and the lower his education the more young people tend to be leftist. However, these differences are relatively minor given the general distribution. It is interesting that income is one of the few variables without any significance. When a correlation was made between positioning on the left-centre-right scale and agreement with the first three statements (for which  $M=0.65$ ), a statistically significant but negative correlation was found – those who opted for the right wing express leftist attitudes on the economic-social scale to a greater extent.

The questionnaire also asked to what extent young people condone abortion and homosexuality on a scale from 1 to 10. Mean values indicate an exceptionally conservative environment since they are positioned close to the negative pole on the scale:  $M=3.69$  for abortion and  $M=2.89$  for homosexuality.

It is interesting that statistically significant differences are to be found in terms of respondents' gender only in the case with homosexuality, which, like the findings in the previous study (in which the question about abortion was not asked), young female

FIGURE 69: Ideological positioning: left-center-right (2013)

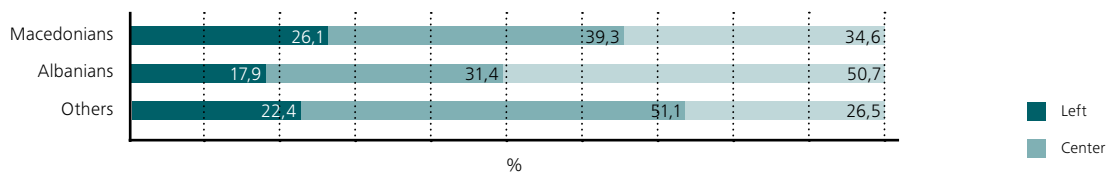


FIGURE 70: Ideological Positions (Scale 1–5: 1 totally disagree; 5 totally agree)

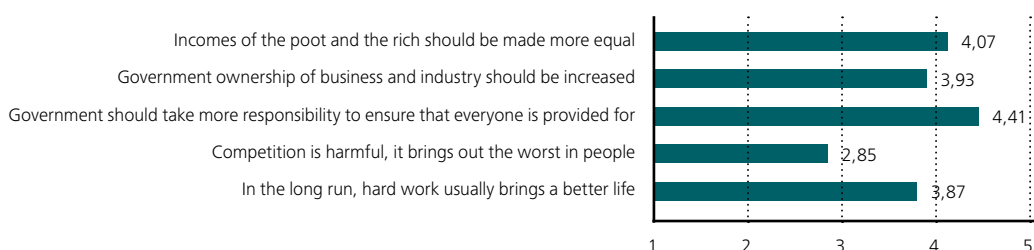
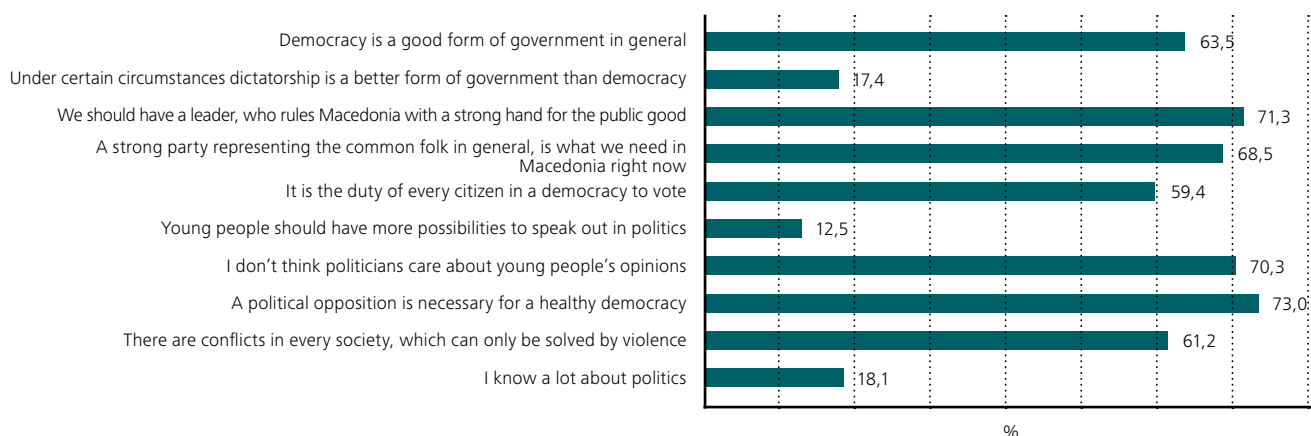


FIGURE 71: Democratic and authoritarian values



respondents provided a more justifiable response ( $M=3.29$ ) compared to young male respondents ( $M=2.47$ ). Furthermore, members of the smaller ethnic communities also have more liberal attitudes toward abortion ( $M=4.72$ ) and homosexuality ( $M=3.44$ ) than Macedonians ( $M=3.92$  for abortion and  $M=3.15$  for homosexuality), and particularly Albanians ( $M=2.53$  for abortion and  $M=1.75$  for homosexuality), who are extremely conservative.

Family income correlates positively with positive attitudes on abortion as well as both parents' education. The respondents' education is only in a correlation with attitudes on homosexuality, least justified by respondents having completed secondary education, while categories of respondents with lowest and highest levels of education display closer attitudes. As expected, respondents' religiousness also has a high negative correlation with attitudes along the liberalism-conservatism dimension – the expected direction.

The correlation of scores on the left to the right axis with the scores on approval of abortion and homosexuality is statistically significant and shows that the respondents who are positioned on the left tend much more to approve abortion ( $r=0.144$ ;  $p<0,01$ ) and homosexuality ( $r=0.158$ ;  $p=0.01$ ), which indicates that there is consistency between attitudes of and ideological self-positioning, and that this dimension, unlike the one from the past, has greater potential, and, given political developments in the past 10 years relating to this issues, is already useful in the ideological profiling of political parties.

## DEMOCRATIC AND AUTHORITARIAN VALUES

Acceptance of democratic values by the broad population is one of the most important pillars of democracy. In comparative studies, democratic values and authoritarianism are one of the most frequently researched phenomena, and have also been the subject of research in our country. Findings since the late 1990s indicate a significant prevalence of authoritarian values, but also general acceptance of democracy (Simoska et al, 2001;

Hristova, 2011, Simoska et al, 2010; Markovic et al 2011; Maricic & Petkovski, 2014).

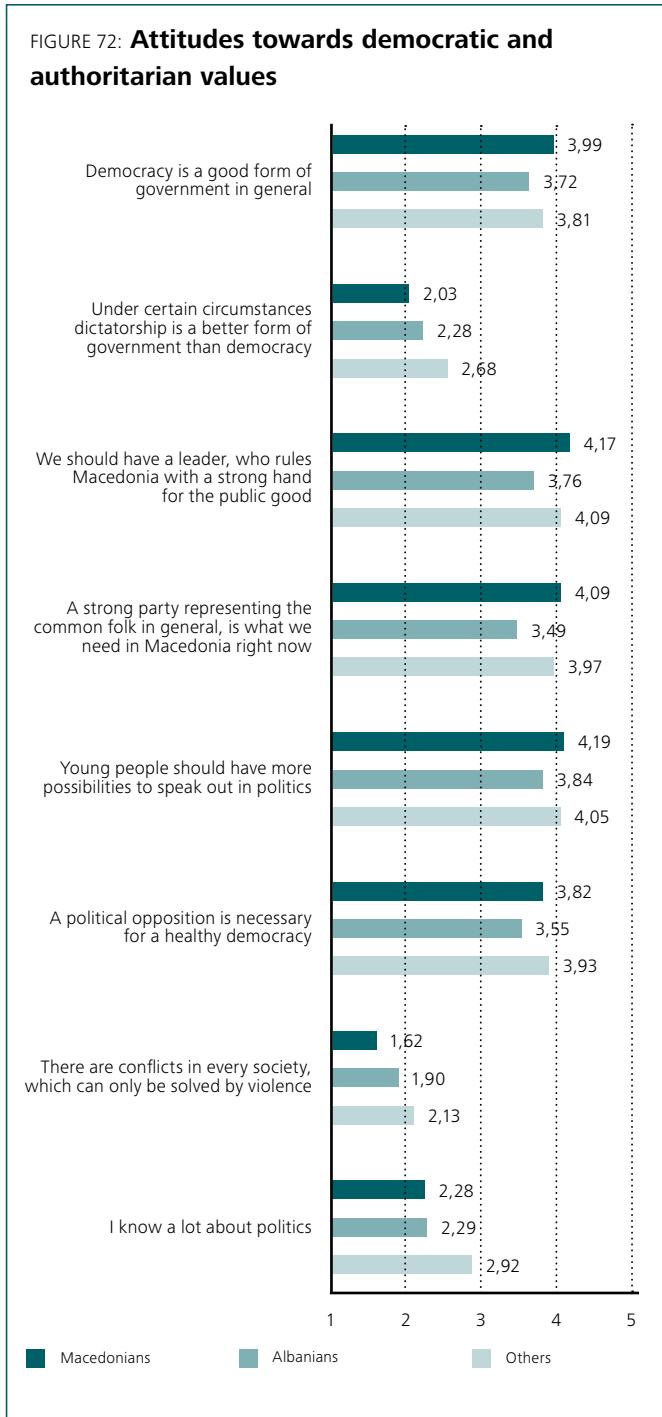
We researched democratic and authoritarian values in this study by means of six questions. Several additional questions refer to young people's role in politics and voting as a duty. The last question measures the political knowledge of youth based on their self-perception.

Of the data obtained it can be seen that, like research on the general population, the young to some extent express ambivalent attitudes. While 63.5% agree that "Generally democracy is a good form of government" and "political opposition is necessary for a healthy democracy" (59.4%), a higher percentage of them agree with the statements that "We should have a leader who rules Macedonia with a strong hand for the public good" (71.3%) and that "A strong party representing the common people in general is what we need in Macedonia right now" (68.5%), which are typical indicators of authoritarianism, and as of late, populism. With regard to the question about a strong leader, Macedonia displays a significantly higher percentage of agreement than the cross-national average (59.5%). The additional interviews suggest that the young people often accept this statement as a result of dissatisfaction with the state of democracy in the country.

Only 12.5% of young people believe that some conflicts can be resolved with violence. 70% of young people are of opinion that voting is actually a civic duty. Regarding youth and political issues, 61% of young people believe that politicians do not care about their opinion, and 73% think that they should have more opportunities to have a say in politics. Only 18% of young people responded that they have considerable political knowledge.

There are only differences according to gender for the penultimate statement regarding politicians' concern for youth:  $M=1.63$  for young female respondents and  $M=1.83$  for young males on a scale 1–5, where 1 is "completely disagree", and 5 "completely agree". Young people from rural areas are less likely to agree with the statement relating to dictatorship ( $M=2.05$ ) than those from urban areas ( $M=2.20$ ). Resolution of conflicts with violence is also less acceptable for the youth from rural areas ( $M=1.62$ ) compared to those from urban areas ( $M=1.76$ ). The middle and youngest age

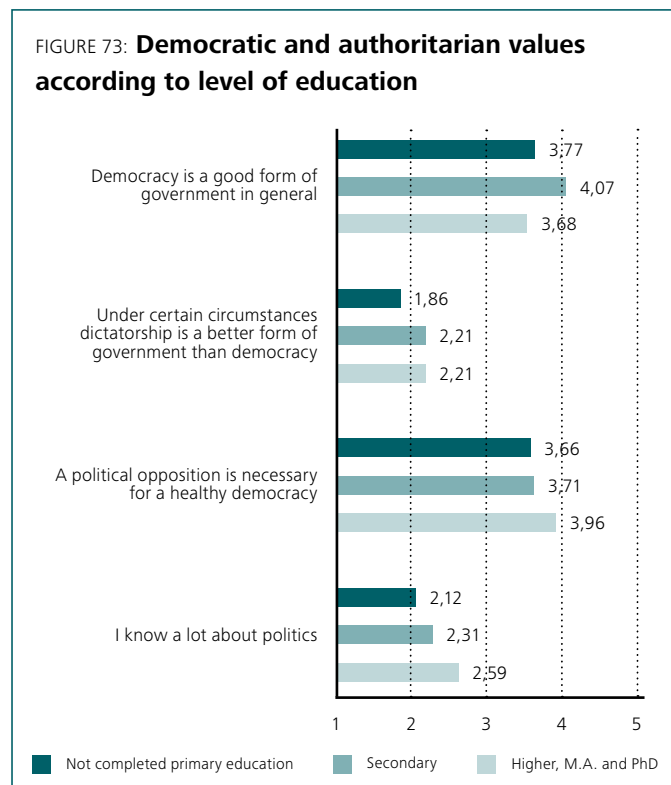
groups more often condone dictatorship in the circumstances mentioned; when it comes to attitudes about voting – agreement grows with age, whereas when it comes to the importance of the opposition and resolution of conflicts with violence, the situation is reversed – older respondents are less likely to agree with these statements.



Looking at it from an angle of ethnic affiliation, Macedonians more often agree with the statement that democracy is a good form of government, and condone least a dictatorial regime and use of violence, but to a greater extent believe that the state should be governed by a strong party and a leader with a strong hand. Smaller ethnic communities are closer to the Macedonians

with regard to the pro-democratic indicators and the importance of a strong leader and party, but they score highest on the least democratic indicators that accept dictatorship and violence. Albanians are always in the middle with their scores.

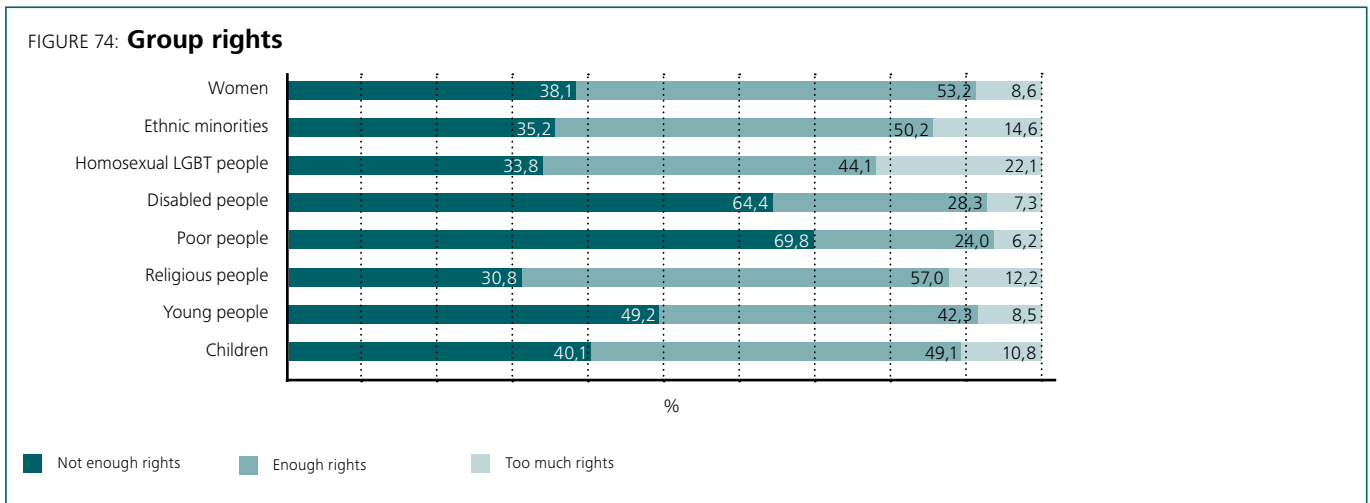
Differences in terms of the level of education are somewhat contradictory since young people with the highest level of education are less inclined towards democracy and accept dictatorship more than those with the lowest level of education, while at the same time they more often believe that opposition is necessary and that they have a better knowledge of politics. However, it should be considered that some of the respondents are still going through the educational process.



The mother’s education is in a positive correlation with the importance of opposition as well as with acceptance of dictatorship, and is negatively correlated with acceptance of democracy. The father’s education is of significance in understanding voting as a duty, where it displays a negative correlation, as well as with regard to acceptance of dictatorship under certain circumstances, which is more acceptable for children whose fathers have completed the highest level of education.

Family income of the respondents is also significant, with those respondents with higher incomes most often accepting democracy as a form of governance ( $M=0.237$ ;  $P<0.01$ ), finding dictatorship justified the least ( $r=-0.122$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), and most often accepting political opposition ( $r=0.072$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), while being least accepting of conflict-settlement using violence ( $r=-0.151$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), and more often accepting a strong leader ( $r=0.118$ ;  $p<0.01$ ).

When statements regarding authoritarianism/democracy are grouped, the scale does not exhibit a high degree of reliability.



### Do you agree with the statement that we should have a leader who will rule the country with a strong hand for the public good? Please explain.

"It is clear that if everyone is permitted to do whatever they want, there will not be much success. In my opinion, we should have a leader who does not rule the country as a dictator, but in a reasonable way and for the good of everybody." (Teon, 18)

"No, I don't. I think that we need a complete transformation of society, culture, values..." (Ana, 23)

"Yes, we should. We need a leader who will stand up for the people much more, and not only work on how to get richer." (Tara, 23)

"I absolutely agree. What is good for the public is good for everybody. It is time for change in the country, in all areas, and at the same time, to improve people's lives because we can really do much more as a country, but we are far from that. Therefore, we need a leader who will lead us forward." (Aleksandra, 27)

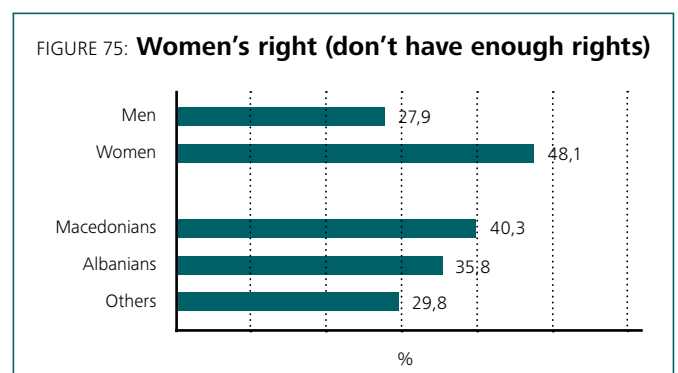
"I agree with the statement because the current situation is in a need of such a leader. A leader who, unlike the leading party, the opposition, and the political party that represents the largest minority, which cannot reach a compromise and pull Macedonia out of stagnation, can solve part of the problems that Macedonia faces with a strong hand. Later, when the situation in Macedonia is stabilised, I think that a compromise should be found on key issues that will place Macedonia on the right path." (Bojan, 25)

"Yes. However, I believe it is difficult to define the public good. The public good is to enhance general living conditions and to improve the standard of living (...) although there are different "public goods" that are difficult to generalise to everyone." (Dritan, 17)

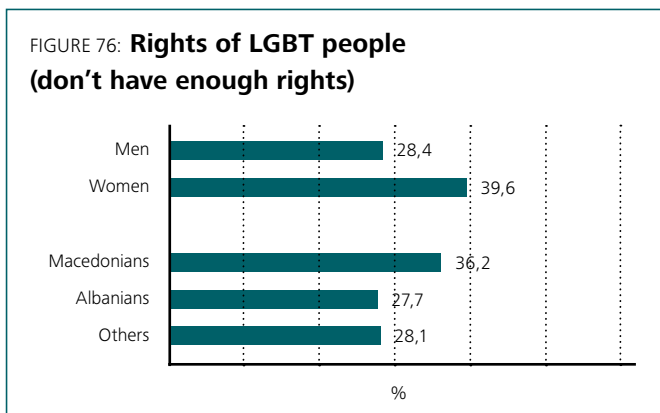
## GROUP RIGHTS

Data on youth attitudes pertaining to the rights of certain groups in society corroborate findings from previous studies to the effect that young people are not sufficiently tolerant. This particularly goes for LGBT people, women, and ethnic minorities. The percentage of answers affirming that these three categories have sufficient/too many rights is highest, while objective data indicate that precisely these groups are among the most vulnerable categories of citizens in Macedonia and face discrimination as well (especially LGBT people). Young people are calling for more rights for people with disabilities and the poor, followed by agreement with the statement that young people and children should have more rights.

Grouping according to socio-demographic characteristics shows that there are differences with regard to attitudes as to whether the above categories of citizens have enough rights. Some of the more interesting findings relate to perception of a group's members who are potentially more at risk themselves. In this case, the data available make it possible to check this attitude among women and ethnic minorities. Hence, in line with the expectations, a greater percentage of young female respondents feel that they do not have enough rights (48.1%) compared to young male respondents, of whom 27.9% responded that women do not have enough rights. In terms of ethnic affiliation, a greater portion of Macedonians think that women do not have enough rights (40.3%) compared to Albanians (35.8%) and smaller ethnic communities (28.9%).



With regard to the rights of LGBT persons, more young females once again (39.6%) and Macedonians (36.2%) believe that those people do not have enough rights, or have more liberal attitudes toward this issue compared to male respondents (28.4%), Albanians (27.7%) and other ethnic communities (28.1%).



When minorities' rights are in question, a majority of Albanians as members of the largest minority in Macedonia (52.9%) think that minorities do not have enough rights, followed by smaller ethnic communities (35.2%) and Macedonians (29.5%).

## F-SCALE AND NATIONALISM SCALE

The questionnaire also included a modified 4-item F-scale (Lane, 1955) as well as items on the scale for (new) nationalism (Columbus, 2006). The F-scale items (the questions below and questions regarding a strong leader from the part on authoritarian values) are of a general/psychological nature, while the other questions relate to the national context and the importance of being Macedonian.

General analysis of this data indicates that youth have worryingly high scores on F-scale items (Figure 81). Two of them go to the fourth degree on the 5-point scale, where 1 is "completely disagree", and 5 – "completely agree". The average scores for young people in all the countries included in the research on these items is lower than those for Macedonia with regard to the statement relating to willpower ( $M=3.60$ ) and the statement relating to an insult to honour ( $M=3.46$ ), but higher regarding the need for strict discipline ( $M=3.39$ ).

In terms of nationalism, mean values are positioned below the neutral values, except for the statement that non-Macedonians should adopt the customs and values of Macedonians ( $M=3.08$ ). However, these data are to a certain extent distorted due to the importance of ethnic identities that have yet to assign significance to the identity that is linked to citizenship. We checked this as shown below, since under such conditions, statements involving nationalism mainly relate to Macedonians as an ethnic group.

Differences in scores on the nationalism scale ( $M=8.06$ ;  $\text{min}=3$ ,  $\text{max}=15$ ) are more numerous compared to the fascism scale ( $M=15.03$ ;  $\text{min}=4$ ,  $\text{max}=20$ ). Once again, there are no differences to be found between the genders with regard to the scores on the two scales. There are no differences as to whether young people live in urban or rural areas, either. Macedonians have the highest overall score on the F-scale ( $M=15.31$ ), followed by the smaller ethnic communities ( $M=14.94$ ) and Albanians ( $M=14.23$ ), although the differences are not large. In line with expectations, Macedonians reflect the highest level of nationalism ( $M=9.3$ ), followed by the smaller ethnic communities ( $M=6.83$ ) and Albanians ( $M=5.89$ ).

Respondents' age is significant with regard to nationalism, with the highest scores being found in the 20–24 age group ( $M=8.8$ ), followed by the 14–19 age group ( $M=8.62$ ), while the oldest respondents (25–29 years) have the lowest scores ( $M=7.67$ ).

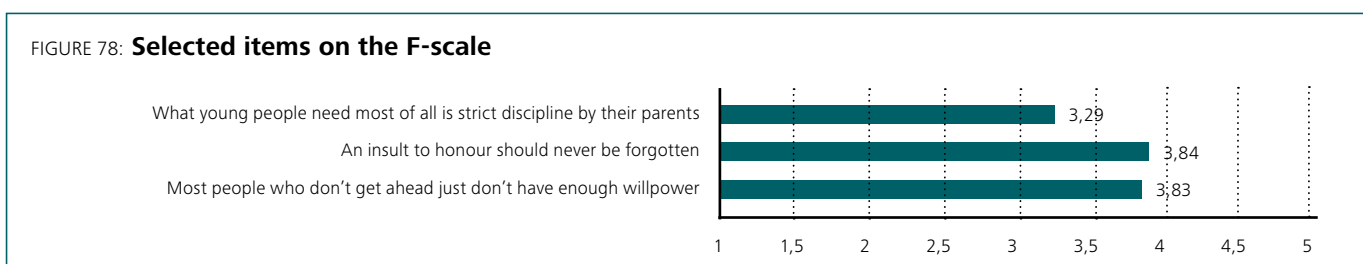
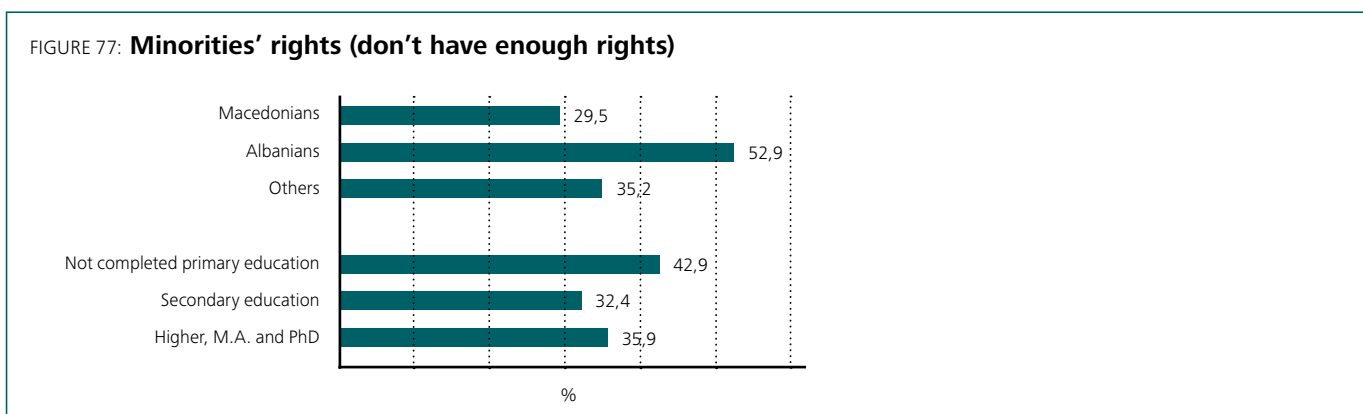
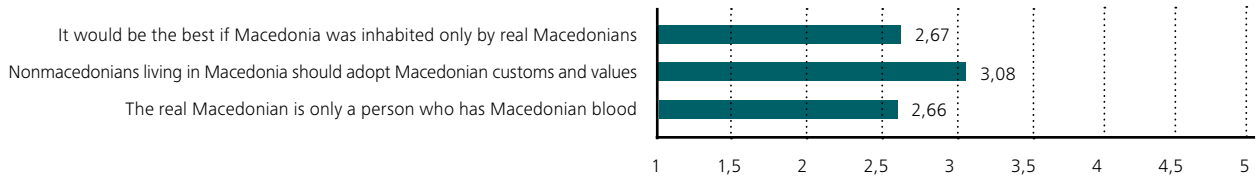


FIGURE 79: Selected items on nationalism scale



Young people with a higher education have a lower score on the nationalism scale. Nationalism rises proportionally with the level of the mother’s education. Respondents’ family income is significant in terms of the scores obtained on both scales, i.e. young people with higher income have higher scores on both scales (F-scale  $r=0.094$ ,  $P<0.01$ , N-scale:  $r=0.105$ ;  $p<0.01$ ).

Identification with the left, right, or centre, and the religiousness of the respondents is also significant for both scales. Those identifying with the right of the spectrum have higher scores on the F-scale, just like the more religious respondents, while members of the left express a greater degree of nationalism. More religious respondents have a lower score on the nationalism scale (these are probably ethnic Albanians, who are the most religious category).

However, it should be noted that the F-scale has a low level of reliability ( $\alpha=0.49$ ), which limits its utilisation in more complex statistical analysis. The nationalism scale has a high level of reliability ( $\alpha=0.81$ ), but it is also problematic for the aforementioned reasons.

### POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN INFORMAL ACTIVITIES

As mentioned above, participation in additional political or social activities not related (only) to voting is something that adds significant quality to the participatory potential of citizens, especially youth (Van Deth, 2014, Morales, 2009). The following block of questions analyses the participatory potential of youth in Macedonia.

Like previous findings (Cekikj, 2014), approximately 40% of young people have a positive attitude toward political participation when it comes to signing petitions, participation in protests, and in activities of a voluntary nature or for civic organisations. Most of the young people who have positive attitudes have already taken part in these types of activities. 30% of young people have participated or would participate in political activities online or in social networks. 24.7% would stop buying certain products for political or environmental reasons. A lower percentage (26%) would also participate in activities of a political party or group.

Since activities in a political party are of a different nature than broader political participation, all of the questions (other than this one) were grouped in one variable called “Political participation” ( $M=7.39$ ;  $min=5$ ,  $max=15$ ). The scale has a high level of reliability ( $\alpha=0.86$ ).

FIGURE 80: Scores on F and N scales by ideological orientations

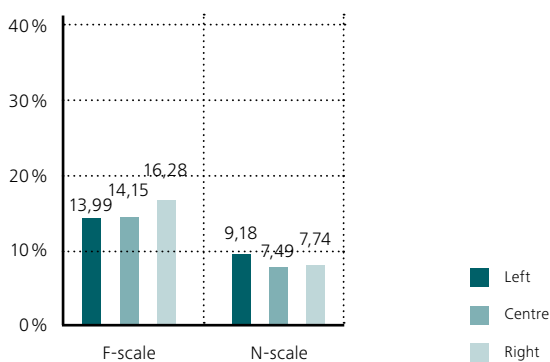


FIGURE 81: Participation in political activities/political engagement

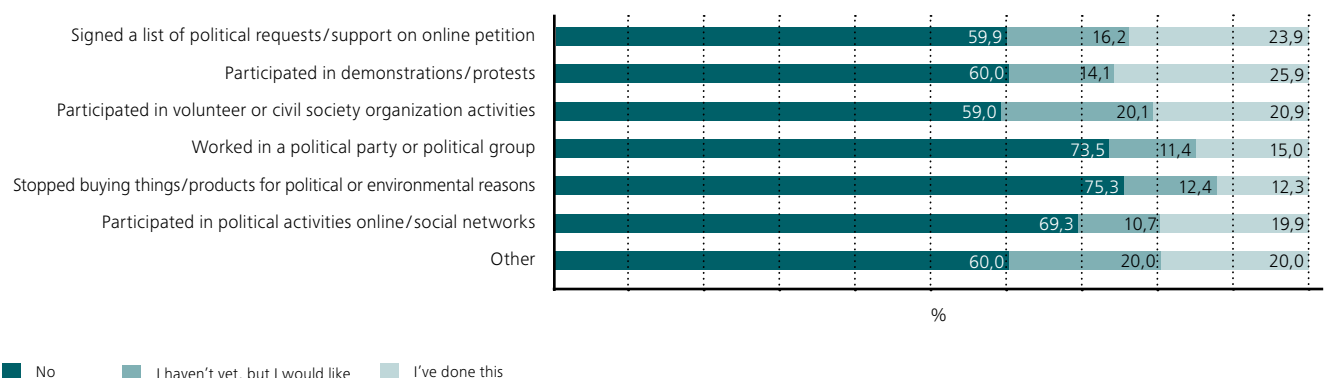
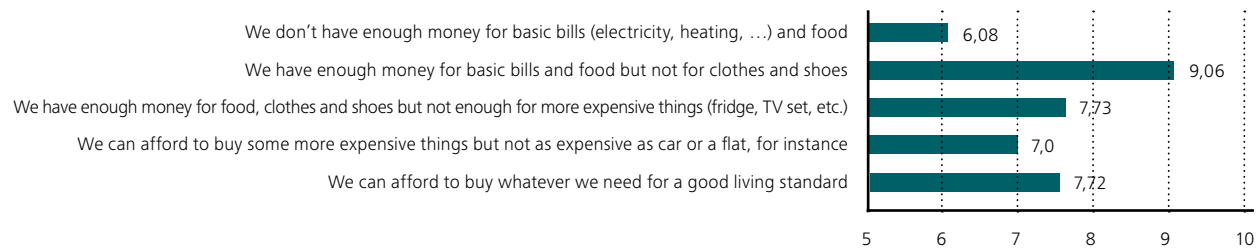


FIGURE 82: Political participation (by family income)



Young male respondents have higher scores on this scale ( $M=7.84$ ) than young female ones ( $M=6.91$ ), or they participate more often in all the stated activities regardless of differences relating to the types of activity in which they are involved, as a large part of the literature suggests (Portney *et al.*, 2009). Political participation rises with respondents' age ( $r=0.12$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). When it comes to ethnic affiliation, Macedonians have a lower score ( $M=7.03$ ), followed by Albanians ( $M=8.24$ ), and the smaller ethnic communities ( $M=8.53$ ).

The level of education is also important – the higher the level of education, the greater the political participation by young people. Parents' education is not correlated, while family income is important. Contrary to the expectations suggested by the literature, political participation is most prevalent among young people

who belong to the second group in terms of income level (out of 5), followed by the third and the fourth group of respondents in terms of family income.

Multivariate regression analysis was performed on this variable, where in addition to demographic variables several other variables identified as significant by the literature were included: scores on economic-social and liberal-conservative dimensions, interest in politics and religiousness. As a result of low reliability, we did not use the scores from the scale for authoritarianism or the F-scale (or the N-scale for the aforementioned reasons), which are also important in this type of analysis. When only demographic variables are included, the explanatory power of the model is low (we do not present these results), which justifies the use of additional variables potentially significant in terms of political participation.



TABLE 12: **Regression analysis of political participation**

Political participation	
Gender	0.418* (0.206)
Age	0.041 (0.032)
Rural-urban	0.020 (0.223)
Income	-0.405** (0.124)
Education	0.112 (0.116)
Mother's education	0.50 (0.127)
Father's education	-0.097 (0.122)
Albanians	1.182** (0.311)
Other	1.415** (0.417)
Interest in politics	1.130** (0.080)
Score on economic-social dimension	-0.136** (0.040)
Score on liberal-conservative dimension	0.140** (0.022)
Religiousness	-0.065 (0.074)

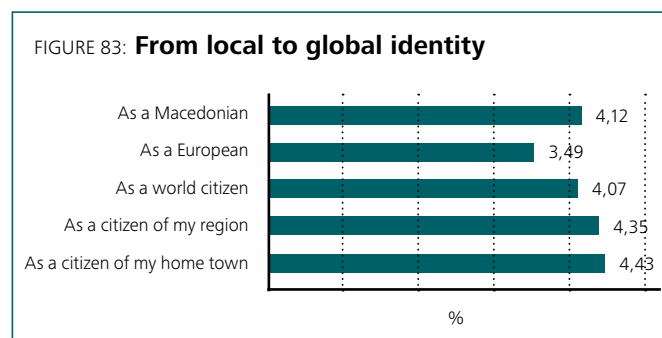
Observations	562
R <sup>2</sup>	0.412
Corrected R	0.398
F statistics	29.557
Note: The table presents regression coefficients and standard errors in parentheses. The Macedonians are a reference category. **p<0.01; *p<0.05.	

The results of the model shown in Table 12<sup>28</sup> indicate that gender and income are significant when it comes to political participation with the same positive correlation as in the bivariate analysis as well as ethnic affiliation, whose statistical significance is higher. Education and age have lost their significance, which indicates that generally speaking even though significant at bivariate level, their predictive power is weak. Findings regarding the impact of family income are interesting, namely that young people coming from families with a lower income have higher scores on the scale of political participation. This indicates that youth from low social-status environments and surroundings that have a negative impact on their opportunities – a frequent case given the situation in the country – are more willing to mobilise and act to bring about change. Similar to numerous other studies, interest in politics is a

strong predictor of youth political participation. The score on the liberal-conservative dimension is statistically significant with a positive correlation. The score along the economic-social dimension is statistically significant and negatively correlated.

## FROM LOCAL TO GLOBAL IDENTITY

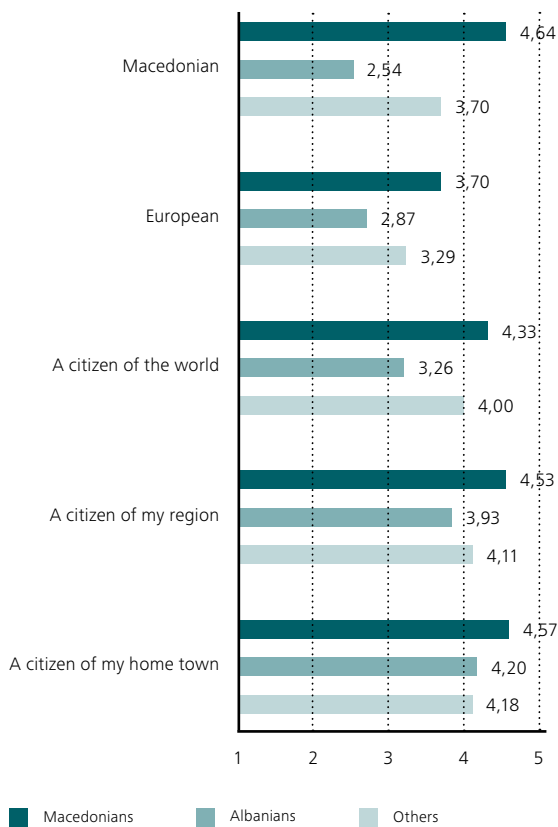
The following question measures identification of youth from local to global identities, where 1 is 'I do not see myself as (relevant identity)', and 5 – 'I fully see myself as (relevant identity)'. They express a tight connection with these identities, with the greatest attachment being to identities in the most immediate setting – local (M=4.43) and regional identity (M=4.35). Unlike the previous findings (Janev, 2016), identification with the national state (M=4.12) and the world is very close (M=4.07). Surprisingly, young people identify least with Europe (M=3.49).



Macedonians express the highest degree of identification with all identities offered, while Albanians above all identify with their local/regional identity. They also feel the least Macedonian, much less than the members of smaller ethnic communities. They also feel less European.

Age increases national identification, while the middle age group identifies with Europe the least, and the oldest age group the most. The place of residence is significant for identification with the world, the region, and the home town. Identification is stronger with youth from urban areas for all three categories, and differences are greatest when it comes to global identification. Differences between the genders and the level of education are not statistically significant. Income is significant for all identities with the correlation being quite strong and positive in all cases.

FIGURE 84: How much do you see yourself as:



is positively and strongly correlated with national pride, and negatively and somewhat more weakly with willingness to accept refugees and migrants.

Macedonians and the others are more likely to agree with the statement that national interests are not prominent enough, and Macedonians are most sceptical that the importance of the country will grow. As was to be expected, they expressed the greatest degree of national pride, and Albanians the least. Macedonians are significantly less likely to accept refugees and migrants.

### PROBLEMS IN THE COUNTRY AND EXPECTATIONS

In terms of problems to be resolved, young people do not make many distinctions, i.e. they believe that all of the stated goals/problems should be solved. The scores obtained on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1= not at all important to be solved, and 5 = very important to be solved, are greater than 4, so it can be concluded that youth perceive their surrounding as replete with various types of problems. This makes a comparison between the categories of respondents unnecessary.

Regarding expectations of economic development in the next 10 years, on a scale from 1 to 5 young people expressed a moderate optimism, with the mean score being 2.99. In percentage terms, 34 % of young people opted for positive values on the scale, while 33.5% chose neutral ones.

Macedonians are the least optimistic (M=2.78), while Albanians (M=3.33) and the smaller ethnic communities (M=3.59) are more optimistic.

Younger respondents are greater optimists than older ones. Family income is also significant; the greatest optimism, however, is expressed by members of the third category out of the five (M=3.21).

In this study, young people were asked to evaluate the situation in Macedonia and the European Union with regard to eight social values, from 1 to 5. The analysis shows that: 1) all the values are evaluated as being better in the EU than in Macedonia; 2) none of the values in Macedonia are evaluated as being positive (the mean values are below the neutral point on a scale from 1 to 5); 3) the differences in evaluations relating to economic welfare and employment are drastic, followed by equality, rule of law and human rights. The smallest differences are between security and individual freedom.

### ATTITUDES TOWARD FOREIGN POLICY

Almost two-thirds of respondents believe that the interests of Macedonia are not sufficiently emphasised in global politics. 40% of respondents are of the opinion that Macedonia’s international importance will rise in the next few years. 60% of respondents are proud of their national identity. Few young people think that the state should accept more refugees (14.9%) or migrants (12.2%).

Young male respondents express greater national pride than young females, but the differences are very small. Young people from urban areas expressed higher levels of national pride than young people from rural areas, with the former being more inclined to accept refugees and migrants. Younger respondents are also more likely to accept refugees and migrants. Family income

FIGURE 85: Attitudes toward foreign policy

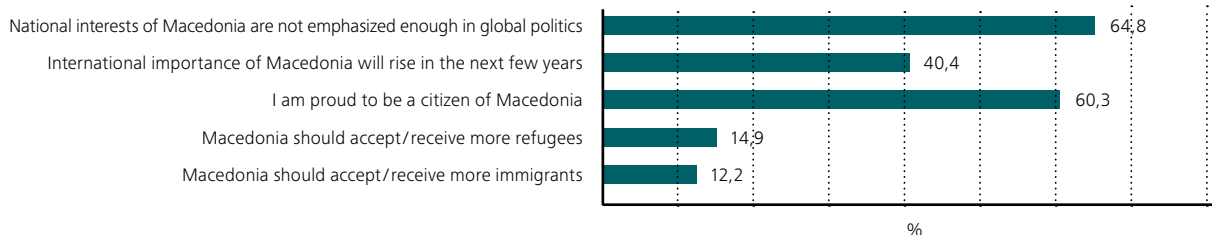
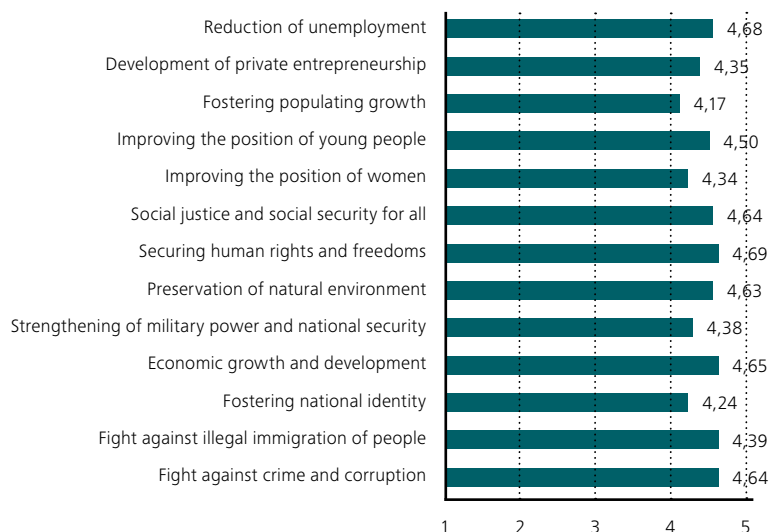
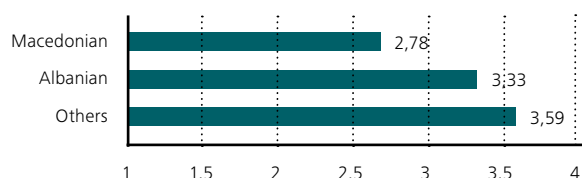


FIGURE 86: **Goals of the government (problems to be solved)**FIGURE 87: **Expectations regarding the economic situation (1 – 5)**

Furthermore, youth were asked to rank these values. When ranking, they opted for general political values like democracy and human rights as well as values relating to economic welfare. Security and freedom, which are extremes of sorts, were selected less often, and in relation with these, a lower discrepancy was perceived between the EU and Macedonia.

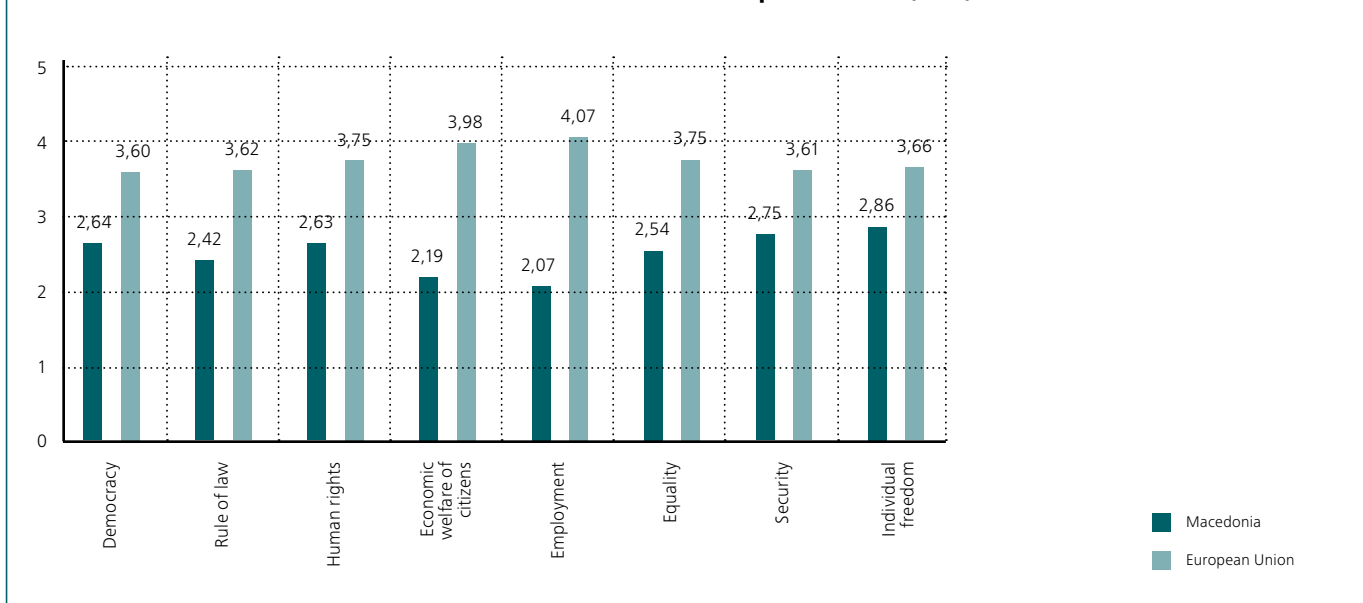
TABLE 13: **Ranking of Values**

	First rank	Second rank	Third rank
Democracy	20.9 %		
Rule of law		15.8 %	
Human rights	23.2 %	19.1 %	17.5 %
Citizens' economic welfare	18.2 %	15 %	17.8 %
Employment		18 %	18.3 %
Equality			
Security			
Individual freedom			

Ultimately, 81 % of youth support membership in the European Union, which is a high percentage and above the average for the general population. As was to be expected, support for accession

is lower among ethnic Macedonians (77 %), and higher among Albanians (94.4 %). Surprisingly, it is lowest among the members of smaller ethnic communities (74.6 %).

FIGURE 88: Status of values chosen in Macedonia and the European Union (1–5)



## CONCLUSIONS

- Interest in politics among young people and the discussion relating to political topics have diminished, i.e. it is twice as low as in the previous 2013 study.
- Only 20.9% of youth are of the opinion that their interests are well or very well represented in national politics. Nevertheless, 84% of young people responded that they would vote in elections, which is the highest percentage among the countries covered by the study.
- 61% of young people believe that politicians do not care about their opinion, and 73% think that they should have more opportunities to have a say in politics.
- Confidence in institutions is low. Young people mostly trust the army and religious institutions, and for the first time, they express trust in voluntary movements. They have the least confidence in national political institutions and in political parties.
- On a scale from 1 to 5, youth satisfaction with the state of democracy in Macedonia is 2.54.
- On a scale from 1 to 10, from extreme left to extreme right, the mean value for those who position themselves ideologically is near the centre (M=5.16).
- Young people express leftist attitudes, i.e. to a great extent they accept a bigger role on the part of the state in the economy. In terms of attitudes along the liberal-conservative dimension explored in the research through questions related to acceptance of abortion and homosexuality, young people are very conservative, i.e. oriented toward the right of the political spectrum.
- 71.3% of youth are of the opinion that “We should have a leader who will rule Macedonia with a strong hand for the public good”, and that “A strong party that will represent the common folk in general is what we need in Macedonia right now” (68.5%), which are typical indicators of authoritarianism, and as of late, acceptability of populism. Young people have worryingly high scores on the scales measuring fascism and nationalism.
- Approximately 40% of youth have positive attitudes toward informal political participation. Most of them who have a positive attitude have already taken part in various forms of participation.
- Almost two-thirds of respondents believe that the interests of Macedonia are not sufficiently prominent, while 60% expressed pride in their national identity. Few young people think that the state should accept more refugees (14.9%) or emigrants/migrants (12.2%).
- Youth think that their society is overburdened with numerous problems and express moderate optimism in terms of their expectations regarding economic development in the next 10 years.
- Analysis of perceptions of the situation in Macedonia and in the European Union, with eight values having been offered, shows that the situation ranks better for the EU than for Macedonia on all values;
- 81% of young people support membership in the European Union.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Additional youth education is necessary on the nature of democratic political systems and the role of the citizens therein, or opportunities for political participation and the possibility for a direct impact on decisions that concern people.
- Additional education is necessary on the nature of political institutions, the separation of power, and the role of the elected representatives while emphasising that their work should be characterised by transparency and accountability to citizens.
- Additional education is necessary on the different ideologies and their answers to societal problems so that young people can develop an informed opinion, position themselves successfully in terms of ideology, and use their right to vote more efficiently.
- Additional education is required about the different categories of citizens and their needs for greater sensitivity and effective protection of marginalised communities.
- It is necessary to include youth in the decision-making processes, especially at the local level and on topics of interest to them by strengthening existing institutional opportunities for participation by youth in politics, especially through the use of modern media and information-technology tools.
- The government should support activities across institutional platforms to inform young people and motivate them to get engaged.
- It is necessary for political parties to make a more serious effort to overcome problems relating to rule of law, corruption, and other weaknesses in the democratic system that have been identified to create a different, new political culture based on dialogue. Only this can reduce party-based discrimination and re-establish young people's confidence in institutions and political parties.
- Government institutions as well as the trade unions should offer platforms to improve the knowledge of young people regarding labour rights, the labour market, and the role of trade unions, and to increase opportunities for participation.
- It is necessary to strengthen youth organisations within the political parties and to reinforce the democratic principles of political action and decision-making in the parties.

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## FOOTNOTES

- [ 1 ] A census has not been conducted since 2002.
- [ 2 ] Size of the populated place, Gender, Q3, Q8, Q9.8, Q13, Q14, Q20, Q61, Q88, Q89.1, Q96.1, Q98 and Q127.
- [ 3 ] The cluster analysis automatically grouped the respondents into three clusters, where 1=46.1 %, 2=24.7 % and 3=23.5 %.
- [ 4 ] The histogram (skewed toward the right) did not display any response distribution. Consequently, to compare scores by age categories, non-parametric tests are applied, which do not indicate any statistically significant correlation.
- [ 5 ] An additional SES (socio-economic status) variable was created and estimated; but it is not used in the analysis due to the low number of entirely valid answers by respondents, with a total of only 300 cases.
- [ 6 ] The impact of specific factors on migration tendencies cannot be evidenced through a linear regression due to the failure to satisfy the basic hypothesis of normal distribution of residuals (too extremely positive and negative residuals).
- [ 7 ] Respondents are automatically grouped in four clusters, combined as a percentage as follows: 1=31.8 %, 2= 22.0 %, 3=20.5 % and 4=25.7 %.
- [ 8 ] In this section with three parts, non-parametric statistics is applied, with significance at a level of 0.05 being used as a minimum.
- [ 9 ] Statistics applied: non-parametric method Kruskal Wallis Anova for age variable and Mann Whitney for gender, nationality and place of residence variables.
- [ 10 ] Applied statistic Spearman's correlation coefficient
- [ 11 ] Authoritative parents are characterised by high expectations from their children, but this is accompanied by understanding and support for their children. This type of parenting creates the healthiest environment for the child, and helps nurture a productive relationship between parent and child.
- With permissive parenting, parents are sensitive to the needs and requests of their children, but they do not make any demands on their children. These parents tend to be mild, as they try to avoid confrontation. The benefit from this parenting style is that these parents are usually very gentle and loving. However, its negative effects outweigh its positive aspects. Few rules are set, and even when they exist they are inconsistent. This lack of structure produces children with low levels of self-discipline and self-control.
- Authoritarian parenting, or so-called strict parenting, is characterised by parents who place high demands on their children, but they are not sensitive to their children's needs. Authoritarian parents allow little open dialogue between parent and child and they expect their children to adhere to their strict rules and expectations. They usually rely on punishment when they demand obedience or when they educate them (Robinson, Mandieco, Olsen & Hart, 1995).
- [ 12 ] In that study, most young people (44%) believed that it would neither be hard nor easy to achieve their life goals and plans, and 13% merely believed that they would manage to attain their life goals and plans easily or very easily. Roughly one-third of young people (31%) believe that this will be hard (or very hard) for them. Similar to the previous question, most young people (40%) believe that it will be "neither easy, nor hard" to earn enough to live their preferred lifestyle, more than one-third (37%) believe that this will be "hard" or "very hard", and only 10% believe that it will be "easy" or "very easy" (Jakimovski et al., 2014).
- [ 13 ] The data of the study entitled "The Identities of the Student Population in Republic of Macedonia" conducted by the Institute for Social, Political and Judicial Research in 2013 exploring what students in RM dream about indicates that most students dream about completing their studies and getting a job (45.5%), followed by students who dream about establishing their own family (18.5%). 5% to 9% of students in RM dream "of living better than my parents", "becoming rich/and escaping from here one day" (Cvetanova et al., 2016).
- [ 14 ] Spearman Correlation
- [ 15 ] Applied statistics Mann Whitney
- [ 16 ] In the 2013 Youth Study, responses offered in response to the question regarding the intensity of practicing religion ranged from 1 to 7, with 1 denoting rarely, and 7 regularly.
- [ 17 ] Non-parametric test Mann Whitney U test was used for testing predictability of several important variables.
- [ 18 ] Non-parametric correlation was used.
- [ 19 ] Religiousness is constructed out of responses to two questions: "How important is God in your life?" (on a scale from 1 to 10) and "How often do you attend religious services?" (on a scale from 1 to 7). The group of religious respondents includes those who had a score over 6 on the first scale and a score over 4 on the second scale.
- [ 20 ] The same question was asked in the "2013 Youth Study in Macedonia", with answers being on a scale of 1 to 10, so the comparison was made after the scores on the ten-degree and five-degree scales were transformed. The question was asked in identical form, but religious leaders were evaluated in the 2013 study, which was not the case in this study.
- [ 21 ] Sexual orientation as a reason for discrimination probably does not and cannot thoroughly reflect the real state in such types of research.
- [ 22 ] Statistics applied: non-parametric correlation,  $\chi^2$ , binary logistic regression, cluster analysis.
- [ 23 ] Full- and part-time professors, assistant professors and senior lecturers.
- [ 24 ] (Official Gazette. 137/2013, 30/2016)
- [ 25 ] Developed within the Twinning project "Further Improvement of the System for Development and Implementation of the National Qualifications Network" MK 13 IPA SO 02 15.
- [ 26 ] Approved by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy with the Decision No 08- 5015/1 of 25.07.2017.
- [ 27 ] In 2015, Skills Observatory was established to take this activity, but it does not function.
- [ 28 ] When the statement regarding the need for a strong leader from the scale of authoritarianism is added to this model, the variable is negatively correlated and statistically significant, but there are no changes in the significance of the variables presented in the model in Table 12. Given that the explanatory power of the model does not increase when the authoritarianism variable is added, we decided to keep the existing model.



## TABLE OF FIGURES

10	FIGURE 1: <b>Gender</b>	31	FIGURE 29: <b>Concrete activities taken to move</b>
10	FIGURE 2: <b>Age</b>	32	FIGURE 30: <b>When would you migrate?</b>
11	FIGURE 3: <b>How would you describe your place of residence?</b>	32	FIGURE 31: <b>Plan to stay in the host country</b>
11	FIGURE 4: <b>Nationality</b>	33	FIGURE 32: <b>Concrete activities taken to move</b>
11	FIGURE 5: <b>Financial situation of the household (in percent)</b>	34	FIGURE 33: <b>Level of information on opportunities for emigrants</b>
16	FIGURE 6: <b>Youth activities during leisure time – mean values on a scale between 1 (never) to 5 (very often)</b>	34	FIGURE 34: <b>Level of knowledge of the official language in the desired country</b>
16	FIGURE 7: <b>Time series of time spent on watching TV or internet</b>	35	FIGURE 35: <b>Invitations by someone living in the preferred country</b>
17	FIGURE 8: <b>Number of virtual “fiends”</b>	35	FIGURE 36: <b>Potential contribution to the development and prosperity of the desired host country</b>
17	FIGURE 9: <b>How often do you use Internet for certain purposes?</b>	40	FIGURE 37: <b>Values of youth in Macedonia (in arithmetical means)</b>
18	FIGURE 10: <b>Do you smoke?</b>	40	FIGURE 38: <b>Value cluster dendrogram Dendrogram using Average Linkage (Between ...)</b>
18	FIGURE 11: <b>Do you drink alcohol?</b>	41	FIGURE 39: <b>Personal future projections</b>
18	FIGURE 12: <b>Do you smoke? Cross-tabulation by gender</b>	41	FIGURE 40: <b>RM future projections</b>
19	FIGURE 13: <b>Do you drink alcohol? Cross-tabulation</b>	42	FIGURE 41: <b>Young people’s fears regarding social phenomena (arithmetical means)</b>
19	FIGURE 14: <b>Do you use soft drugs such as marijuana?</b>	43	FIGURE 42: <b>Percentage of young people attending religious services</b>
19	FIGURE 15: <b>Cluster analysis of alcohol consumption</b>	44	FIGURE 43: <b>Percentage of responses to the question about the importance of God in young people’s lives</b>
20	FIGURE 16: <b>Cluster analysis of taking soft drugs such as marijuana</b>	45	FIGURE 44: <b>Comparative data relating to trust in others (arithmetical mean)</b>
20	FIGURE 17: <b>Which of the following statements best describes your sexual experience?</b>	45	FIGURE 45: <b>Comparative data of youth social distance (arithmetical mean)</b>
21	FIGURE 18: <b>Do you use contraceptives or birth control methods?</b>	46	FIGURE 46: <b>Percentages of answers on the type of discrimination suffered</b>
22	FIGURE 19: <b>Attitude about sexual abstinence before marriage</b>	54	FIGURE 47: <b>There are cases where grades and exams are ‘bought’ in institutes/universities in Macedonia</b>
23	FIGURE 20: <b>Trajectory within the transition of key life events for females</b>	55	FIGURE 48: <b>Grade average 2013/2018</b>
23	FIGURE 21: <b>Trajectory within the transition of key life events for males</b>	55	FIGURE 49: <b>Hours dedicated to learning 2013/2018</b>
24	FIGURE 22: <b>In comparison to people your age: How much money do you have for your personal needs?</b>	56	FIGURE 50: <b>Everyday life at school/faculty 2013/2018</b>
28	FIGURE 23: <b>Have you ever stayed in a foreign country for studying or training purposes?</b>	56	FIGURE 51: <b>Socioeconomic status and youth aspiration for the desired level of education</b>
28	FIGURE 24: <b>Have you ever been abroad longer than 6 months?</b>	57	FIGURE 52: <b>Do you think that training, school and university education are well adapted to the current world of work or not?</b>
29	FIGURE 25: <b>Desire to leave the motherland</b>	58	FIGURE 53: <b>Have you ever performed a practical internship/having current relevance in terms of education</b>
30	FIGURE 26: <b>Cross-national analysis: Desire for migration in SEE countries – comparison of mean values</b>	58	FIGURE 54: <b>How easy will it be to find a job after completing education?</b>
30	FIGURE 27: <b>Time series of migration plans</b>		
30	FIGURE 28: <b>Cluster analysis of migration desire</b>		

- 59 FIGURE 55:  
**Estimated Marginal Means of How easy will it be for you, in your opinion, to find a job after you finish your formal education?**
- 60 FIGURE 56:  
**Profession/job requirements and formal education**
- 60 FIGURE 57:  
**Which of the following sectors would you most like to work in?**
- 62 FIGURE 58:  
**Importance of factors in finding a job and the financial situation of the household**
- 63 FIGURE 59:  
**Have you participated in voluntary activity in the past 12 months i.e. have you done any unpaid work voluntarily?**
- 63 FIGURE 60:  
**Organisations where such activities have taken place**
- 68 FIGURE 61:  
**Interest in politics (% of answers "interested" and "very interested")**
- 68 FIGURE 62:  
**Information on political events**
- 69 FIGURE 63:  
**Satisfaction with representation of young people's interests in politics**
- 69 FIGURE 64:  
**Voting in elections**
- 70 FIGURE 65:  
**Would you be willing to take on a political function?**
- 70 FIGURE 66:  
**Trust in institutions**
- 71 FIGURE 67:  
**Ideological positioning: left-center-right**
- 71 FIGURE 68:  
**Ideological positioning: left-center-right (2018)**
- 72 FIGURE 69:  
**Ideological positioning: left-center-right (2013)**
- 72 FIGURE 70:  
**Ideological Positions (Scale 1–5: 1 totally disagree; 5 totally agree)**
- 73 FIGURE 71:  
**Democratic and authoritarian values**
- 74 FIGURE 72:  
**Attitudes towards democratic and authoritarian values**
- 74 FIGURE 73:  
**Democratic and authoritarian values according to level of education**
- 75 FIGURE 74:  
**Group rights**
- 75 FIGURE 75:  
**Women's right (don't have enough rights)**
- 76 FIGURE 76:  
**Rights of LGBT people (don't have enough rights)**
- 76 FIGURE 77:  
**Minorities' rights (don't have enough rights)**
- 76 FIGURE 78:  
**Selected items on the F-scale**
- 77 FIGURE 79:  
**Selected items on nationalism scale**
- 77 FIGURE 80:  
**Scores on F and N scales by ideological orientations**
- 77 FIGURE 81:  
**Participation in political activities/political engagement**
- 78 FIGURE 82:  
**Political participation (by family income)**
- 79 FIGURE 83:  
**From local to global identity**
- 80 FIGURE 84:  
**How much do you see yourself as:**
- 80 FIGURE 85:  
**Attitudes toward foreign policy**
- 81 FIGURE 86:  
**Goals of the government (problems to be solved)**
- 81 FIGURE 87:  
**Expectations regarding the economic situation (1–5)**
- 82 FIGURE 88:  
**Status of values chosen in Macedonia and the European Union (1–5)**

## TABLE OF TABLES

12	TABLE 1: <b>Material Property</b>
17	TABLE 2: <b>Number of friends in real life</b>
21	TABLE 3: <b>Which of the following statements best describes your sexual experience? Cross-tabulation by age groups</b>
21	TABLE 4: <b>Which of the following statements best describes your sexual experience? Cross-tabulation by age groups</b>
32	TABLE 5: <b>Preferred destination for migration</b>
59	TABLE 10: <b>What is your current employment status?</b>
61	TABLE 11: <b>Range of factors in finding a job</b>
79	TABLE 12: <b>Regression analysis of political participation</b>
81	TABLE 13: <b>Ranking of Values</b>



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