



ORIGINAL PAPER

Dominant system in the Republic of North Macedonia: Socialism or capitalism?

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Abstract:

The vast majority of explanations of capitalist and socialist systems are based on their contradictory features. However, on a general historical and theoretical level, there are some similarities between both families of a system obtained throughout the process of their co-evolution. Therefore, as a result of these similarities, even today, most confuse their economic concepts. Such confusion rightly stimulates our research interest to understand some basic categories within the political culture of citizens in North Macedonia, i.e., understanding its homogenization level (whether it is low or high), which is a necessary precondition for the basic consensus in society. The research, based on the distribution of social wealth and product, and private property and market ownership, through the survey, will measure the attitude of citizens towards the old and new social order, respectively, towards socialism and capitalism. To accomplish this survey by not asking correspondents direct questions, through some indicative questions, we will focus on the constituent features of these two systems, such as justice, humanity, the concentration of capital, and property distribution. These are also elements of a fundamental difference between socialism and capitalism, both in theory and social practice. The results will prove the hypothesis that in the Republic of North Macedonia, we can not have a clear picture of the dominant system, as we have a combined mosaic that to some extent is in favor of the new capitalist system, but without many economic prospects.

Keywords: *Socialism; Capitalism; Political Culture; North Macedonia.*

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Between Socialism and Capitalism

Although political systems represent a complex interplay of political culture with other aspects of the political system, both formal and informal, it isn't easy with the tools currently available to deal with the totality of political systems at the same time.

This paper comes at a time of socio-economic and political changes in the country and in the region, which is followed by the formation of new states and the loss of trust in current institutions and political elites.

The paper itself incorporates empirical research, which offers different modalities from different prisms of intellectual point of view and the role of political culture in the awareness and participation of citizens in policymaking, highlighting the views of young age groups on the future of the country.

The awareness dominates the current system's opinion that society is dynamic, not static, and subject to constant changes and revolutions in its development. Changes happen in all areas. Based on Parsons' (1998) functional theory, revolution is a process of change that increases the ability to be adopted in different conditions and circumstances.

As the most comprehensive economic and political concept of this ideology, socialism is any of the various economic and political theories that defend collective or governmental ownership. On the other side, concerning the distribution of wealth in capitalism, which follows a different logic, society's organizations are based on private property and market economy laws.

Polish scholar Anna Volk-Poveska in her study of democracy and the market economy in Eastern Europe writes that "the political culture of societies that abandoned communism is full of paradoxes, which relate to the character and essence of the processes of the transitional period" (Weidenfeld, 1999). Despite the fact that these countries, including North Macedonia, are in the process of transition, they even to this day can be found in the conflict between the political system and the interests of society, in the conflict between goals and means, in the conflict of integrative credibility. Therefore, the transition would be considered meaningful if this process represents a social change, which in the first place means a political change, which affects every pore of contemporary society.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, which symbolized Europe's unification, the transition process began, followed by a series of challenges concentrated on activities to remedy the weak economic situation. "Stabilization, liberalization, and privatization were presented as the main objectives for this unique historical experience. The highest priority was the fight against inflation, and speed was seen as essential to privatization. "Shock therapy provided a model to build a market economy within a short historical period" (Balcerowicz, 1995). But according to Abdullai (2008), the countries that accepted this therapy, i.e., the financial packages from the International Monetary Fund, such as Poland and Hungary, managed to survive with many difficulties and problems, such as rising unemployment, declining living standards, and the enrichment of political oligarchs who bought enterprises at a low price or without money. While the former Yugoslavia of the reformist Prime Minister, Ante Markovic, did not accept this therapy, the consequences were fatal, which ended with the dissolution and disappearance of this multinational state. The transition and privatization process in North Macedonia began on the eve of the former Yugoslavia's break-up, but still under its auspices. This process

took place at a fast and intense pace, where many uncertainties and distortions appeared. Therefore, it did not bring economic prosperity and economic development to the country.

Methodology

It is proven that for the overall design of a country's political culture, the survey is more appropriate; therefore, as far as North Macedonia is concerned, such a study has been previously conducted by various scholars and the prestigious world institutes. We can specify World Value Survey, European Social Survey, and European Values Study, significant projects research-led every year in all Europe and the world - suitable for extracting the necessary formulations for research questions and proper coding. The most applied model is that of the World Value Survey (WVS, 2001). Still, this prestigious organization for North Macedonia has conducted only two surveys, one in 1998 and the last in 2001. In the same year, the Institute for Sociological and Political-Legal Research entitled "Political Culture of Citizens in the Republic of Macedonia" made a similar study (Simoska, Gaber & Babunski, 2001). The latest known survey on the measurement of the political culture in North Macedonia is that of 2013 by the Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" - Skopje (IDSCS, 2013), entitled "Political culture in Macedonia - national field research report." So, as can be seen from 2013 until today, there is no direct study of a political culture based on the North Macedonia survey.

Our study's survey is conducted by the Institute for Research, Innovation, and Development – Tetovo (irid.mk). It was intended to measure the population's public opinion throughout the territory of North Macedonia in the period October - December, 2019. The methodology used to create the representative sample was "Clustered Convenience Sampling, and the software used for recording and processing the responses was SPSS (ibm.com)." For this survey, twenty surveyors were engaged with different ethnic compositions, gender, and ages 22 to 45 years. As a result, the number of valid answers is 1070, a representative sample for the Republic of North Macedonia. Ronald Inglehart's article entitled "How Strong is Mass Support for Democracy: And How Can We Measure It?" (Inglehart, 2003) - has been used mainly as a methodological guide in measuring the democratic capacity of the country. In terms of question modeling in our study, we have found it reasonable to refer to these preliminary surveys (World Value Survey, European Social Survey, and European Values Study) to a certain degree. However, the scale and the measurement structure itself has been adapted to the context of North Macedonia to make it more understandable to the citizens and to provide more relevant answers.

The empirical part must be representative following the population's state statistics, i.e., the country's demographic criteria. Therefore, based on the last census of 2002, North Macedonia is officially the home of 64.2 percent of the Macedonian population, 25.2 percent of the Albanian population, about 10 percent of Turks, Serbs, Vlachs, Bosnians, etc. (stat.gov.mk, 2019). But, since, from 2002 until today, the population census has not been done, and its demographics may have changed, we find that compared to state statistics, we have a deviation of the ethnic ratio of 10%. As another limitation, we also consider age. We have 10% of the age over 46, which is deemed small to measure the average population's political culture. Later, due to the lack of middle and old age, we also have a low percentage of people with primary or eighth-grade school (only 1.3%). These restrictions are objective due to time constraints,

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limited human resources, and financial constraints. We decided to focus mostly on the younger generation of the population due to this survey's knowledge and practicality. We also had obstacles that prevented survey conduct and refusals from participating in the survey by prejudicing and thinking about the survey's background during this process. However, our engaged interviewers have tried to clarify its research objective.

The results of the survey - Dominant system: Socialism or capitalism?

The survey topic is called socialism or capitalism, and not socialism versus capitalism is the reason for observing the results. Even today, these two terminologies still live in parallel, and we cannot draw a dividing line between them.

A. Indications of political differences between the two systems (Socialism & Capitalism)

Regarding the political differences between the two systems, in order to get the best results, in our survey we asked three questions of the political character of the capitalist or socialist system.

Question 1

Based on the current political system, on the idea of party pluralism or having only one party, surprising results were obtained from the answers to the statement: "I do not trust the one-party political class," where 73.6% responded positively to this finding while 25.4% responded negatively.

Table 1 – Author's elaboration

I do not trust the one-party political class		
N	Valid	1059
	Missing	11

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Yes	787	73.6	74.3	74.3
	No	272	25.4	25.7	100.0
	Total	1059	99.0	100.0	
Missing	.0	11	1.0		
Total		1070	100.0		

Weaves:

a. Ethnicity * I do not trust the one-party-led political class

Table 2 – Author's elaboration

		I do not trust the one-party-led political class		Total
		Po	Jo	
Ethnicity	Macedonian	401	147	548
	Albanians	282	99	381
	Turkish	42	18	60
	Macedonian Muslims	33	4	37
	Roma	5	1	6
	Others	17	2	19

Total	780	271	1051
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In the intertwining of data, if you concentrate on the ethnic report, the attitude of the Albanians is paradoxical, given that the Albanians vote for the ruling party for the last 20 years. The results show that 25% of Albanian ethnicity still trust the political class of a single party. In conclusion, it turns out that still in specific leadership segments, they have convictions from the past ideological system. While mainly for Albanians, the term "group" is at multiple hierarchies of values (regardless of whether it is a political party or religious or ethnic group).

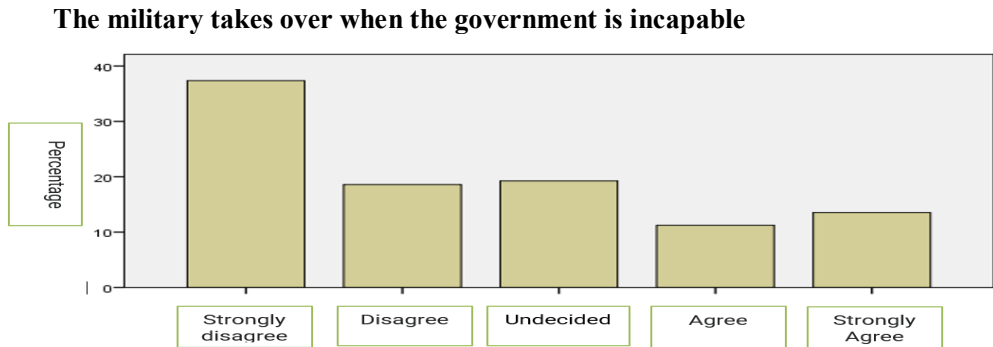
Question 2

Regarding the fact that the army takes over when the government is incompetent, we still have a variety of answers but that more in percentage respectively 36.6% do not agree at all with this statement, while to this when we add 18.2% of respondents who do not agree. It turns out that over half of the respondents do not agree with this undemocratic statement. On the other hand, 18.9% are undecided on this statement, 11% agree, and 13.3% fully agree.

Table 3 – Author's elaboration

The military takes over when the government is incapable		
N	Missing	1049
	Total	21

Graphic 1 – Author's elaboration



Whether the citizens of North Macedonia have democratic or authoritarian beliefs depends on their attitudes towards the political elite. The next question focused on the behavior of politicians in the relationship between their interests and the interests of the country and whether they have the willingness and capacity to respond to the needs of the community at large.

Generally speaking, authority is considered a negative value. It is usually seen as a product of the political relations of the past. In this research, the authoritarianism of the political leaders in the country will be elaborated only as one of the segments of the political culture.

Initially, a number of variables will be extracted, decomposed, and defined, constituting the authority's primary content.

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Below we will highlight only those variables that affect the political and managerial processes, along with a brief definition of each:

Conservatism - Strict adherence to conventional, middle-class values;

Authoritarian Aggression - The tendency to be on the lookout for, condemn, dismiss, and punish disobedient people.

Strength and "rigor" - Preoccupation with the dominant-submissive dimension, strong/weak, leader/follower; identification with the power figure; great emphasis on the usual attributes of the ego; exaggerated assertion of strength and severity.

Destructiveness and cynicism - Generalized enmity, the extermination of man;

Conventionalism - Affirmation of disobedience and related values;

Authoritarian submission - Submissive, uncritical attitude towards idealized moral authorities; and

Awareness - Respect for power and total discipline.

Each of the variables outlined above is assessed as a more or less central tendency in an authoritarian person, who, under a dynamic political process, brings to the surface his ethnocentrism. One of the attitudes that are indicative in this view is how the citizens in the country evaluate the political elite. The following answers provide an overview in this regard.

Question 3

Regarding whether the political class is old and in solid relation with the communist past, it turns out that more than half, respectively 53.9% stated that the political class is old while 43.6% that it is not.

Table 13 – Author's elaboration

The political class is old and in strong relation to the communist past		
N	Valid	1044
	Missing	26

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Yes	577	53.9	55.3	55.3
	No	467	43.6	44.7	100.0
	Total	1044	97.6	100.0	
Missing	.0	26	2.4		
Total		1070	100.0		

Weaves:

a. Ethnicity * The political class is old and in strong relation to the communist past

Table 13 – Author's elaboration

		The political class is old and in strong relation to the communist past		Total
		Po	Jo	
Ethnicity	Macedonian	277	263	540
	Albanians	226	149	375
	Turkish	33	27	60
	Macedonian Muslims	24	12	36
	Roma	1	5	6
	Others	13	6	19

Total	574	462	1036
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Since the majority (53.9%) of the correspondents think that the political class is old and related to the communist past, it is very significant to emphasize the ethnic differences concerning this issue. Among Macedonians, the ratio between affirmative and negative answers is very close (51% Yes - 49% No). Among Albanians, it is slightly more distinct (60% Yes - 40 No), while much more distinct, despite the small number of correspondents, is of Macedonian Muslim ethnicity (67% Yes - 33 No).

Where do citizens refer when they mention the age of the elite when most current party leaders are led by new figures who are not related to the previous system? The dilemma can be based on the aspect of the ideological history of the party and certain actors within the party bodies that have age-related connections with the past ideology.

B. Indications of economical differences between the two systems (Socialism & Capitalism)

For the research needs, we concretized some of the main socialism features as a social system is mostly identified as in the ideological-economic aspect. Furthermore, in the framework of socialism's social practices, the central question was about the distribution of social wealth, i.e., social production.

We will try to achieve better results if we ask five indicative indirect questions to understand the correspondents' opinion and not necessarily their declaration that they prefer the current capitalist system or the old socialist system.

Question 1

Regarding the claim that "**the money should be in the hands of as few successful people as possible,**" 13.4% strongly agree, 10.3% agree with this statement, 24.3% are undecided, 16% disagree, and 35% strongly disagree.

Table 4 – Author's elaboration

The money should be in the hands of a few successful people as possible.	
Valid	1049
Missing	21

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Strongly disagree	375	35.0	35.4	35.4
	Disagree	171	16.0	16.1	51.6
	Undecided	260	24.3	24.6	76.1
	Agree	110	10.3	10.4	86.5
	Strongly agree	143	13.4	13.5	100.0
Total		1059	99.0	100.0	
Missing	.0	11	1.0		
Total:		1070	100.0		

Regarding the declaration that "**money should be in the hands of as few successful people as possible,**" the total of those who strongly disagree and disagree is more than half correspondent (51%). If we analyze the results, interesting is the percentage of those who are undecided, about 25%.

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Weaves:

Table 5 – Author's elaboration

		"Money should be in the hands of as few successful people as possible"					Total
		Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	
Ethnicity	Macedonian	207	107	145	36	53	548
	Albanians	126	52	74	52	79	383
	Turkish	14	6	20	16	4	60
	Macedonian Muslims	22	1	8	2	4	37
	Roma	0	0	3	3	0	6
	Others	5	3	10	0	1	19
Total		374	169	260	109	141	1053

In terms of intertwining ethnic data, despite the small number of correspondents, all Roma respondents are positive that "money should be in the hands of as few successful people".

Question 2

Regarding the quote that "**the rich need something to be taken for others to have more,**" again we have a variety of answers: 22.9% strongly disagree with this statement, 14.1% disagree, 24.9% are undecided, 10.6 % agree, and 26.7% strongly agree that the rich should be deprived of something so that others can have more.

Table 6 – Author's elaboration

The rich need something to be taken for others to have more.		
N	Valid	1061
	Missing	9

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Strongly disagree	245	22.9	23.1	23.1
	Disagree	151	14.1	14.2	37.3
	Undecided	266	24.9	25.1	62.4
	Agree	113	10.6	10.7	73.0
	Strongly agree	286	26.7	27.0	100.0
	Total	1061	99.2	100.0	
Missing	.0	9	.8		
Total		1070	100.0		

Regarding the statement that "**The rich need something to be taken for others to have more,**" the total correspondents who strongly disagree and disagree with it is 37% (compared to those who agree and strongly agree 37.2%).

Question 3

According to the respondents, the state is not equal to its citizens and does not treat them equally to people's incomes. 41.8% of the correspondent strongly disagree

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that **"the state equals people's incomes,"** 20.4% disagree, 21.9% are undecided, 7.2% agree, and 7.2% fully agree.

Table 7 – Author's elaboration

The state equals people's incomes		
	Valid	1053
	Missing	17

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Strongly disagree	447	41.8	42.5	42.5
	Disagree	218	20.4	20.7	63.2
	Undecided	234	21.9	22.2	85.4
	Agree	77	7.2	7.3	92.7
	Strongly agree	77	7.2	7.3	100.0
	Total	1053	98.4	100.0	
Missing	.0	17	1.6		
Total		1070	100.0		

Weaving:

Table 8 - Author's elaboration

		The state equals people's incomes					Total
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree	
Age group	18-30	320	136	168	64	48	736
	31-45	69	64	39	10	24	206
	46-60	43	9	21	2	3	78
	Over 60	13	8	5	1	1	28
Total		445	217	233	77	76	1048

Ethnicity * The state equals people's incomes

Table 9 – Author's elaboration

		The state equals people's incomes				
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
Ethnicity	Macedonian	195	139	139	43	27
	Albanians	203	56	61	24	40
	Turkish	22	16	9	8	5
	Macedonian Muslims	9	3	20	0	3
	Roma	2	2	1	1	0
	Others	14	2	3	0	0
Total		445	218	233	76	75

The certainty of the answer "strongly disagree" among the Albanians, in this case, is more pronounced. 52% of them strongly disagree that the state equals people's incomes.

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As we can see, the above questions are directly related to socialism, but except for the query "the state equals people's incomes," where over 60% of respondents disagree and strongly disagree with this system, in the first and second question, their resistance to socialism is weaker.

Regarding the quote: "money to be in the hands of as few successful people as possible," the total of those who disagree and disagree at all is 51% (compared to 23.7%).

While in the statement: "the rich should get something for others to have more," the total of those who disagree and disagree at all is 37% (compared to 37.2%).

Below, we will try to achieve better results if we ask indicative secret questions to understand the correspondents' beliefs and not necessarily their declaration that they prefer the current capitalist system or the old socialist system.

Question 4

When quoted as "**the government should tax the rich and subsidize the poor,**" over a third or 35.8% strongly disagree with this statement, 26% are undecided, 18.8% disagree, 7.5% agree, and 11.5% strongly agree. As can be seen, there is a significant percentage of undecided (26%). This high percentage may be an indication that they probably do not understand taxation.

Table 10 – Author's elaboration

The government should tax the rich and subsidize the poor.		
N	Valid	1061
	Missing	9

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Strongly disagree	383	35.8	36.1	36.1
	Disagree	201	18.8	18.9	55.0
	Undecided	278	26.0	26.2	81.2
	Agree	76	7.1	7.2	88.4
	Strongly agree	123	11.5	11.6	100.0
	Total	1061	99.2	100.0	
Missing	.0	9	.8		
Total:		1070	100.0		

Question 5

Regarding the statement that "**people should receive state aid for unemployment,**" 10.4% of respondents strongly agree, 12.5% agree, 19.6% disagree, and 27.5% strongly disagree.

Table 11 – Author's elaboration

People should receive state aid for unemployment		
	Valid	1052
	Missing	18

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
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Valid	Strongly disagree	294	27.5	27.9	27.9
	Disagree	210	19.6	20.0	47.9
	Undecided	303	28.3	28.8	76.7
	Agree	134	12.5	12.7	89.4
	Strongly agree	111	10.4	10.6	100.0
	Total	1052	98.3	100.0	
Missing	.0	18	1.7		
Total		1070	100.0		

Nevertheless, then based on implied or indicative assertions of systems through sub-questions, we came to results as follows:

- In the following quote: **"The government should tax the rich and subsidize the poor,"** the ratio of those who oppose this claim and those who accept it is 54% to 19%, but again the percentage of undecided correspondents remains high (25%);

- Regarding the statement that **"people should receive state aid for unemployment,"** the ratio of those who oppose this statement and those who accept it is 47.1% to 22.9%. While correspondents who are undecided reach the maximum percentage of 28.3%;

There is a large gap of dilemmas, doubts, and uncertainties easily verified by the large percentage of correspondent's undecided on which system they belong to, which is the common denominator of the above three cases (24.3%, 24.9%, and 21.9 %). Citizens have gradually disengaged from the old system, but it is not safe on their path to capitalism.

If we look further at the intertwining of age, we will realize that it is normal for the older ones to show weaker criticism of the old system, that is, more criticism of capitalism. Young and highly educated correspondents mostly felt praise for capitalism as the capitalist system directly influences them daily.

To get the most accurate results, we built a model with the sum of:

- a. The joint answers "Strongly disagree" and "disagree" represent capitalism; and
- b. The collective responses "strongly agree" and "agree" define socialism.

If we calculate them, we will come to precise results of the dominant system in North Macedonia:

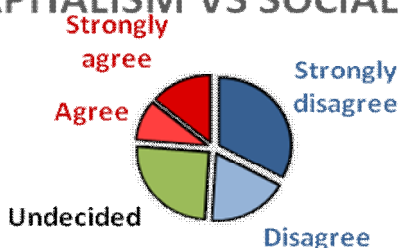
Table 12 – Author's elaboration

Economic aspect	Capitalism		Neutral	Socialism	
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
The money should be in the hands of a few successful people as possible.	375	171	260	110	143
The rich need something to be taken for others to have more.	245	151	266	113	286
The state equals people's incomes.	447	218	234	77	77

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The government should tax the rich and subsidize the poor.	383	201	278	76	123
People should receive state aid for unemployment.	294	210	303	134	111
Total I	1744	951	1341	510	740
Total II	2695 answers favor Capitalism		1341 neutral	1250 answers favor Socialism	

CAPITALISM VS SOCIALISM



Graphic 2 – Author's elaboration

We achieved results that favor the capitalist system with a ratio of approximately 2 to 1:

Two thousand six hundred ninety-five accumulated answers from the survey favor capitalism (2695), and 1250 collected answers in favor of socialism. More specifically, except when the correspondents believe in the socialist statement that: "**The rich need something to be taken for others (poor) to have more**" (26.7% strongly agree and 10.6% agree), which can be justified due to the country's unstable economic situation, in other cases, perhaps not with any great superiority, everything favors capitalism.

Conclusion

The data stated concerning the general assessment of socialism, namely capitalism, shows a mosaic appearance. Elaboration of the distribution of questions shows that the respondents are more willing to agree with the capitalist system to a large extent, emphasizing that young people are more predisposed to the new system and the elderly for the socialist system. It is realistic to expect that better transition outcomes will be needed in addition to a considerable period, as necessary preconditions for greater positive acceptance of capitalism. In conclusion, initially, the improvement of the citizens' living standards will act as a catalyst in terms of embracing or accepting some changes in the new capitalist system.

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