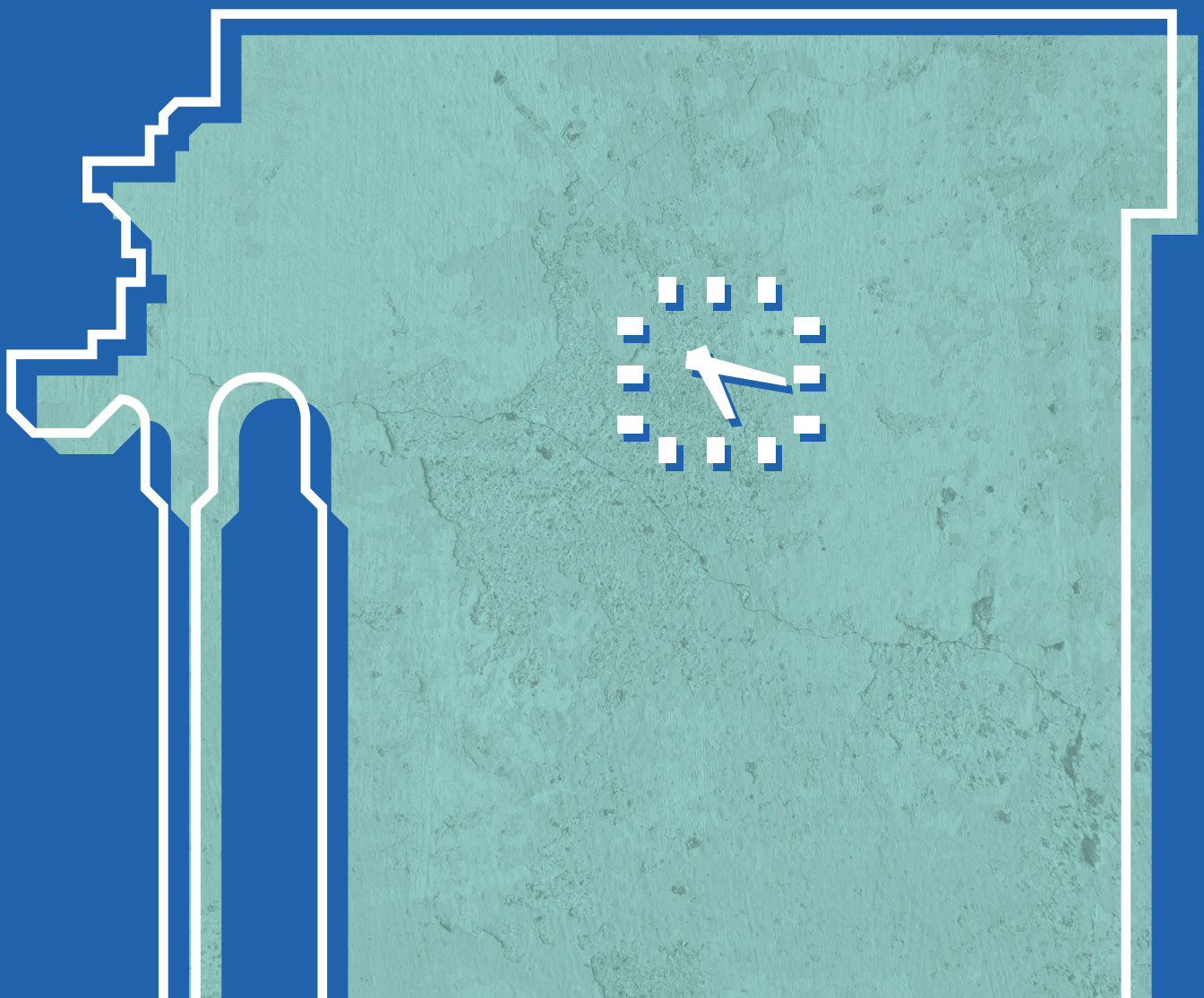
Institute for Democracy
Societas Civilis -Skopje

SOLIDARITY

FROM OVERCOMING CRISIS TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



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SKOPJE REMEMBERS 1963-2023

Publication commissioned by the UNDP country office in North Macedonia

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Foreword by Stevo Pendarovski, President of the Republic of North Macedonia

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the year that marks six decades since the devastating Skopje earthquake, which fundamentally changed the lives of its residents and gave a completely new direction to the development and definition of the city, with a key determinant being a city of solidarity, UNDP prepared an extraordinary publication that addresses the topic of solidarity from various aspects. Namely, through the essays of our eminent professors, publicists, but also younger authors, solidarity is analyzed through the prism of economy, democratic processes, the diaspora, climate change, volunteer work, gender solidarity, as well as the mentioned topic, post-earthquake Skopje, built on the foundations of international solidarity.

Taking into account the interest of having your text printed in the publication, i.e. the number of papers received on the call and the quality of the selected papers, it is obvious that the topic of solidarity is always current and encourages creative discussion and opens up space for analyses, observations, discussions.

Solidarity is indeed immanent to human civilization and a pillar of every democratic society. It was through the example of Skopje six decades ago, when the then ideologically divided world came together in support of a city destroyed by a catastrophic earthquake, that the importance of international solidarity, the expediency of the United Nations and the support system justified their cause. Another, last example is the devastating earthquake in Syria and Turkey and the importance of solidarity shown by the international community and the states individually, as well as by numerous individuals. Without solidarity, we would hardly have survived the Covid-19 pandemic; it is exactly on the basis of solidarity that the issue of climate change and many other pressing issues that burden humanity can be solved. Solidarity in time of pandemics, economic and financial crises, military crises, security challenges, but also solidarity in everyday life at the level of neighborhood, local community.

The political meaning of the term solidarity as a unity of goals, interests and standards cannot be materialized in everyday life without a feeling of reciprocity, helping, togetherness between people. Hence, solidarity is also related to our socialization, empathy, emotional intelligence. The alienation of modern man and his incompatibility in the community reflects on social cohesion, but also on humanity and solidarity. Therefore, let us not forget the meaning of solidarity and build solidary societies and a solidary world. Only a united, solidary and open world can adequately respond to global challenges that are becoming more complex and dangerous. We have an obligation to the present generations, but we also owe it to the future ones, to leave adequate conditions and solid values for progress and development.

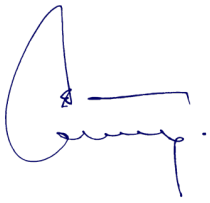
Dear Friends,

On this occasion, I would like to emphasize that the Macedonian society, divided along many lines and facing constant crises, needs to reaffirm solidarity and its essence at every level in social life. It is, first of all, an obligation to ourselves, but also to the international institutions we are members of and to which we not only formally, but also essentially belong.

The Republic of North Macedonia includes solidarity among the other fundamental values in its Constitution. The capital of the country, Skopje, is a city of solidarity and is known and recognized as such in the world. It is in Skopje that buildings and streets bear the names of the helpers - countries, cities, personalities, who raised the city from the ashes. However, it seems that unfortunately solidarity at present is in a deep shadow and more in the area of theory and terminology than essence, creation, thought and idea. We must understand solidarity, not as an imposed obligation with a purposeful use, but as a natural reaction and everyday life. It is advisable to encourage a debate and to focus on solidarity and its importance for the Macedonian society. Why don't we consider taking an example from some European countries and renaming the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy to Ministry of Social Solidarity? Why don't we emphasize the importance of inter-generational solidarity? Why don't we renew the tradition of organizing days of solidarity?

Undoubtedly, in this context, a positive example is provided by the UNDP publication, which, I am confident, will be an additional incentive for further discussion, elaborations, analyses, scientific papers, as well as for taking specific steps and solutions.

Stevo Pendarovski
President of North Macedonia



Solidarity, tackling the development challenges of today

International cooperation, be it between countries, organizations, social movements, or individuals is one of our best paths forward in tackling development challenges. It always has been that way. The history of international relations is full of cases where parties have either recognized their mutual interest to collaborate in the achievement of common goals or have decided that it is the right thing to do and mobilized action around it. Ratified international treaties, the creation of international organizations, the establishment of formal and informal global structures to help accelerate the achievement of common goals is not an exception in global politics, it is the norm. Notably, this March, we saw the power of international cooperation, when delegates reached an agreement on protecting marine biodiversity in international waters, in what has been labeled as a 'victory for multilateralism and for global efforts to counter the destructive trends facing ocean health'. Albeit some of these victories can be long in the making (this treaty took more than a decade of negotiations to ensure an agreement on how we can protect the oceans that lie outside national boundaries), but its existence and future implementation will be an engine for progress. We can also use the example of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Embedded within them is Goal 17: Partnership for the Goals, that recognizes the importance of having a revitalized global partnership in order to reach the sustainable development of our common aspirations. This SDG Goal echoes the need for us to be supportive, empathetic, inventive, and cooperative if we want to build a better world. Not just states amongst themselves, but a range of actors in the world of politics.

The challenges of today, and what lies ahead, will undoubtedly have international cooperation as a part of the response. However, often, we will also have to rely on solidarity in our response to global challenges. Take for instance the climate crisis that we are facing. International cooperation to tackle the challenge is a must, but cooperation that is underpinned in solidarity. We are quickly learning that solidarity plays a vital role in tackling this challenge. To illustrate, UN Secretary General at COP27 called for 'a historic pact between developed and developing countries', framing the climate change emergency as a moral imperative, and a fundamental question of international solidarity and climate justice. Recently, he proposed to G20 a Climate Solidarity Pact, and an acceleration agenda to reach the goals of the Paris agreement. We need this type of inter-country solidarity, so that we can tackle this issue holistically, and mindful of the unequal contributions that caused the problem, and the unfair distribution of its consequences. Adjacent to these calls, we also see young people calling for 'an intergenerational solidarity' on the climate crisis, mindful of the disproportionate burden of the impact of climate change on different generations. Demanding greater solidarity is also in the focus of the 2022 special report on 'New threats to human security in the Anthropocene', that argues in favor of complementing the current strategies and protections with solidarity so that we can stand up to the challenges of the Anthropocene. Clearly solidarity plays and is yet to play an integral role in our response to climate change, but it seems that advocating for greater solidarity has been a core ask during other key global processes, including the covid

pandemic, the polycrisis that followed it, human rights movement, as well in responding to disasters and humanitarian crisis, to name a few. Lastly, we witnessed renewed calls for international solidarity, as one of the worst disasters this century unfolded in February 2023 in Türkiye-Syria, impacting millions of people and leaving the countries in disarray. On the topic of solidarity in the aftermath of crisis, this year, we are commemorating 60 years of the 1963 Skopje earthquake that reduced the city in rubble. North Macedonia, at the time received immense support and solidarity from the UN system, countries and people towards rebuilding and reconstructing the city and lifting the spirts of people. To show gratitude for this endeavor the city adopted the motto 'Skopje, the city of international solidarity', recognizing the role other countries and individuals played in rebuilding the city. Even today, symbols of the manifested solidarity can be found on the streets of the capital, be it the streets named after contributing countries, or the objects and neighborhoods that were built in the post-earthquake period.

This 60th memorial of the Skopje earthquake seems to be an opportune moment for a broader conversation on the importance of solidarity in development. Therefore, we have invited scholars, practitioners, activists, students, and young people to offer their thoughts and arguments on the importance of solidarity in various development themes. We believe that with this compendium we will contribute to an existing conversation about the role solidarity can play in our communities, and we hope to inspire a conversation here in North Macedonia about the future of development through these lenses.

The UNDP country office in Skopje, North Macedonia has had activities and programs that enhance and advocate for an approach to development informed and constituted by solidarity. To illustrate, UNDP has been involved in the care services space for several years now, supporting vulnerable groups as a part of the biggest social and employment portfolio with several interventions designed to address obstacles for active participation in the labour market. As a country team we have also been promoting ecological solidarity by advocating for an alliance between individuals, central and local governments, CSO scientists and researchers around common goals, and shared responsibility for the wellbeing of people and sustainable growth. We are working to ensure that bigger urban municipalities show solidarity and support smaller rural municipalities in performing their functions with the same quality, through our inter-municipal cooperation models for local governance in numerous areas including: urban planning, social services, and finance management. To conclude, we have been, and we are continuously working on advancing gender – responsive public policies and services that respond to the needs of women and man and strengthen inclusive governance, economic and social activation, participation, and women leadership.

Armen Grigoryan
Resident Representative at UNDP North Macedonia

Compendium summary

Nenad Markovikj [1]
Ivan Damjanovski [2]

As commemorations of 60 years of the Skopje earthquake are approaching, the generations that remember the disastrous earthquake were yet again reminded of the shock that occurred in the morning on 26th of July 1963, in Skopje, then part of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia. The recent catastrophic events in Turkey and Syria once again showed all human vulnerability from the forces of nature, but it also displayed a massive global support and relief for the victims, regardless of the economic potency of the donor countries, domestic socio-political events or bilateral relations with the affected countries. Citizens of North Macedonia recognized their own tragedy but did once again witness the utter most important aspect of global human action in such post-catastrophic scenery – that one of solidarity.

Solidarity, generally defined as common action based on mutual human support, is the central topic of this compendium published by United Nations Development Programme and the Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" – Skopje. It was chosen exactly on the occasion of the upcoming commemoration of 60 years of the Skopje earthquake, marking one of the most dramatic events in the recent history of the capital of North Macedonia. The focal point of the compendium was placed on solidarity as the most critical aspect in mitigating the devastating effects of natural disasters, but also as the only human action that guides collective efforts of individuals, ethnic groups, and even entire nations under one premise – saving as many lives as possible.

However, 60 years since the Skopje earthquake is just the initial topic and the first section of the compendium. Solidarity is given a much broader meaning and context in this publication, in which five different aspects of solidarity are being analyzed – besides the aftermath of the Skopje earthquake in the first section, the second section has been devoted

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to the democratic and economic solidarity, the third section gives insight into diaspora issues, the fourth one analyzes solidarity through the lens of climate change while the last one speaks about solidarity and gender. A separate section is dedicated to students' articles on solidarity, with the best students chosen to contribute and partake in this publication.

Analyzing the post-catastrophic reconstruction of the city seems like a logical starting point of the edition dedicated to the 60 years commemoration of the Skopje earthquake. The texts in the first section are devoted to the issue alongside a text on the topic of remembering the earthquake and to the collective memory of the nation related to the disaster. The second section has several focus points – one on economic solidarity and taxation, the second one on solidarity as fundament of democracy and the third one on the inclusion of people with disabilities in the labor market. The third section analyzes aspects of solidarity through the question of the diaspora, but not only remittances - other forms of solidarity are analyzed as well.

In the fourth section authors give independent insight on climate change and the role of solidarity, while the fifth section is related to gender solidarity and its aspects. The separate students section includes essays dedicated to the post-earthquake relief for the citizens of Skopje as well as the upcoming 60th commemoration, selected through a rigorous process of peer review.

The selection of texts clearly indicates the intent of the editorial team of this compendium. On one hand, the intention was to pay respect and give testimony to the most devastating event in the recent history of North Macedonia and its capital – the Skopje earthquake from 1963. On the other hand, a broader context is being addressed – one of solidarity as a phenomenon that exceeds disaster relief and must be present in many other spheres of human life. Its importance to democratic and economic stability, climate change, gender issues as well as many other areas indicates that this compendium is just the beginning of the story on solidarity. Its continuation might include many new aspects but for the time being the editorial team hopes that this selection of texts will attract the attention of not just the audience that remembers the earthquake but also of the younger generation whose future collective actions can be successful only if reminded of their most vital aspect – solidarity.

Building the City of Solidarity: The Case of Post-earthquake Reconstruction of Skopje

Ana Ivanovska Deskova[1]
Jovan Ivanovski[2]
Vladimir Deskov[3]

The City of Solidarity

The catastrophic earthquake that destroyed Skopje in the early morning on 26th of July 1963 took more than 1.070 lives, with over 3.300 people injured and 70 to 80 percent of the buildings were either ruined or damaged beyond repair. The housing buildings suffered greatest damage, leaving more than 150.000 out of nearly 200.000 inhabitants homeless overnight. The earthquake also destroyed or left without basic working conditions many public institutions – cultural facilities, schools, hospitals, scientific institutions etc. The total quantitative analysis showed that only 1 out of 40 buildings was possible to be used immediately after the earthquake. In addition to the estimated damage to the buildings, a huge amount of installed equipment, documents, books, personal items etc. was destroyed as well. The exact extent of the damage has never been precisely determined, some of it remained unrecorded, and many consequences of the disaster were felt much later. The extent to which the earthquake destroyed the city was often compared with the devastation of many cities during the Second World War.

The new situation in which the city found itself required urgent and complex measures and activities and the city administration showed remarkably high level of preparedness to respond to the crisis.

> "Within twenty minutes of the shock, the Macedonian Republic's Minister of Interior set up headquarters in a public park to organize rescue and relief work. Within five hours, the President of the Yugoslav Federal Government Executive Council has arrived from Belgrade, 450 km away. By then, emergency committees were in action, directing the taking precautions against further shocks…" (*Skopje Resurgent: The Story of A United Nations Special Fund Town Planning Project, 1970, p. 24*).

The news about the catastrophic earthquake in Skopje immediately spread beyond the borders of the Yugoslav federation, inciting a strong response and activating the international network of solidarity and help. As a response to President Tito's appeal to

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foreign governments and the International Red Cross, starting from the first few hours after the earthquake, and for as long as an entire decade, aid from more than 80 countries worldwide started to arrive in Skopje.[4] The response was immediate and the character of the aid was appropriate to the needs of the city at the moment it was given; at first, the basic necessities, medical supplies, shelters etc.; later, temporary and permanent structures were built as a direct help for the devastated city: the elementary school "Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (gift from Switzerland), specialized polyclinic "Bucharest" (from Romania), gynecological and obstetric Hospital (from Czechoslovakia), chemical school "Maria Curie Skłodowska" (from Poland), high school "Georgi Dimitrov" (from Bulgaria), sports hall "Partizan" (built with funds from France), the Universal hall (built with donations from several countries) are some of the most important.[5] Such expressions of international help were not entirely new, but Skopje was unique in its scope and significance. As stated in the United Nations report:

> "Great natural disasters always evoke an immediate humanitarian response that transcends national prejudices and the barriers of ideology; but the world's reaction to Skopje earthquake had gone far beyond first-aid and sympathetic gestures. (…) It was as though a frustrated urge to co-operate had found in Skopje an unexceptionable outlet". (*Skopje Resurgent: The Story of A United Nations Special Fund Town Planning Project, 1970, pp. 51, 52*)

It seemed that the world saw in Skopje the need and excuse for cooperation of the countries divided by the Cold War animosity. President Tito went to the heart of the matter when he addressed the UN General Assembly on October 22, 1963:

"We feel this broad display of international solidarity also reflects the desire of overwhelming majority of peoples throughout the world to prevent the far greater catastrophe which a nuclear war would bring upon mankind." (Skopje Resurgent: The Story of A United Nations Special Fund Town Planning Project, 1970, p. 52)

Aware of the scope and complexity of the building endeavor, Yugoslav officials approached the UN for assistance in the further process of meeting the city's long-term needs. On 14th of October 1963, the UN Assembly unanimously adopted a Resolution in favor of the Yugoslav Governments' request and, from that moment on, the UN became coordinator of the reconstruction process. Under UN auspices, previously local and unknown Skopje become a forum for global cooperation and exchange for planners, architects and other experts.

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[1] On September 23, 1963, 35 nations asked the UN General Assembly to put a relief for Skopje on its agenda, four days later the Assembly agreed to give Skopje a priority, urging national Governments and international agencies to send to Skopje immediate material help of any kind they could. The Committee for the Reconstruction and development of Skopje made an effort to acknowledge all the donations in successive series of publications *Vaša pomoć Skopju / Your Aid for Skopje*, which were periodically delivered to all those who contributed to the city renewal.

[5] With the funds received from the foreign and domestic aid, many other (temporary or permanent) facilities were built for different purposes: housing units, hospitals, schools etc.

Building the City of the Future

The process led by the UN had great ambitions – to promote the previously unknown, local Skopje in an experimental model of the UN and an example for future interventions of this kind. Maurice Rotival, a UN expert, would say: "…the world now expects that the New Skopje will become a model city, built not for the present, but for the future. Any less eloquent result of the work done by the leadership of the United Nations (…) will tell that a great opportunity has been wasted (...) Skopje has to be not just a city to live in, but also a monument to the hope in a better world." Skopje became a city of world solidarity.

Ernest Weismann, a Croatian architect, former Yugoslav member of Congrès internationaux d'architecture modern (CIAM) and student of Le Corbusier, who emigrated to the United States before the war, was appointed coordinator of the planning process. Adolf Ciborowski, chief planner of the postwar reconstruction of Warsaw, was leading the planning process for the new Master Plan. As consultants, in addition to the many local architects and urban planners, a number of foreign experts also provided their contribution - Doxiadis and Partners from Greece, Polservice from Poland, Wilbur Smith from Great Britain, etc. The Master Plan for Skopje, adopted at the end of 1965, was a strategic plan with big visions for the city that should grow into a metropolis after the earthquake. The plan envisaged significant expansion of the city's territory, with the idea of Skopje to grow into a regional center, supported by the so-called "Open city policy".

The reconstruction of the city center, a territory of approximately 2x2 km, as a space of the highest importance for the city and the Republic, in 1965 was the subject of a separate, international competition, organized by the UN and the Yugoslav government. Eight teams were invited to the competition - 4 Yugoslav and 4 international. The international commission, led by Ernest Weismann, awarded the majority of the award (60%) to renowned Japanese architect Kenzō Tange, with the remaining 40% to Croatian architects Radovan Miščević and Fedor Wenzler.[6] The plan that Kenzō Tange and his team made for Skopje was ambitious in every sense - architectural, symbolic, economic and political. The plan offered bold, "futuristic" visions of a metropolis on the brink of utopia that clearly display elements of Japanese super-urban metabolism. This vision for the new city, gazing far into the future, greatly exceeded the current needs of the city as well as the technological and financial capabilities of the country.

[6] More information about the process of post-earthquake reconstruction of Skopje in (*Skopje Resurgent: The Story of A United Nations Special Fund Town Planning Project,* 1970) and (Tolic, 2011)

The extensive process of the planned reconstruction of Skopje began with the adoption of the Master Plan in 1965 and the Plan for the City Center in 1967.[7] In the short but intense period that followed (a period of about 15 years, until the early 1980s), the city underwent through a process of construction that greatly changed its appearance and quality of life. In addition to the huge volume of construction works (completion of the street network, construction of new streets and boulevards, renewal of the railway hub, regulation of the Vardar river, etc.), during the post-earthquake renewal of Skopje a series of impressive architectural and urban ensembles were built: the City Wall, City Shopping Center, segment of the Cultural Center (Opera and ballet building, extension of the Commercial Bank and Music-Ballet School Center), University campus, Telecommunication Center, reconstruction of the Old Skopje Bazaar, Museum of Macedonia, as well as a many individual buildings within the central urban area and in the periphery. Although the list is long, it is necessary to emphasize the Museum of Contemporary Art (whose project was a donation from Poland), the elementary school "Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi" (gift from Switzerland), the Building of the Archives of the City of Skopje, the student dormitory "Goce Delchev", the pedagogical high school "Nikola Karev", the Directorate for Hydrometeorological Affairs, the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts and many others.

Reconstruction and Beyond

The post-earthquake renewal of Skopje marks a dramatic increase in the number of apartments and an increase in the quality of housing.[8] The extensive construction aimed to raise the standard of housing, which was barely 8 m^2 per inhabitant (expressed in square meters) before the earthquake, while some of the old Skopje neighborhoods did not yet have the basic infrastructure. The new settlements were a qualitative step forward, equipped with complete infrastructure - water supply, sewerage, electricity network with street lighting, greenery and landscaped public areas. Additionally, the entire territory of the city was "equipped" with the necessary public buildings - primary and secondary schools, kindergartens, post offices, banks, cultural centers, libraries, etc. In relation to the wider city area, these buildings were a necessary support for the expansion of the territory,

[7] In parallel with the planning process, the most urgent problem was tackled from the first days after the earthquake - accommodation of the population. In the period 1963-65, 18 new settlements with over 14,000 prefabricated apartments were built. The first settlement of this kind is Gjorche Petrov, the construction of which began on 5th of August 1963 (roughly ten days after the earthquake). According to a rough estimate, about 1,000 hectares of new construction area were used, which was later incorporated into the new urban plan for the city.
[8] In the period until 1965 alone, 18 new settlements with over 14,000 prefabricated apartments were built on the new city territories. In the years following the adoption of the Basic Urban Plan and the plan for arranging the central city area, numerous buildings for multi-family housing are being built, of which the architectural-urban ensemble of the City Wall is of particular importance. Data related to the renewal of the city shows that by 26th of July 1973 (tenth commemoration of the earthquake) a total of 35,500 new apartments had been built.

providing the basic cultural, educational, health, trade and other various support of existing and newly formed urban territories.[9] They clearly show the state policy – not only to rebuild the destroyed city, but the new one to be a significant qualitative step forward.

The post-earthquake reconstruction affirmed the city center as the most important territory of the city of Skopje, the Republic, but also beyond. Respectively, the most significant architectural and urban ensembles as well as individual buildings of public character were built within the center during the 1970s. The wide belt of public buildings is equally concentrated on both riverbanks, connecting the historic city, the one that over the centuries organically developed on the riverbank and the city that in the early 20th century moved to the right. In the realization of the new plan for the city center, one can read the idea of balancing the importance of the two banks of the Vardar River in terms of economic, social and cultural level of development. While commercial and administrative facilities were built on the right side (Telecommunication Center, City Shopping Center and the planned megastructure of the "City Gate"), a series of important cultural and educational buildings were erected on the left side, (the built segment of the Cultural Center, the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts, the National University Library "St. Kliment Ohridski", the Youth Center "25 May" (today MKC), Radio and Television Skopje (today MRTV), etc.). In addition to the abovementioned, significant buildings have been inscribed in the historical fabric of the city, which with their program complement and enrich the existing cultural route: the Museum of Contemporary Art (near the medieval fortress Kale), the Museum of Macedonia (on the edge of the Old Skopje Bazaar) and the Theater of the Nationalities. The extensive architectural implementations offer strong programmatic densification within the city center, changing significantly the existing context and strengthening the concentration of late-modern buildings. It is these buildings, each of them individually but even more as a collection, which serve as a confirmation that architecture has the ability to create places which carry the collective identity of the city.

The multidisciplinary expertise from different countries in the world, present in different phases of the reconstruction of the city (analysis, planning, projects and realization) would define the international character of the reconstruction, which was reflected in the domain of architectural creation as well. The intensive work and cooperation of world-renowned architects, architects from North Macedonia and the wider territory of Yugoslavia, resulted in a valuable architectural collection. In the relatively short period of time, there was an influx of late modern influences in Skopje - brutalism, Japanese metabolism, structuralism, etc., which came from various European and global centers, and in Skopje were absorbed, digested and (re)interpreted, from more or less direct quotes of certain models, up to their critical reinterpretations, in which one could clearly read the author's signature. In the context of the value of Skopje's reconstruction, it

[9] The fact that in the first ten years after the earthquake, only within the new residential settlements over 131,000 m2 so-called "ancillary facilities" were built (schools, kindergartens, dispensaries, supermarkets, etc.) is quite illustrative. In the beginning, most of the facilities were prefabricated, received as aid or bought abroad. Later, in the completion of the settlements, other buildings with permanent character were built, some of them with strongly emphasized architectural quality.

should be especially emphasized that in the 1960s and 1970s, for the first time Macedonian architecture moved in parallel with the world architectural trends.

The post-earthquake renewal of Skopje was a period of special importance for the development of the Macedonian architectural scene. The number of Macedonian authors was dominant among the architectural realizations (educated in Belgrade, Zagreb or Ljubljana, but also the first generations of architects graduated from the Faculty of Architecture in Skopje). Some of them completed their education in the United States, Finland, the Netherlands, etc., realizing architectural practices with renowned contemporary authors and bringing the latest architectural trends to Skopje.[10] The high ambitions set before the post-earthquake reconstruction of Skopje imposed high requirements and criteria. The period was characterized by a high degree of authorial autonomy, sufficient for development of authentic and relevant cultural practices, and the architectural response to the given problems was a result of professional criteria, the quality and expertise of the authors.

A special aspect of the post-earthquake renewal were the benefits related to the newly acquired knowledge and the increased standard and quality of construction. The awareness that Skopje is located on seismically active ground initiated a series of researches related to the safety of the city and the built structures in case of future earthquakes. At the recommendation of the UN, the Institute for Earthquake Engineering and Engineering Seismology (IZIIS) was established in Skopje as one of the top scientific research centers of its type. In the years that followed, seismic research became an integral part of planning and design process, while aseismic construction became an obligatory standard that in the long run changed the way of building in Skopje.

In summary, the post-earthquake renewal of Skopje is much more than a case of rebuilding of a city that suffered in disaster. The exceptional political ambition and commitment to make Skopje an exemplary city has led into many channels of cooperation and exchange that transcended local borders. As a unique case of collaboration at the intersection of the former East and West, it showcases global landmark features as the product of unprecedented international solidarity. Even though the Skopje post-earthquake reconstruction project remained unfinished, it helps better understanding of the complex and multivalent history of city planning guided by the United Nations, shining a new light on a unique case of international unity that can already be considered a cultural history. The case of the post-earthquake renewal of Skopje should become a matter of further recognition, providing a lens through which we could not only historicize it, but could provide both context and prospects for the similar challenges at our contemporary times.

[10] Such is the case of architect Georgi Konstantinovski, who as part of the American aid received a scholarship for Yale master's degree and had an internship with renowned architects Paul Rudolf and Ieoh Ming Pei. Upon his return to Skopje, in his facilities - the Archive of the City of Skopje and the Student Dormitory "Goce Delchev", Konstantinovski combined the influences of the two American mentors (strict geometric shapes, sculpturality and exposed concrete with a specific texture), thus introducing the language of American brutalism in Skopje.

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Envisaging the City of Solidarity: Commemoration of the 1963 Skopje Earthquake and the Post-earthquake Urban Reconstruction (1963–81)

Naum Trajanovski[1]

Introduction[2]

On the early morning of 26th of June 1963, an earthquake struck the Macedonian capital of Skopje, destroying more than two-thirds of the urban structures and killing 1,070 people. The politically non-aligned Yugoslav government immediately issued a call for help for its third-largest city and the erstwhile southernmost federal capital. This call was initially picked up by the Yugoslav republics, followed by more than 80 countries across the globe and many international organizations, all providing help to Skopje and the people of Skopje in the aftermath of the catastrophe – an episode of human solidarity that was depicted by many contemporaries as unprecedented. The emerging role of the United Nations (UN) as a systemizing agent of post-earthquake aid and donations to Skopje was crucial to the fate of the city; the UN endorsed the Yugoslav political decision to rebuild the city just days after the earthquake and, in October 1963, unanimously passed a resolution to support the Yugoslav government in the post-earthquake reconstruction of Skopje using the UN's Special Fund.[3] The urban reconstruction was led by a team of prominent international architects and urban planners and lasted until the early 1980s. The Yugoslav and Macedonian authorities decided to reimagine the Macedonian capital as a "City of solidarity," a symbol of cross-bloc cooperation. They also deemed Skopje an "Open City," one open to domestic and intra-federal migrations, as "a symbol of the brotherhood and unity of our [Yugoslav] peoples and international solidarity."[4]

This paper deals with the official efforts to narrate the earthquake and the post-earthquake reconstruction by looking at the commemorative activities in Skopje taking place from 1963 to the early 1980s. Drawing upon the "sociology of events" (Berezin, 2017; Wagner-Pacifici, 2017) and critical disaster studies literature (Ullberg, 2017; Drost, 2019), I view natural disasters as "impact events" (Fuchs, 2012) that shatter not only the material but also the symbolic worlds we inhabit. As such, their modality is constantly being renegotiated and

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[2] A longer version of this text was published in the Journal of Nationalism, Memory & Language Politics, volume 15 (2021, pp. 30-51).
[3] An extensive account of the UN's involvement in post-1963 Skopje can be found in the book Skopje Resurgent: The Story of a United Nations Special Fund Town Planning Project, a 400-page study published in 1970, authored by Derek Senior, a British freelance expert on town planning and a former member of the Royal Commission on Local Government in England, and the so-called Yellow books, a set of 22 reports of the UN-coordinated activities in Skopje published in Macedonian, Serbo-Croatian, and English in the mid and late 1960s. More on the "Yellow books" in Lozanovska and Martek (2019).
[4] City of Skopje Archive (CSA), Skopje: Dnevni Jugoslovenski Operativno-Informativni Bilten o Obnovi i Izgradnju, Sociološki aspekti novog generalnog urbanističkog plana Skopja, 29 May 1964, 1-6.

the commemorative ceremonies serve as the most common platforms for these discursive negotiations. In a similar vein, cultural memory literature views commemorative events as social and political by definition, while the agency of change is recently being discussed in light of the sociological actor-centered approach (see, for instance, Kubik and Bernhard, 2014). I will also discuss the various commemorative activities as means of solidifying a "commemorative narrative" which, in the words of Eviatar Zerubavel, is the "broad storyline" that integrates the memory practices in a given temporal scope (see Zerubavel 2003). Therefore, I aim to reconstruct the commemorative events and narratives of the 1963 Skopje earthquake as well as its major memory agents and agencies in the first post-earthquake decades by looking at archival materials, such as the daily bulletin reporting on the urban reconstruction process, media and institutional discourses. Hence, in the following section, I will demonstrate how the two initial post-earthquake decades played a formative role for the establishment of a commemorative narrative that ever since inform the local views over the earthquake and the post-earthquake urban reconstruction.

Envisaging solidarity (1963–81)

Parallel to the preparations for the urban reconstruction project, the Yugoslav authorities immediately endorsed the international support the city of Skopje received after the earthquake. On a central level, it was certainly Tito who most exploited "the political power of a symbol he himself had created that guaranteed Skopje a future" (Tolic, 2017, p. 173). The main platforms for communicating the Yugoslav narrative of post-earthquake Skopje as a symbol of international solidarity included the already established networks of the Nonaligned Movement (of which Yugoslavia was a founding member), the UN (of which, again, Yugoslavia was a founding member and an original signatory of the UN Charter at the UN Conference on International Organizations), and the reinvented relations with the Eastern Bloc in the wake of Stalin's death (Spaskovska, 2019; see, as well, Mirchevska and Jancheva, 2013). Ernest Weissmann, an architect of Croat origins and UN officer on the Economic and Social Council, was especially significant in these regards. Weismann was one of the key figures entrusted by both the Yugoslav government and the UN to manage the Skopje reconstruction process. Like the UN, he pushed for reestablishing Skopje as an epitome of a city that promotes peace, understanding, and collaboration in the midst of the Cold War. All of the above actors drew the critical context of this

[5] According to Tolic, Weissmann, an "unconditional" internationalist, mediated the process where "planning and politics were to act synergistically in order to rebuild the destroyed Macedonian capital, making it a symbol of international cooperation; in other words, a world city" (2017, p. 196).

[6] For a comparative take, see Capotescu (2020).

multileveled, cross-sectorial, and transnational endeavor.[5] In turn, the immediate post-earthquake support to Skopje became a reference point for the humanitarian interventions in the late 1960s and early 1970s.[6]

However, as the major memory agents in the local constellation, the local Skopje authorities were initially focused on promoting intra-Yugoslav solidarity in the aftermath of the earthquake; in late June, for instance, the Skopje City Council accepted an initiative for erecting a monument to the city's "brotherhood and unity."[7] Daily bulletin reporting on urban reconstruction made it obvious, prior to the first commemoration on 26th of July 1964, that this primarily domestic-oriented slogan did not sufficiently captivate the international support to the city. The set of activities that took place on 26th of July 1964, to a large extent shaped the coordinates of the annual earthquake commemorations in the following two decades: a discursive linkage between commemorating the perished and praising the post-earthquake support to the city. The first aspect was related to the physical location of the Butel Cemetery in Skopje. In mid-July 1964, the City Council had already issued a draft invoice to the Skopje reconstruction special fund for arrangement of the graves of the people who perished.[8] A commemorative assembly of the Skopje City Council adopted a special resolution on 26th of July 1964, that elevated the site to a higher level of institutional projection by listing the Alley of the Victims of the Skopje Earthquake as a *Spomen groblje* [memorial cemetery].[9] The Council held several meetings dedicated to the cemetary from June to December 1964, while its definite scenery was finalized in 1965 with the installation of Georgi Gruin's monument "26th of July," a massive *béton brut* edifice typical of the Yugoslav memorial architecture and sculpture of the day, at the actual memorial site.[10]

The other set of commemorative activities held in July 1964 was aimed at honoring the international presence in the city in the wake of the tragedy. In the words of Blagoj Popov, the then-equivalent of a Skopje city mayor, spoken on the occasion of the international premiere of Veljko Bulajić's *Skoplje '63* at the 1964 Cannes Film Festival: "The earthquake in Skopje was not just a mere tragedy, [but] something much more than that."[11] This reasoning would translate into an official endorsement of the role of Tito, the UN's General Secretary, and the "Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, all the groups and individuals from abroad" in Skopje's reconstruction at the commemorative assembly on 26th of July 1964. As of 1964, the annual commemoration of the 1963 earthquake evolved into a platform for awarding the various stakeholders active in the urban reconstruction and promoting benchmarks of the reconstruction project. At the 1965 commemoration,

[7] CSA, Skopje: Dnevni jugoslovenski operativno-informativni bilten o obnovi i izgradnju, Održana je prva sednica odbora za proslavu 20-godišnjice oslobodjenja Skopja, 28 June 1964, 2-4.
[8] CSA, Skopje: Dnevni jugoslovenski operativno-informativni bilten o obnovi i izgradnju, Potrebna sredstva za uredjenje groblja poginulih od zemljotresa u Skopju, 16 June 1964, 5.
[9] CSA, Skopje: Dnevni jugoslovenski operativno-informativni bilten o obnovi i izgradnju, Sa svečene sednice gradskog sobranja Grada Skopja, 28 July 1964, 2-4.
[10] For an overview of the federal context, see Horvatinčić (2018).
[11] CSA, Skopje: Dnevni jugoslovenski operativno-informativni bilten o obnovi i izgradnju, Pres-konferencija u gradskom sobranju, 14 May 1964, 2. See, as well, Stanoevski (1964).

for instance, a UN-organized international jury announced the winners of the design contest for Skopje's central area, while the City Council acknowledged approximately 150 organizations from all around the globe. The major commemorative event in 1978 was the inauguration of the Treska Lake Complex in Skopje; in 1980, the inauguration of the new building of the Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Engineering Seismology; and in 1981, the new building of the Transportation Center of Skopje.

Halfway through the completion of the urban reconstruction project, the Yugoslav authorities established July 26 as a *Dan solidarnosti* [solidarity day], an initiative publicized in the early 1970s and made official in October 1973, thus further exploiting the symbolic capital of the solidarity trope to reinvent the state's disaster management politics. Dwelling on the "positive example of Skopje" and the 1969 Banja Luka earthquake, the legal project envisioned a special Fond solidarnosti [Solidarity Fund] that would account for up to 0.2% of the annual state budget with the single aim of supporting the post-natural-disaster recovery of the Yugoslav regions. The city of Skopje backed the initiative by acting as its informal capital and a "symbol of the strongly manifested solidarity" (Arsov, 1973). The legal project also envisioned a so-called Solidarity Week with a fixed annual starting date of 26th of July as a federal fundraising platform for auctioning solidarity-related memorabilia, such as special postage stamps. Therefore, as of 1973, the Skopje-based commemorations of the 1963 earthquake have often been portrayed as segments of the federal Solidarity Week in the Macedonian media. In 1976, the 26th of July commemorations took place just days after disastrous flooding in the neighboring town of Kumanovo and an earthquake in Tolomin, Slovenia, two events that set the commemorative tone back in Skopje by increasing emphasis on Yugoslav solidarity. In a similar vein, the catastrophic 1979 earthquake in Montenegro shifted the commemorative focus in Skopje from the 1963 tragedy to the post-earthquake solidarity in Skopje and the Yugoslav solidarity with Montenegrins.

A major illustration of the celebratory and future-oriented tones in the commemorations of the 1963 Skopje earthquake during the first two post-earthquake decades is the festival titled *Sredbi na solidarnosta* [Solidarity meetings], or SM. On 18th of May 1964, a Skopje City Council adopted a decree that officially established the SM as an annual, week-long festival of non-competitive cultural and sportive events to take place in Skopje from 26th of

July to 2nd of August. The Festival's end date was chosen on purpose by the organizational committee because 2nd of August was also the date of the Orthodox Christian holiday honoring St. Elijah, as well as the most prominent national holiday in post-war North Macedonia: Republic Day, or Ilinden.[12] Each SM was organized by a special institutional body - the Organizational Committee of SM, which included 22 board members overseeing the work of nine subcommittees.[13] The Organizational Committee also published an annual, multilingual summary of the festival, which listed all events and participants and provided a brief history of the city of Skopje and reports from the President of the Board and the Organizational Committee. According to the per City Council of Skopje, the SM had a threefold goal: to perform (or "manifest anew") international solidarity for the city of Skopje, to promote Yugoslav sports and culture, and, finally, to show that "even though the city was struck by a deadly elementary force, it aims and aspires to live and conduct its everyday activities throughout these difficult conditions."[14] Even though the organizers were not always able to provide suitable lodging because of Skopje's situation on the ground, the number of participants in the sportive and cultural events has yet to be matched even today: the first SM had 1,509 participants in the sports segment alone, comprising 618 Yugoslavs, 147 locals, and 529 foreigners, as well as 32 media teams with over 215 members. The program was expanded the next year, not only to host a higher number of participants but also to include three exhibitions and activities on "four major sites and several smaller ones."[15]

The aftermath

If the late 1960s and 1970s Skopje saw rapid urban buildup, 1980s and 1990s were marked by the official halt of the reconstruction project, the deterioration of the interethnic relations in the city and the dissolution of Yugoslavia. The economic crisis also meant termination of the government funding of the Fond za obnova i izgradba na Skopje [Fund for Renewal and Reconstruction of Skopje], the major government body overseeing the funding and responsible for Skopje's post-earthquake reconstruction, while the subsequent Operative Program ceased to exist in 1982. In parallel, interethnic tensions in North Macedonia reached a boil as of the early 1980s. Slobodan Milošević's rise to power and the 1981 riots

[12] Elsewhere I argued that the 1960s and the 1970s were also focal in the construction of the commemorative ritualogy of Ilinden in post-war North Macedonia (see Trajanovski, 2020).
[13] The SM importance within the local governance can be also illustrated with the first draft of the President of the SM Board, Strate Arsovski, a well-established sportive worker, member of the first post-war Union of the Sport Federations of Macedonia (1945) and a director of the erstwhile Institute of sport (1954-1957); and its Vice-President, Emanuel Mane Čučkov, a prominent Macedonian post-war politician, Minister for Macedonian in the Provisional Government of the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia and member of the first Macedonian Parliament. More in Trieset godini fizička kultura (1976).
[14] More in CSA, Skopje: Dnevni jugoslovenski operativno-informativni bilten o obnovi i izgradnju, Vesti, 28 July 1964.
[15] More in CSA, Skopje: Informativen bilten, Sostanok na organizacioniot komitet na "Sredbata na solidarnosta," 31 May 1965, 7-9; CSA, Skopje: Informativen bilten, Pred održuvanjeto na "Sredbata na solidarnosta," 5 July 1965, 15.

in Kosovo were followed by Albanian riots in North Macedonia, which, in turn, provoked harsh responses by the government authorities throughout the course of the 1980s. All these events — the halt of the reconstruction project, the economic crisis in Yugoslavia, and the deterioration of the interethnic relations in the city, the state, and the federation— contributed to a particular revision of the discourse about the post-earthquake solidarity in Skopje; international solidarity was still praised in the local public, yet the post-earthquake urban project was reassessed from several standpoints. The most prominent narrative, whose criticism of the project in the 1980s and 1990s was molded around nostalgic discourse for pre-1963 Skopje—its everyday life and cultural and social history—as a safe place against the background of rising interethnic conflict and urban issues. This discourse also reappeared in the mid-2000s as one of the rationales for the "Skopje 2014 project." These developments, alongside the social mobilizations and heated public debates over the legacies of the 1963 Skopje earthquake and, especially, of the post-earthquake reconstruction marked what I elsewhere depict as the third commemorative period (2001-20; more in Trajanovski, 2021). Sixty years after these two events, one can conclude that the earthquake and post-earthquake reconstruction legacies work as floating signifiers in the public domain, with many formal and informal actors using their discursive potentials to portray their agendas.

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Lessons (Un)Learned: Skopje's post-earthquake reconstruction

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Introduction

As with any event of grand magnitude, everything that follows it is viewed either in a pre- or post- fashion. So was the case with the earthquake that happened on the 26th of July 1963 in Skopje. As Derek Senior describes it (Senior D., 1970) it is difficult for people who have never experienced a violent natural catastrophe to fathom the situation in which Skopje found itself. The only imaginative parallel, although significantly misleading, would be the experience of bombardment from the air. However, an earthquake is an ''act of God'', a suffering stripped from a common cause, with no hope for a victorious outcome. Skopje was senselessly singled out for an impersonal, isolated cataclysm.

These grim circumstances gave Skopje an international spotlight. An outpour of help, both in money and kind, including medical, engineering, and building teams started arriving in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake. Skopje was put on the world map, a world that was at the height of the Cold War. In such uncertain times, the story of Skopje showed that human sympathy, solidarity and unity transcends any political ideology. The post-earthquake reconstruction of Skopje was a complex and multi-faceted process, characterized by its non-linear nature. The scale of the disaster and the urgent need for recovery gave rise to various interrelated processes that often competed for attention and resources, resulting in a multi-polar and dynamic environment.

One of the key challenges in the post-earthquake reconstruction of Skopje was balancing the need for immediate and effective action with the requirements of long-term planning. There was immense pressure to address the urgent needs of affected residents, such as providing temporary shelter, medical assistance, and basic amenities. At the same time, there was a recognition that the reconstruction efforts needed to be well-planned and informed by studies, analysis, and experiments to ensure that the city is rebuilt resilient and

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sustainable. The complexity of the post-earthquake reconstruction process in Skopje was further compounded by the need to address diverse and sometimes conflicting interests. The management of international aid was also a complex process as it can be a two-edged sword. Although it plays a significant role, international aid can often lead to a ‘’one-size-fits-all’’ approach that does not adequately address the needs and challenges of the local context. Additionally, it can sometimes be used as a tool to promote one-sided interests and propaganda. The position of Yugoslavia as a non- Aligned country enabled an interchange of knowledge and an establishment of a network between the East and West during the height of the Cold War. On the one hand, there were the contributions of architects and urban planners from abroad, while on the other hand, several local architects were sent to study trips and stays abroad making a major contribution to the local architecture scene upon their return.

The success of the complete vision for the Skopje project was made possible in part due to the complete devastation of the city as well as Yugoslavia’s socialist system of governance. The post-earthquake plan for Skopje was a leading planning exercise which introduced new approaches, especially regarding sociological analysis and its spatial consequences, an early version of the Threshold analysis and a pioneering version of convergent planning. Placing the case of Skopje in broader theoretical frameworks such as disaster risk reduction, social vulnerability and sustainable development can provide a clearer understanding of the immense contribution and legacy that the reconstruction process set and in turn foster interdisciplinary dialogue.

Understanding theoretical frameworks for urban development

Disaster Risk Reduction is defined as a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceed the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its resources. Disasters are often described as a result of the combination of exposure to a hazard; the conditions of vulnerability that are present; and insufficient capacity or measures to reduce or cope with the potential negative consequences. (UNISDR, 2007b) DRR can be understood as a cyclical and interconnected series of activities involving

governments, businesses, and communities. These activities include planning and mitigating the impact of disasters, responding during disasters, and taking action to recover after disasters have occurred. It is important to view DRR measures as an ongoing and continuous process, where resilience is systematically integrated into the design, construction, and operation processes (DCOP) rather than being added as an afterthought to construction projects. (Chmutina K., Ganor T. and Bosher, 2014) The active involvement of multiple stakeholders can enhance the capacity and capability of those engaged in DRR. Public and private stakeholders from diverse backgrounds can contribute to knowledge and experience sharing, fostering a collaborative approach.

Social vulnerability is defined as the characteristics of a person or group in terms of their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impacts of a natural hazard. Disasters magnify pre-existing social and economic trends in places without fundamentally changing them. The concept of social vulnerability recognizes that the social inequalities embedded in local sociopolitical systems before a disaster inhibit the ability of different groups of people to cope with and rebound from disaster events. (Van Zandt, S. et al, 2012) However, despite the implicit recognition that pre-disaster conditions shape post-disaster outcomes, the literature has little to say about the relationship between social vulnerability and the ability of groups to shape post-disaster recovery decisions. Social vulnerability acknowledges that disaster risk is not distributed evenly across a population or a place. Damage levels, for example, are not simply due to the force of the hazard agent itself, but are also related to factors such as income, race/ethnicity, housing type and tenure, neighbourhood characteristics, social characteristics and attitudes. (Alexander, D., 2012)
The concept of sustainable development gained widespread attention after the United Nation's 1992 Environment and Development Conference in Rio de Janeiro. It was seen as a relevant land-use planning approach to promote sustainability. However, there have been debates about the meaning of the concept, on the one hand, it is both promoted as a paradigm shift and on the other hand as just another buzzword. The relevant literature focuses on three main goals: environmental protection, social and intergenerational equity, and economic development. (Conroy, M.M. and Berke, P.R., 2004)

As interest grows in understanding how planning can promote sustainable development, there has been increased attention on analyzing the planning process, including forms of participation, resource allocation, and commitment. The organizational framework of

local plans and state planning mandate designs have also been examined for their influence on promoting sustainability. A collaborative approach is fundamental to the sustainability paradigm, as it fosters a sense of community, equity, and empowerment. Collaborative planning processes recognize the complexity of the planning environment and aim to minimize conflicts by addressing issues and concerns through inclusive discussions for resolution.

The reconstruction of Skopje: Episodes of Progress and Challenges through DRR, Social Vulnerability, and Sustainability

Several episodes from the reconstruction of Skopje can be observed through the lens of these theoretical frameworks. The experience highlighted the need for "building back better" principles, which emphasize the integration of disaster risk reduction measures into post-disaster recovery and reconstruction efforts, to ensure that the rebuilt infrastructure and housing are more resilient to future hazards. (Shi M. et al, 2021)

The devastation caused by this earthquake led to improvements to the Yugoslavian earthquake standards in 1964, and the foundation of an earthquake engineering institution in Skopje. In 1965, upon the recommendation of the UN's International Consultative Board, the Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Engineering Seismology (IZIIS) was established. IZIIS's mandate was to assist and supervise the post-earthquake reconstruction of the city while building capacity in the field of earthquake engineering and seismology. In this way, IZIIS established itself as the reference point for the education and training of engineers in the Balkans in seismic engineering.

The classification system of building typologies was defined predominantly based on the Institute of Earthquake Engineering and in 1964 the first Seismic Design Code was published, prompted by the 1963 earthquake. The standard improved methods for determining design loads on buildings and introduced quality requirements for materials and construction. Following this, a new improved seismic design code (1981) and later the code for the repair and strengthening of earthquake-damaged buildings (1985) were published, with updated information on the seismic hazard levels demonstrating a further

effort to develop a seismic strategy for the country. (World Bank, 2020) In addition, the strict regulation on the demolition and preservation of housing buildings after the earthquake allowed for the reduction of risk-prone dwellings with 9% of all housing being completely destroyed, 33% heavily damaged and marked to be demolished, 36.3% heavily damaged in need of serious reconstruction and 9% that had some light damage (the rest were left unmarked) (Завод за Урбанизам и Архитектура, 1964).

Another course that was taken in reducing risk were the urban development policies that were instated after the earthquake with the General Urban Plan of 1965 that marked the surrounding area around Vardar and Treska as major green and recreational zones. With the construction of a minor and major river bed for Vardar the risk of floods substantially subsided. Additionally, the placement of so-called protective greenery along the riverbeds serving as a buffer zone was meant as a precautionary measure in controlling floods and establishing a green link throughout the west-east axis of Skopje.

The post-earthquake reconstruction of the city from a social perspective is evident in the first-ever large-scale sociological study conducted among the citizens of Skopje, carried out by the Polish expert team from December 1964 to April 1965. This social survey successfully gathered information from 4,006 families about their current living conditions, housing preferences, and ideas for future urban development (Завод за Урбанизам и Архитектура Скопје, & Полсервис Варшава, 1965). The study provided a portrayal of the economic and demographic features of local households and shed light on major interethnic issues in post-earthquake Skopje. Even before the social survey was officially announced as part of the UN reconstruction efforts, local authorities had commissioned studies on Skopje's population demographics and economy to inform urban policies after the disaster. Interestingly, the local authorities in Skopje, in May 1964, expressed scepticism about the contribution of Western European urban sociology to the planning of post-earthquake Skopje, considering it to be focused on narrow-class, technocratic, or bureaucratic interests, unlike the Yugoslav "socialist democratism" which they considered to be an entirely different theoretical and ideological position thus practically eliminating Doxiadis Associates from the study. The proposal for the social survey from Poland, another socialist country with a more developed empirical sociological scholarship and a legacy of academic exchange with Skopje, has been received with great enthusiasm by the local decision-makers. (Trajanovski, N., 2021)

The importance of directly linking urban planning with the social development of the city was recognized, and the survey's goals were described as twofold - informative and educational - to allow citizens to provide their honest opinions about the future of their city. The report from the social survey revealed that many discrepancies, such as household size, occupation, housing density, and income per capita, were correlated with ethnicity. The authors of the report recommended several directions for planning activities, including integrating both sides of the city physically divided by the Vardar River and symbolically divided by ethnic neighbourhoods through the establishment of public, cultural, and other buildings with integrative functions, as well as strengthening social capital in the city. The idea of reimagining the city centre as a space of intercultural exchange, which would later be articulated in the plan for the city centre, originated from the social survey findings. The Polish experts recognized the centripetal tendency of daily communication as a potential factor to facilitate interethnic coexistence in the city after 1963, and this perception influenced urban and architectural projects for the city centre. However, despite the authorities' intentions to foster the city's development and preserve its cultural characteristics while abolishing socio-ethnic differences, the challenges brought about by the influx of people increased the unemployment rates, and urban infrastructure was insufficient to accommodate the new social reality, resulting in issues such as shortages of educational facilities, and informal and illegal housing. The self-confident and interventionist social engineers among Skopje's master planners, who favoured an ideology of a homogeneous society adapted to modern urban life, faced challenges in achieving their goals.

It can be argued that the entire planning methodology for the Skopje project was in the spirit of sustainable development. As reconstruction efforts in Skopje began to be coordinated, an international partnership was organized by the UN for coordinating the general Master Plan for the city's reconstruction. The partnership included the International Board of Consultants. with Chairman Ernest Weissmann, that was responsible for the provision of experts and consulting work; Yugoslav authorities that were responsible for the supervision, collaboration, provision of experts and approval of design proposals and the design team with Adolf Ciborowski as Project Manager, including also Doxiadis Associates, Polservice, Warsaw and the Skopje Institute of Town Planning and Architecture.

Initial relief, emergency response, rescue operations, and various forms of aid were provided to Skopje both before and during the UN's involvement. Fisher's analysis of the reconstruction period identified five overlapping stages: relief operation (July to October

1963), evacuation of women and children and provision of tent shelters, housing provision (August 1963 to May 1964), planning (1963-1966), and ongoing reconstruction (1971 for the first phase and 1981 for the second phase). (Fisher J., 1964) After the earthquake, a collaborative process involving intersecting, multi-polar, international forces took place in Skopje. The concept of Socialist 'Export Architecture' that was developed by the former Eastern bloc, focusing on collective work and distributed authorship, showcasing how expert frameworks could adapt to local structures, cultures, conditions, and nationalisms of developing nations was expanded in the Skopje project, with several factors contributing to its unique situation. Firstly, the involvement of Kenzo Tange, a pioneering Japanese architect and winner of the international competition for the city centre. Secondly, the significant investment by the UN in the project that surpassed all expectations; thirdly, Yugoslavia's political role as part of the Non-Aligned Movement. (Lozanovska, M. and Martek, I., 2018)

The planning and knowledge for the Skopje project were not predetermined but rather emerged through productive and intellectual labour, involving a series of decisions depending on the contributions and preparedness of individuals and teams to articulate them. One significant aspect of the multi-polar exchange was the education and training of local professionals. The influx of international expertise in Skopje elevated the standards of the local professions, leading to the establishment of new departments and the revision of structures and procedures in existing departments. Local members have expressed how this intellectual labour and discipline influenced the local professions, raising professional standards and practical acquisition of skills and expertise. (Martek, I. and Lozanovska, M., 2016)

Senior's meticulous documentation allows for an additional perspective to emerge when the focus is on the productive processes of reconstruction. Significant roles were paired, with an international expert collaborating with a local counterpart. For instance, project manager Ciborowski worked alongside co-director Kole Jordanovski, and the Doxiadis and Polservice teams were paired with Skopje ITPA (Institute for Town Planning and Architecture) directors Risto Galic and Vojislav Makcic. Furthermore, the collaborative potential is evident within the working teams, including the dual representation of the international consultant team. Polservice contributed members to the Social Survey team and the master plan. Doxiadis, known for publishing the journal Ekistiks on the science of human settlements, contributed members to the Housing team, working alongside local professionals. (Senior D., 1970) This created opportunities for knowledge transfer, as the

expert working teams were responsible for specific areas of production. For example, the Housing working team focused on developing policies, plans, and strategies for the new housing in Skopje, educating the local teams on methodology, procedure, and structure. One of the UN Special Fund projects was a Training Centre for Building Construction Workers. Graduates from this centre, would staff the new Town Planning department, assist with drafting a set of town planning bylaws, and were vital for the implementation of the plans.

Conclusion

The records of humanitarian aid, such as the bulletins "Your Aid to Skopje," depict a politically unified world. This perspective shows how the reconstruction of a relatively small and unknown city can create a network of nations, organizations, institutions, and ordinary individuals that perceive internationalism differently from what was portrayed in mainstream architecture journals at that time. The Skopje project employed a mix of economy, diplomacy, and gift exchange that may appear primitive compared to contemporary fields of globalization. This involved human agency, both individual and collective, and the roles of institutions, facilitation, bureaucracy, collaboration, and production, all of which influenced the design vision embedded in the master plan, its revision and development, and its implementation through construction.

The phenomenon of Skopje was the convergence of competing wills, brought into alignment beyond the singular vision of any individual. In Skopje, we witness the coming together of competing champions who, in their pursuit of realizing personal visions, had to make concessions to remain in the fight for the future of the phoenix city. The organization that conceptualized, developed, and implemented the new Skopje city master plan was not a distinct, objective entity disconnected from the people involved. It was a construct that behaved like a self-organizing system, constantly changing, and it was this constant change that sustained, rather than threatened, the survival of the organization.
Borrowing from Senior (Senior D., 1970), 'Skopje's symbolic significance, for Macedonia, for Yugoslavia, and for a troubled world, had become so great that the basic decision to rebuild it as a model of all that city planning should be, became a foregone conclusion'. And yet, all the king's horses and all the king's men…

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Economic solidarity: How much is enough, and is it necessary in both good and bad times?

Dragan Tevdovski[1]

Introduction

The term "solidarity" originated in 19th century France, where it was used in a legal context - based on Roman legal concept of an obligation in *solidum* - to describe a joint contractual obligation in which each signatory declared themselves liable for the debts of everyone involved. Since then, it has expanded beyond its legal origin to become a central social and political concept in response to anxiety concerning the centrifugal, individualizing forces of commercial and industrial society (Sangiovanni & Viehoff, 2023). It has always been used to describe 'agreement between and support for the members of a group.'

The capitalism is built on certain degree of solidarity. In capitalist economies, the taxation takes part of the reward for citizens' economic activity and redistributes it to the more vulnerable groups of citizens. In fact, there is a strong redistribution in a developed economies. As example, the figure 1 presents for USA and Germany, the two measures of the income inequality: pre-tax Gini and Gini based on disposable income.[2] In both of them, 0% reflects perfect income equality in the society (where all incomes of the citizens are the same), while 100% reflects maximum income inequality (only one person have all the income). Pre-tax Gini is calculated on income before the taxes and social transfers, representing how the market is allocating the incomes in the society from the economic activity. Gini based on disposable income is going step further and takes also into account the corrections made by taxes and social transfers. In both USA and Germany, income inequality created by the market is high (above 50% in the last decade), but the inequality of the disposable income (what citizens actually brings home) is seriously decreased with the redistribution by the taxation and social transfers.

Economic solidarity also exists between economies. Bilateral and multilateral donors often provide financial aid and exchange knowledge and expertise with developing countries

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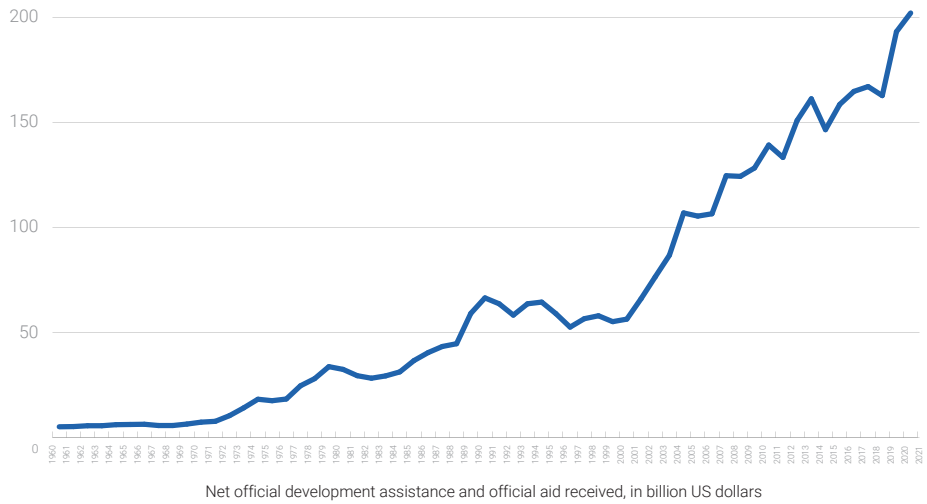
[2] USA and Germany are the main representatives of the two varieties of capitalism: liberal market economies and coordinated market economies.

to address development difficulties. In fact, Figure 2 demonstrates that the total official development assistance in the world has had a steady increase, rising from around 30 billion US dollars annually during the Oil Shocks period (1970s) to 120 billion US dollars during the Global Financial Crisis (2007-2009) and exceeding 200 billion US dollars during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Figure 1: Pre-tax Gini and Gini based on disposable income, USA and Germany

Source: Solt, Frederick (2020). "Measuring Income Inequality Across Countries and Over Time: The Standardized World Income Inequality Database." *Social Science Quarterly* 101(3):1183-1199. SWIID Version 9.3, June 2022.

Figure 2 Net official development assistance and official aid received, in billion US dollars



Source: World Bank (2023) World Development Indicators.

However, this pleasant narrative of mutual understanding and aid among people and economies raises many questions. Some of these are: How much economic solidarity is necessary so as not to reduce the incentives of the market? Should we be concerned with equality of results or is equality of opportunities the only important factor? Do we only need to help the most vulnerable? What is the right timing for solidarity? Is it only during times of recession? Is it fair for profits to be individualized, but losses to be shared?

The answers to these questions differ along several lines, ideological, interest groups, time of the answer and the current problems in the global economy, etc. But they are very important because they shape the physiognomy of the modern states, in terms of how much tax should be collected and how the redistribution in the economy should look like. The goal of this paper is to present the main economic views regarding these questions.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: The following section discusses the ideology behind the milder case for economic solidarity. Section 3 provides the views of the economists who are in favor for strong economic solidarity. Finally, last section provides conclusion, emphasizing the role of interest groups.

The ideology behind the milder case

The neoclassical economic thought is centered around the competition in the market. Adam Smith's invisible hand refers to interplay of individual actions that allows the market

to reach equilibrium without government interventions. The *laissez-faire* is driven by the desire of the individuals to maximize profits, while competition leads to better product quality, improved efficiency and optimal allocation of resources, so in effect the best interest of society, as whole, is fulfilled. The explanation of this concept is provided in the "Wealth of Nations" (Smith, 1776):

"As every individual, therefore, endeavours as much as he can both to employ his capital in the support of domestic industry, and so to direct that industry that its produce may be of the greatest value; every individual necessarily labours to render the annual revenue of the society as great as he can. He generally, indeed, neither intends to promote the public interest, nor knows how much he is promoting it. By preferring the support of domestic to that of foreign industry, he intends only his own security; and by directing that industry in such a manner as its produce may be of the greatest value, he intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. Nor is it always the worse for the society that it was no part of it. By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it. I have never known much good done by those who affected to trade for the public good. It is an affectation, indeed, not very common among merchants, and very few words need be employed in dissuading them from it."

The proponents of the (Smith, 1776) *laissez-faire* put on pedestal economic freedom and the individual in the society. So, they accept economic solidarity only to reduce inequality of opportunities and to create more equal playing field. But they are strongly against corrections in the inequality of outcomes, i.e. how the market allocates the rewards from economic activity. They see the inequality of outcomes as the driving force of competition, while the state intervention in the market allocation of the rewards can reduce the incentives of the individuals. This ideology is highlighted into two sentences of the Nobel prize winner Milton Friedman: "Is there some society you know that doesn't run on greed?", "We need to make better for the people that left behind, I don't think we should kill the capitalism system in the process."

The main implication of this economic thought is that the distributional issues should not be of central interest to economist. Nobel prize winner Robert Lucas had very strong view on this: "Of the tendencies that are harmful to sound economics, the most seductive, and in my view the most poisonous, is to focus on questions of distribution… The potential for improving the lives of poor people by finding the different ways of distributing current production is nothing compared to the apparently limitless potential of increasing production."

The ideology in favor of bold solidarity

The issues of the distribution and economic solidarity are in focus of increasing number of economists. (Piketty, 2013) opposes to Kuznets curve and shows that the rate of return on capital is higher than the rate of economic growth over longer period, so that the inherited wealth grows faster than wages. The result is concentration of wealth, and this unequal distribution of wealth causes social and economic instability. Nobel prize winner Joseph Stiglitz in the book "The price of inequality" highlights: "As those at the top continue to enjoy the best health care, education, and benefits of wealth, they often fail to realize that their fate is bound up with how the other 99 percent live." In the past decade, also the leading international organizations, as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, started to provide evidence that high inequality can be harmful for economic growth.
(Atkinson, 2015) argues that is wrong not to enquire into the outcomes once a level playing field for the race has been establish. He explains that the main reason for concern about inequality of outcome is that it directly affects equality of opportunity – for the next generation. Because today's ex-post outcomes shape tomorrow's ex ante playing field, i.e. the beneficiaries of inequality of outcome today can transmit an unfair advantage for their children tomorrow. So, this is important argument for bold redistribution and economic solidarity.

This camp of economists proposes stronger mechanisms for income and wealth redistribution, as well as better access to public services. It is also important to note that the Piketty's proposal for a global system of progressive wealth taxes which seemed very radical in the year when proposed (2013), in a modified form was introduced eight years later as Global Minimum Tax. Similarly, International Monetary Fund and the World Bank much strongly are promoting investments in education, healthcare, and early childhood development and strengthening social safety nets as important policies. The World bank has started to publish Human Capital Index since 2018. The recent Fiscal Monitor: A Fair Shot highlights the need for a holistic approach, which encompasses both predistributive and redistributive policies, that can be financed by raising progressivity of tax systems (International Monetary Fund, 2021).

Conclusion

This paper presents the main ideologies behind the need for solidarity in society. The neoclassical view is against corrections in the inequality of outcomes, because it will reduce

the incentives for competition in the market. They accept economic solidarity only to reduce inequality of opportunities and to create more equal playing field. However, there is another view that is making a case for much stronger solidarity and redistribution in the society. They highlight the concentration of wealth at the top of distribution, arguing that today's inequality of outcomes affects tomorrow equality of opportunity.

These ideologies are used by different interest groups in society when they try to fulfill their own goals. The owners of capital are in general very supportive for the neoclassical view. They generally do not support increased taxation during expansions, arguing that government is bad allocator of resources and that only invisible hand of the market can adequately distribute outcomes (market rewards). However, during the recessions, they are requesting strong state support. For example, during the recent pandemic, the Macedonian chambers of commerce were very vocal for the need for solidarity with the business sector, which was also the case all around the world. On the other hand, labor is more concerned about the channels and objectives of redistribution. The recent left-wing movements can be summed up in the words of Bernie Sanders: "We have socialism for the very rich and rugged individualism for the poor".[3]

Economic solidarity between the countries is also shaped by interests. One of the most positive examples in this regard is the European Union (EU). EU achieved remarkable results in development of its poorer members. An important solidarity tool is the Cohesion Fund, which provides financial assistance to EU Member countries with a gross national income per capita below 90% of the EU average, with the aim of promoting economic, social, and territorial cohesion. As a result, the poorer EU member countries have made impressive gains in income convergence with the EU. For instance, between 2011-2022, Bulgaria's GDP per capita increased from 46% to 59% of the EU average, Romania's from 55% to 77%, and Croatia's from 61% to 73%. However, the delayed EU integration of the Western Balkan can also show the opaque side of solidarity. While the EU member countries from the region will use billions of euros solidarity from EU taxpayers in the next years (for decarbonization of the economies, infrastructure development, etc.), Western Balkan countries do not have access to these EU cohesion funds, so it will impact competitiveness of the economies, and will create not income convergence, but divergence between the Western Balkans and EU countries from the region. So, this is also argument for the need cohesion funds to be gradually open for the Western Balkan countries during the EU integration process.

[1] In the past decade, there are also growing number of neoclassical (mainstream) economists, who are for competition in the market and do not support solidarity per se, while they emphasize the problem of equal playing field in the modern economies. (Zingales, 2012) oppose "pro-business" policies that serve special interests, restrict competition and impose huge costs on taxpayers, arguing for "pro-market" policies that improve the functioning and fairness of the market. (Wolf, 2020) writes "I used to think Milton Friedman was right. But I have changed my mind… corporations aren't just players of the game, they are the ones setting the rules—bad ones… In reality, corporations are powerful entities able to exercise immense influence within society." (Admati, 2021) reminds about Stigler's works (in 1970s) that engagement of corporations with governments affects economic outcomes, and that imbalances of power and expertise can distort democracy and harm society

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Solidarity as the basis of democracy

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Introduction: Meaning of solidarity and its relationship with democracy

According to the Cambridge Dictionary solidarity is defined as "agreement between and support for the members of a group" (Cambridge Online Dictionary, 2023). Similarly, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines solidarity as "unity (as of a group or class) that produces or is based on community of interests, objectives, and standards (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2024). However, the sense of solidarity and the true meaning of it goes beyond the support within a certain group and can serve as a unifying power between humankind altogether. For there are values that are important to every person in this world, core values in which we all believe, postulates that unify us together, no matter where we live or what we believe.

Solidarity is the glue that unifies people in their struggle to achieve and maintain core and fundamental values such as freedom, equality, and justice. The slogan of the French Revolution: "Liberté, egalité, fraternité" was not chosen by chance. It was clear that freedom cannot be achieved without equality and solidarity among people. It is precisely solidarity that makes us humane.

This brings us to the term "Humanitarianism" which as Cinnamon explains "is generally understood as taking actions to improve the living conditions of others, and more typically and specifically, the provision of assistance to other human beings in times of need" (Cinnamon, 2020). Based on the principle of humanitarianism, people help each other and show solidarity, not only in times of humanitarian catastrophes and crisis, but also when autocratic regimes violate fundamental rights and freedoms. As noted by Elyachar, human rights Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) have played an important role in

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many countries and “have mediated transnational human rights movements and forms of local activism” (Elyachar, 2015).

Related to the concept of solidarity is that of egalitarianism and wealth (re)distribution in organized societies, which has prevailed as one of the core principles not only in religious beliefs but also in political theories which emphasize the importance of harmony between people which is sometimes perceived even more important than justice. As Cingolani notes, Aristotle held that “to lawmakers … harmony seems to matter more than justice, for it is a determining political factor.” (Cingolani, 2015).

Thus, solidarity unifies people around common causes. In antient times solidarity was seen as a sense of commonness among people who belong to the same nation or religion. In modern times solidarity goes beyond internal group relations and is projected out of the certain closed group, nation, or religion, therefore, it becomes international. Now, fundamental human rights unite people all over the world. With the spread of mass and social media, movements like “Me Too”, “Black Lives Matter”, Climate Change actions and other democratic movements become initiatives that unify and mobilize people globally. People are no more divided into smaller groups which do not know or do not want to know anything about each other. They become conscious citizens of the world able to react and take action against injustice, discrimination and oppression. They unite around ideas regardless of the language they speak or the place they live in. They unite around values that make us human beings. This becomes a nightmare for politicians and rulers who count on divisions to help them rule as autocrats and truly complicates their lives.

In times like these new dilemmas occur. As Niederberger puts it, democracies become obliged to support democratic movements all over the world (Niederberger, 2013). Because there comes a belief that everybody deserves to live in a democracy, thus the dilemma that rises is should democracy be regarded as a human right? If it is considered so, then this brings on the obligation for all democracies to support democratic movements everywhere. Thus, the ultimate unifying ideology is born in the world - an idea that brings together people who do not know each other but share the same values and the same beliefs in fundamental human rights and freedoms, that is the ideology of democratic solidarity.

Solidarity and social cohesion

In earlier times the sense of solidarity unified groups of people in nations and religions. Solidarity was regarded as the tissue connecting people which spoke one language, lived in one territory and shared the same religious beliefs. As Cingolani indicates "The sense of solidarity was essential not only for maintaining unity within the clan but also for ensuring harmony and pacified interaction between different clans" (Cingolani, 2015). Moreover, Storey defines a nation as "a collection of people bound together by some sense of solidarity, common culture, shared history, and an attachment to a particular territory or national homeland" (Storey, 2020). On the other hand, religion is also an important ideology able to unify people beyond their nations and the languages they speak and throughout the world, a power desired by rulers of the past and politicians of the present. As Sherkat explains "Because religion is a collective pursuit, religious institutions enjoyed the benefit of preexisting social networks, as well as the cumulative advantage of premobilized collective resources. In contrast, secular political movements based on social class, regional economic interests, or philosophical orientations would have to recruit members de novo and coax them to provide resources for the movement" (Sherkat, 2015). Therefore, even modern political parties aim to use the unifying power of religion to gather more people around their political cause, often ostracizing those who do not wish to be part of these groups or who do not necessarily share their ideas or beliefs.

The sense of solidarity within a nation and the ethnic identity shared by its people remains an extremely important issue in modern times, particularly so in the Balkans. On the other hand, the Balkan countries are characterized by the diversity of people living together in states where the nation-state approach often shows to be insufficient to accommodate the needs of different ethnicities living together. Thus, the model of multicultural accommodation explained by Chupeska comes to awareness (Чупеска Станишковска, 2017). In multicultural, multilingual, and multireligious states social cohesion is unachievable without building a sense of solidarity between diverse groups and communities. The diverse societies of the global world are impossible to exist and thrive without developing that sense of solidarity which contributes to social cohesion. Without that sense, societies that might seem diverse are in fact divided societies where different communities live side by side but not together, they look at each other but they do not see each other, they share the same problems but are blinded by their differences which cover them like a curtain and do not allow them to really see and feel their surroundings.

Solidarity lifts that curtain and makes people see each other. Solidarity makes people work with one another and help each other when they are in need. Solidarity encourages people to be altruistic, to understand someone else's needs and to help them in times of difficulties. Without solidarity there cannot be a real and sustainable cohesion.

Solidarity is important not only in terms of ensuring an inter-ethnic and inter-religious cohesion. Namely, ethnic, and religious identities are not the sole identities of a person in this age of multiple identities. Solidarity ensures the cohesion between people of different gender, different sexual orientation, different social and economical status. Solidarity means that men are not afraid to be perceived as feminists and fight for gender equality. Solidarity means that important issues such as gender-based violence and gender discrimination are not something to be discussed only among women, but rather something that everyone who shares the belief that gender discrimination and gender-based violence are unacceptable can act in that regard. Solidarity means that heterosexual people fight together with LGBT people against discrimination based on sexual orientation. Solidarity is the glue that keeps a diverse society together. Without solidarity things fall apart quickly, divisions prevail, and autocracies rise, since they feed on quarrels, intolerance, and fear from "the other".

Solidarity is fundamentally important in ensuring social equity. A good example of democratic solidarity are the activities within the program Roma Decade in North Macedonia, an initiative aiming at creating equal opportunities for the Roma population in this country and to counter their marginalization.

Modern democracies are built on the fundaments of individual human rights. However, extreme individualism can mean that people are no longer interested in the rights of their fellow citizens, or how we like to put it, people become "not interested in politics". Interestingly, the phrase "I'm not interested in politics" is often articulated in debates where rights of different communities are discussed. In those times, people that otherwise seem to be great democrats, suddenly become uninterested in politics. Being negligent towards the core problems of a society, turning a blind eye on discrimination does not make any of us progressive citizens, it makes us selfish citizens who do not know of solidarity and who are easy to rule. For those that seem uninterested are, in fact, silent supporters of hegemony and discrimination. Therefore, the biggest challenge of modern democracies are not open supporters of divisive ideas, but the silent people who pretend to be uninterested on other people's lives, other people's rights, and other people's freedoms. Thus, the enemy of democracy is negligence and non-interreference when injustice happens.

Solidarity and rule of law

Many of the most horrifying crimes in history have been committed in the name of the law. Let us not forget that the Holocaust was conspired and executed according to the Nuremberg laws, adopted in a parliamentary procedure by a majority consisted of a party that came to power through elections, thus through the very core means of a democracy. It is true that those laws were adopted in a legal procedure, but for sure they were not legitimate since the core principle of legitimacy was not fulfilled: those laws were a ruthless violation of core humanitarian values, rights, and liberties and in total contradiction to the general interest of the victims who in fact were citizens of countries that became hostile to them. The Holocaust, the Genocide in Srebrenica, and other brutal atrocities of the modern times did not happen within one day, nor were they committed by negligent people in the heat of a moment. They were well planned, prepared, and committed in a highly organized way by people that truly believed that certain communities should not exist in this world. The core problem was never those few people who committed these brutal atrocities. The real problem was the compliance of the others, un-interested ones, those people who silently went to work looking at the chimneys of the crematoriums nearby, those people who saw discrimination daily and never reacted, make no mistake, those were the silent killers of the victims. When societies become so divided that such atrocities take place, it means that the glue that keeps those societies together is long gone and perished. The most notable failures in the history of human societies are caused by lack of solidarity.

Divisions in a society make people easier to rule upon. Therefore, divisions are seen as a means of rule by autocrats who thrive on the fear from the unknown. For in divided societies communities live next to each other but never really see the needs of each other, and always in fear that someone else's rights will become more important than their own.

In North Macedonia ethnic divisions have for long served as a source for instability and continue to be approached with different, often contradictory attitudes. As Pollozhani and Taleski indicate, "Social relations are stronger if citizens make a social covenant" where a social covenant is seen as a "a formal or informal agreement between diverse groups of people about a common framework and vision for cooperation" (Pollozhani & Taleski, 2016). The authors indicate that an important reason why the society in North Macedonia is ethnically divided, polarized and segregated is that "most political parties and media use ethno-nationalistic narratives and discourses to mobilise support and legitimise a certain outlook" (Pollozhani & Taleski, 2016). It was only in the recent years and after 2016 elections that some political parties were able to overcome those divisions and participate

in elections with unifying agendas that for the first time in the recent history of this country were concentrated in issues not necessarily related to ethnic identities, but rather to rule of law and anti-corruption. The citizens of this country had lived in a captured state long enough to understand that ethnic divisions were only used by people in power for their own daily political interests. Therefore, during the Colorful Revolution in 2016, people united around ideas such as rule of law and requested accountability for high corruption. Furthermore, they showed solidarity in terms of ethnic rights such as language rights or other collective rights for ethnicities. It was precisely through this kind of solidarity that other major achievements took place, such as the ratification of the Istanbul Convention as well as other important steps that lead towards a more tolerant society that sees diversity as a value rather than as a threat.

However, these major struggles and have shown that progressive thinking and acting is very difficult and always in danger to fall back into regress and uncertainty. For as it was said in the beginning, narratives that unite around nation, ethnicity and religion mobilize people more easily as compared to other "modern" identities such as climate change, conscious living, rule of law and anti-corruption. On the other hand, the latter ones are precisely the identities that are important for the quality of life in modern times. Thus, it is evident that they will continue to unify more and more people in the future, provided that those people remain linked to each other through the tissue of solidarity. At the end of the day, as Harrari puts it, humankind has always found an ideology to believe in and to use as a connecting tissue when large groups of people need to work together (Harari, 2015). It is time that solidarity in fundamental human rights and core democratic principles of rule of law become the connecting tissue among the citizens of the world.

Conclusion

All failures in human society have been cause by lack of solidarity among people. All successful stories of the humankind are solidarity stories in which people work together for a just cause. As Einstein puts it: "Nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has arrived". Let solidarity lead us to a better and more just world where rights and freedoms are not seen as a pie that diminishes when everybody takes a piece of it, but rather as an ever-growing fruit tree that has delicious fruits for us all.

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Leaving No One Behind: Labour Market Inclusion and Solidarity for People with Disabilities in North Macedonia

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Kristijan Kozheski[2]
Gunter Merdzan[3]

Introduction

People with disabilities often face significant challenges when it comes to integrating into the labor market and generally in the economic activities. Barriers such as discrimination, lack of access to education and training, and insufficient skills can prevent individuals with disabilities from securing decent jobs and appropriate inclusion in economic and social processes in the country. In this context, the Republic of North Macedonia ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2011, and since then, significant improvements have been observed in social protection, education, and integration into the labor market. However, many people with disabilities in North Macedonia, like in other developing countries still struggle to find decent employment and fully to integrate in the economic life in the country. An additional challenge for North Macedonia are the national characteristics of small development economy furthermore experiencing large regional imbalances which are evident in the socio-economic trends (economic growth, unemployment, business entities, etc.). These national specifics have a significant impact, via multiple channels of transmission, on the level of regional well-being and additionally on the potential for social inclusion of the various vulnerable groups. Study aims to analyse the degree of inclusion in the labor market and provision of decent work for persons with disabilities in North Macedonia. The analysis aims to determine if individuals with disabilities in the labor market experience similar economic growth benefits as their non-disabled counterparts and furthermore to determine key factors behind these outputs. The study could be solid ground for developing policies and measures aimed at supporting the labor market integration and improving the regional and national position of persons with disabilities in North Macedonia. In this regard, the principles of economic solidarity are of particular importance, especially when it comes to the inclusion of people with disabilities in the labor market.

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The analysis is structured as follows: introduction, followed by the section on participation in the labor market of persons with disabilities. Further, analysis is focused on the gender gap and age differences in labor market integration of persons with disabilities. The role of education in labor market integration is presented in the next chapter, along with an examination of regional disparities. The final section provides the conclusion.

Breaking Barriers: Labour Participation and Integration for Persons with Disabilities through Solidarity

About 15% of the world's population faces some disability. A significant part of persons with disabilities lives in developing countries. In their daily activities, these people are usually characterised by a higher level of social exclusion, marginalisation, and exclusion from political and economic activities in society. Persons with disabilities face challenges and barriers that do not allow their full and effective participation in social, economic, and political activities on an equal basis with other social stakeholders. Hence, these people face various challenges and barriers in education, health and the opportunity to participate in the labour market actively. Such barriers are deepened, especially in developing countries with markedly high rates of inequality in income distribution, poverty, unemployment, and low labour productivity, as well as insufficient compliance with legislation aimed at improving the rights of this group of people. The results of empirical research show that persons with disabilities, on average, are more likely to experience adverse socioeconomic outcomes than persons without disabilities, such as lower education rates, worse health outcomes, less employment, and higher poverty rates (Mcclain-Nhlapo et al., 2022).

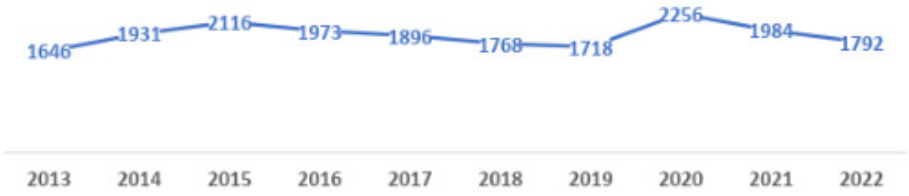
The labour market integration of persons with disabilities is at an unsatisfactory level. Disabled persons who are integrated into the labour market, that is, who are employed in the private or public sector, occupy an insignificant proportion of the total number of unemployed, disabled persons (ILO, 2015). This finding is especially confirmed when a comparison is made with the degree of integration in the labour market of persons without disabilities. Despite the obstacles and various barriers faced by this group of workers, however, a significant part of them attempt to integrate into the workplace - they actively seek employment. In addition to the fact that people with disabilities face many challenges in integrating into the workplace, they significantly contribute to the companies in which they are employed (O'Reilly, 2003). However, a significant part of this category of workers face barriers during workplace integration - companies still do not have the

practice of employing people with disabilities. Hence, many people with disabilities are unemployed or employed but receive significantly lower wages for the same job than other employees. One of the barriers to the employment of disabled workers is the lack of workplace equipment that will enable them to perform their work tasks without significant difficulties. Therefore, employers and economic policymakers must consider the needs of this category of workers, thus providing material and financial resources for their integration into the labour market. In this regard, there is the need for active policies and measures aimed at additional training and education of this category of workers. Training programs specially designed for this category of workers can help them acquire additional skills and experience that will make them more competitive in the labour market. The purpose of such programs is to create an inclusive working environment and encourage people with disabilities to enter the labour market while creating a positive attitude of employers towards workers with disabilities. The business and employers should take in to account key elements of solidarity economy and should put into practice a set of values which are essential to their functioning and consistent with care for people, equality and fairness, and the attainment of decent work and livelihoods.

The data on the number of unemployed, disabled persons in the Republic of North Macedonia show that in 2013-2022, the number of unemployed, disabled persons ranged from 1646 persons in 2013 to 2256 persons in 2020 (Chart 1). **The positive economic tendencies and improvements in the labour market performance in the Republic of North Macedonia are also reflected in the reduced number of unemployed, disabled persons** in 2015-2019. Namely, in 2015 the number of unemployed and disabled persons was 2116 persons, while in 2019, this number decreased to 1718. **The integration of people with disabilities in the labor market is more vulnerable and less resistant to economic and social shocks and crises in society** - The beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, i.e., starting from 2020, as a consequence of the implemented restrictive measures and the reduction of economic activity, contributed to an increase in the number of unemployed, disabled people in the Republic of North Macedonia. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, some people with disabilities, especially people who need a personal assistant, were put in a position to be partially or entirely unable to carry out social activities due to the danger of the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Part of this category of workers faced above-average health risks, especially people with impaired health. Also, remote work significantly prevented some of the workers from performing their work tasks because a large part of these workers had their work tied to the workplace; that is, they did not have the skills and other necessary means for the smooth execution of their work tasks. For example, data shows that unemployment among people with disabilities in the US in

2022 is 7.6%, 4 percentage points higher than the general US unemployment rate of 3.5% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023). In terms of age, about 50% of unemployed persons with disability were age 65 and over, nearly three times larger than the share for those with no disability. In the case of the Republic of North Macedonia, the number of unemployed persons with disabilities in 2020 rose to 2,256 persons, i.e., it recorded an increase of 31.3%; with which it can be stated that the **number of unemployed disabled persons because of the COVID-19 pandemic increased by about 1/3**. Since 2021, the number of unemployed, disabled persons has declined but has not yet returned to the level before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chart 1. Number of unemployed, disabled persons in the Republic of North Macedonia, 2013-2022



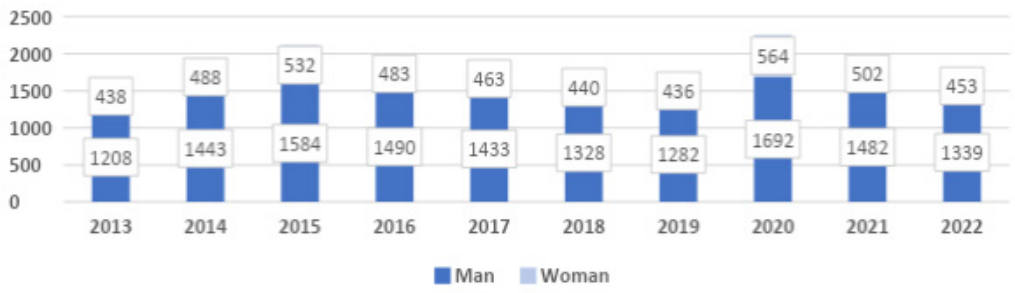
Source: AVRSM

Gender Gap and age differences in Labor Market Integration for Persons with Disabilities

Unemployment among persons with disability is more prevalent among men compared to women. Let us look at the gender aspect of the unemployed, disabled persons in the Republic of North Macedonia. It can be concluded that unemployment is significantly represented among men compared to women. In 2013-2022, the number of unemployed men was almost three times higher than that of unemployed women with disabilities. According to the latest available data for 2022, of the total number of unemployed persons with disabilities, 1792 persons, about ¾ are men (74.7% are men), while only ¼ of the persons with disabilities are women (25.3%) (See Graph 2). In the example of highly developed countries in 2022, the unemployment rate for men with a disability (7.8 per cent) was not much different than that for women with a disability (7.4 per cent). However, the unemployment rates for both men and women with a disability decreased from 2021 to 2022 by 2.3 and 2.7 percentage points, respectively (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023).

Regardless of gender, the degree of labour market integration, i.e., unemployment of this category of workers, follows a synchronised trend. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, i.e., in 2020, unemployment among women with disabilities increased by 29%, while this increase among men amounted to 32%. In the next period, there is a decrease in the unemployment of persons with disabilities, both men and women.

Chart 2. Number of unemployed, disabled persons by gender, 2013-2022



Source: AVRSM

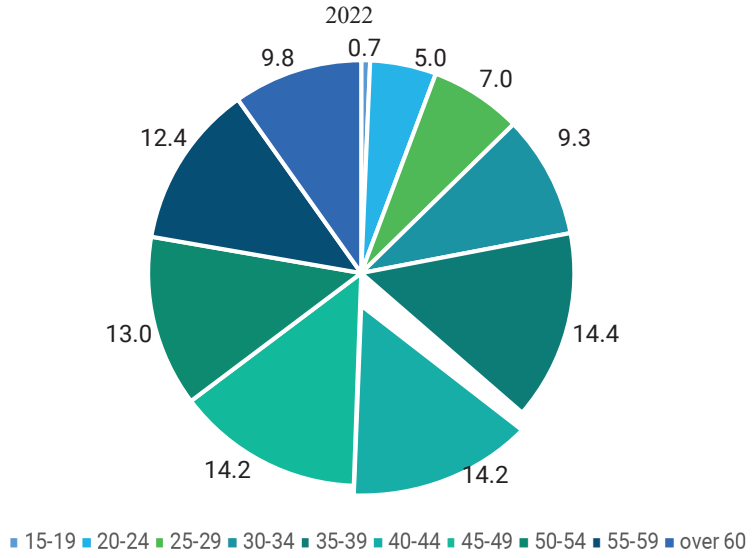
The lowest participation in unemployment characterises persons with disabilities aged 15-19. The distribution of unemployed, disabled persons by age categories for 2013-2022 is shown in Table 1 and Chart 3. The highest representation of unemployed and disabled persons is observed between the age categories of 25-54 - the years in a working career when workers are typically most productive. Of the total number of unemployed persons with disabilities in 2022 in the Republic of North Macedonia, about 68% are between the ages of 35 and 69. It is particularly important to point out that among the unemployed persons with disabilities, there are also persons aged 15 to 19. Although their representation shows an insignificant proportion, it should still be emphasised that people from this age category should be integrated into the educational process instead of being reported as unemployed in AVRSM.

Table 1. Unemployed, disabled persons, by age categories, in the Republic of North Macedonia, 2013-2022

Year	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60 and more
2013	38	141	212	211	210	189	175	166	182	122
2014	24	120	220	269	268	234	222	211	213	150
2015	28	144	193	290	316	266	272	243	239	125
2016	21	148	193	283	259	261	238	229	241	100
2017	18	123	154	229	214	226	213	222	317	180
2018	22	102	148	211	189	231	198	207	285	175
2019	18	93	154	195	225	221	201	205	255	151
2020	9	138	183	236	301	308	312	273	295	201
2021	16	84	144	201	285	253	288	241	264	208
2022	12	90	125	167	258	254	254	233	223	176

Source: AVRSM

Chart 3. Distribution of unemployed, disabled persons, by age category, in the Republic of North Macedonia, in 2022 (in %)



Source: AVRSM

The Role of Education in Achieving Labor Market Integration for Persons with Disabilities

Among the unemployed and disabled persons, the majority are persons without education or with primary education. The table below shows the distribution of unemployed persons with disabilities according to the level of education in the Republic of North Macedonia. The data is presented as a percentage, which allows us to observe trends and changes over time. The data clearly show that the percentage of unemployed persons with disabilities without education or primary education is high. In 2013, this category comprised 46.4% of all unemployed persons with disabilities. Also, in 2022, most of the unemployed persons with disabilities, i.e., 62.8%, are without education or with primary education. This indicates the **need for greater involvement of persons with disabilities in education** to enable them to be more easily integrated into the labour market in the future. Integrating persons with disabilities into the education system is an important issue that educational institutions and policymakers should address. In order to achieve full integration, it is necessary to remove the barriers that prevent people with disabilities from accessing education and to provide them with the necessary material, financial and personnel support.

As it can be seen, the percentage of unemployed persons with disabilities with higher education, completed higher education or Master of Science is low. The relative participation of persons with disabilities with completed higher education and Master of Science in 2013 was 1.1%, 5.2% and 0.2%, respectively, and in 2022 they are even lower and amount to 0.2%, 2.3% and 0.1%, respectively. The share of unemployed persons with disabilities with

incomplete and completed secondary education tends to decrease in 2013-2022. In general, it can be concluded that the data emphasise the need for policies and programs to improve the opportunities for education and employment for persons with disabilities in North Macedonia. Such efforts can help reduce inequality in income distribution, improve social and economic inclusion, and promote a more inclusive society for people with disabilities.

Table 2. Distribution of unemployed, disabled persons, according to the level of education in the Republic of North Macedonia, 2013-2022

Year	Without education and with primary education	Incomplete secondary education	Secondary education	Higher education/ College education	High education	Masters of Science
2013	46.4	22.0	25.1	1.1	5.2	0.2
2014	54.8	19.4	21.3	0.8	3.4	0.3
2015	53.0	19.1	22.9	1.0	3.7	0.3
2016	55.3	19.2	21.6	0.7	2.8	0.4
2017	54.0	20.4	22.3	0.9	2.2	0.2
2018	54.0	20.7	21.5	0.8	2.7	0.3
2019	57.6	18.5	20.5	0.4	2.7	0.3
2020	62.3	17.1	18.0	0.5	2.1	0.0
2021	61.7	16.3	19.1	0.5	2.3	0.1
2022	62.8	15.6	19.0	0.2	2.3	0.1

Source: AVRSM

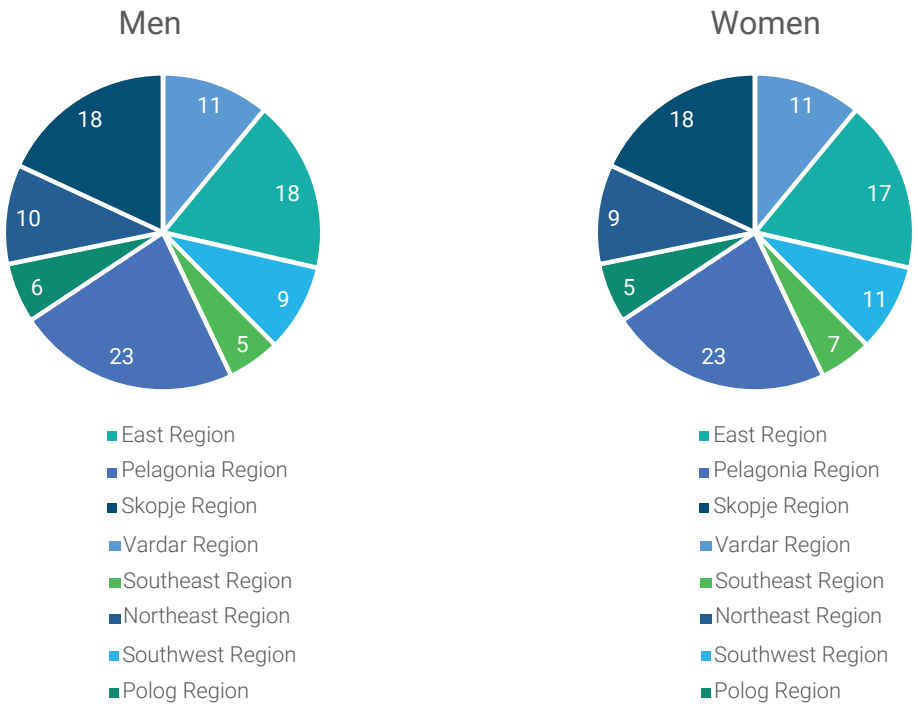
Regional Disparities in Labor Market Integration of Persons with Disabilities in North Macedonia

The unemployment of persons with disabilities in the Republic of North Macedonia shows significant regional disparities. Such regional disparities that follow the labour market in the Republic of North Macedonia arise from the shortcomings of the monocentric development model, which implies pronounced disparities between Skopje and the rest of the planned regions in the country. Ensuring balanced development and reduction of socioeconomic disparities within the planning regions is a significant prerequisite for achieving greater economic growth in the country, increasing the well-being of citizens, and raising the quality of life. Indicators of economic development at the regional level show differences that indicate disproportions in economic development between planning regions. The Skopje region is the most developed, and the northeastern planning region

is the least developed. The first indicator of balanced regional development in economic development is the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the planning region, per capita. Gross domestic product is the sum of the value of a country's total produced final goods and services during a year. This indicator best shows the uneven development of individual planning regions in the Republic of North Macedonia. The Skopje region has the highest GDP per capita, and the Polog planning region has the lowest. The distribution of unemployment of persons with disabilities by gender across different planning regions in the Republic of North Macedonia in 2022 shows that the highest percentage of unemployed persons with disabilities are in the Pelagonian planning region, with men and women equally affected (23% each). This is followed by the Eastern planning region, where 18% of the total men and 17% of the total women with disabilities belong to the category of unemployed persons with disabilities. In the Skopje planning region, the relative participation of men and women with disabilities is also high (18% each).

On the other hand, the lowest relative share of unemployed persons with disabilities is in the Southeast planning region, where only 5% of men and 7% of women. The Southwest planning region also has a relatively low percentage of unemployed persons with disabilities, with 9% of men and 11% of women falling into this category. The data highlight the uneven distribution of employment opportunities for people with disabilities in different planning regions in North Macedonia. This suggests that there may be a **need for targeted policies and initiatives to address the specific employment needs of people with disabilities in different regions.**

Chart 4. Distribution of unemployed, disabled persons, by separate planning regions in the Republic of North Macedonia, in 2022 (in %)



Source: Authors' calculation with data from AVRSM

Conclusion

People with disabilities face significant challenges in integrating into the labour market and the economic activities in North Macedonia, as in other developing countries. Discrimination, lack of access to education and training, and insufficient skills can prevent individuals with disabilities from securing decent jobs. This can also prevent appropriate inclusion in economic and social processes. Despite significant improvements observed in social protection, education, and integration into the labour market since the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2011, many people with disabilities in North Macedonia still struggle to find decent employment and fully integrate into economic life in the country. Large regional imbalances exacerbate disability challenges. This study examined the degree of inclusion in the labour market and the provision of decent work for persons with disabilities in different regions of North Macedonia. The analysis focused on examining the structure and factors influencing labour market integration for persons with disabilities. It explored the potential influence of regional aspects on unemployed persons with disabilities by age category, gender, level of education, and type of disability, in the last two decades. This study provided insights into whether individuals with disabilities in the labour market experience similar economic growth benefits as their non-disabled counterparts. This information can be a solid ground for developing policies and measures to support labour market integration. It can also improve the regional (and national) position of persons with disabilities in North Macedonia. It is imperative to note that these policies and measures should be implemented in collaboration with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations. This ensures their meaningful participation in the process and addresses their needs and priorities. Measures and policies should be designed to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities to access and participate in the labour market. Encouraging employers to create inclusive work environments that are accessible to people with disabilities and promoting solidarity in the workplace. These policies should focus on the elimination of discrimination, the promotion of inclusion and solidarity for persons with disabilities. Such policies should also include measures to facilitate access to vocational training and employment opportunities. They should also support the integration of persons with disabilities into the workforce. Furthermore, measures should be implemented to ensure that persons with disabilities can access the same benefits and protections as other workers.

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Solidarity and the Untapped Potential of the Diaspora Finance: "East or West, Home is Best"?

Aleksandar Stojkov[1]

Introduction

One of the first associations of the principle of solidarity is the potential of the Diaspora to participate in accelerating country's socio-economic, political, and cultural development. The faith in the patriotic duties of expatriate community typically implies a vision of accomplished, wealthy emigrants investing a portion of their monetary savings into the homeland.

It is often forgotten that many expatriates have left the country with some feeling of resentment and/or disappointment. Many of them might have faced adverse conditions at the time of migration – euphemistically referred to as "push factors", such as poverty, weak employment prospects, low wages, negligence by the institutions, discrimination, limited educational opportunities, civil wars' traumas, etc. Others have left primarily attracted by the strong pull factors, i.e., favourable conditions in their destination country. "We are a generation of immigrants who wilfully wanted to find ourselves at another level, to measure our strength with the world and learn from it. Macedonia is too narrow for us, as our ambitions are greater than the borders of our country", points out the famous Macedonian music composer, Duke Bojadziev (source: Faktor, 2015). Regardless of the relative strength of push and pull factors for migration, the country has lost a lot of working-age people who could have improved the demographic profile and the overall quality of life. The presumed solidarity, or awareness of shared interests, by the Diaspora is more feasible when the nostalgic patriotism outweighs the pre-emigrant trauma or dissatisfaction. Even when this is not the case, the authorities should embark on an ambitious reform agenda to successfully transform the society and assure the Diaspora that future generations will have a (more) decent quality of life.

The Diaspora has a strong potential to build bridges of cooperation with the native country, through transfer of knowledge, skills, financial resources, cultural expressions, and even more frequent tourist visits (e.g., Graham 2014; Li and Chan 2020; Zhu and Airey 2021; Naujoks 2022). In this context, the central purpose of this essay is to emphasize

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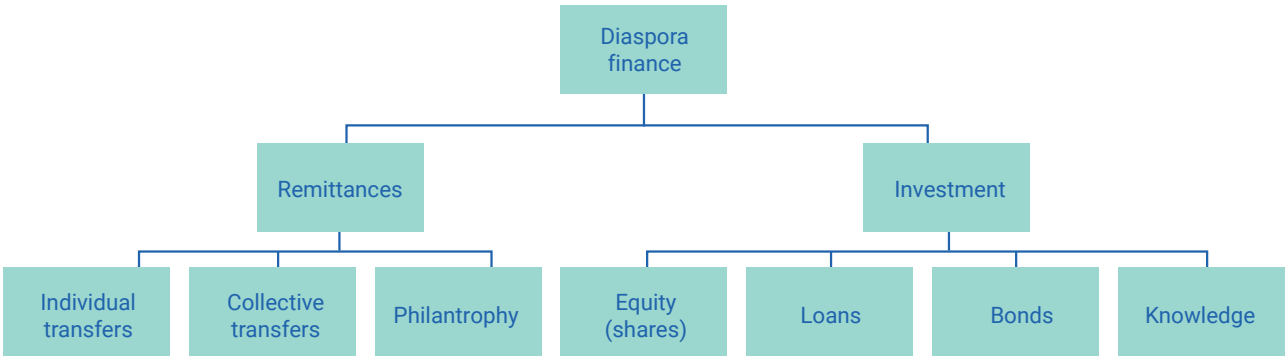
the potential role of Diaspora investment in accelerating the country's socio-economic development.

The structure of the paper is as follows. In the section that follows we provide a critical overview of Diaspora finance. The third section analyses the birthplace bias and presumed risk discount by Diaspora entrepreneurs. The final section conveys policy recommendations.

Diaspora Finance

Depending on their purpose, Diaspora finances can be classified into two broad groups: (1) remittances, primarily intended for private consumption, and (2) Diaspora investments. The various sub-groups are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Classification of Diaspora finance



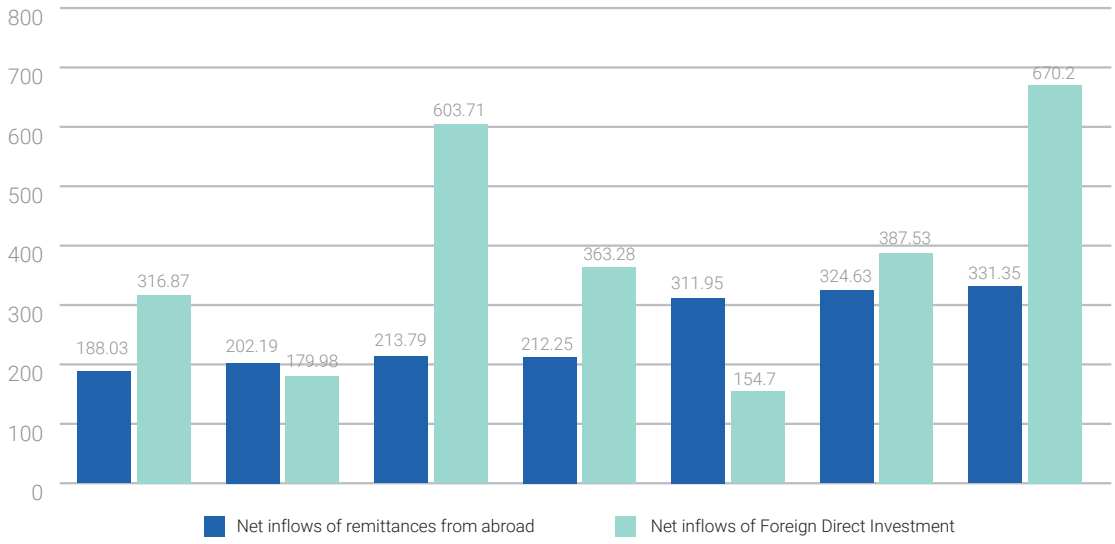
Source: Gelb et al. (2021).

The net inflows of remittances from abroad into the Macedonian economy, as an average for the 2016-2022 period, were 254 million EUR (National Bank, 2023).[2] In some years, the personal remittances were even higher than the net inflows of Foreign Direct Investment in the economy (Figure 2). If both informal and formal channels of delivery are considered, then the private transfers from abroad climb up to 1 billion EUR or 16% of GDP (source: National Bank, 2020). Given their impressive size, this leaves the inevitable impression that remittances have not been given the deserved attention by the policy makers. The tacit consensus is that, as long as they are spent in formal economic activities, their favourable effect will be felt through the increased income of the recipient families and greater personal consumption, that is, higher sale of goods and services on the domestic market.

[2] Truth be told, the estimated amounts of private transfers from abroad involve foreign exchange conversions, which might also occur due to activities in the informal and the underground economy as well as occasional conversion of home-held personal savings

The United Nations Population Fund recently conducted a survey for the needs of the National Bank of North Macedonia (UNFPA, 2023), the purpose of which was to determine the channels of arrival and spending of the remittances from abroad. The sample is composed of 2,000 households, including recipients of remittances from abroad. The research shows that most of the remittances are received through informal channels. In addition, the respondents generally receive the funds several times a year, usually two or four times a year. The majority of the respondents receive the funds for meeting current life needs and furnishing the home, while a smaller part receives funds for the needs of organizing family celebrations and for investing in the household's home. Most of the funds are spent within three months of their receipt.

Figure 2. Net inflows of remittances and Foreign Direct Investment in the Macedonian economy, 2016-2022 (In million euros)



Source: Balance of Payments Statistics, National Bank (April 2023).

According to UNFPA (2022), these findings suggest that although remittances represent an untapped potential for investment, there are several barriers that need to be removed. Given our research objective, we focus more on the various modes of Diaspora investment.

Equity shares (direct and portfolio investments). Transnational Diaspora Entrepreneurship (TDE) has been examined by a large body of the empirical literature, although the concept is still vague (e.g., Nielsen and Riddle 2009; Elo, Täube, and Servais 2022). The current government support in North Macedonia for companies founded by expatriates is 15% of the recognized costs of the investment, but not more than 1 million euros. One option is to raise the government budget support to 30%, but set the maximum at 200,000 euros, for

example, to increase the scope of potential investors. Determining different percentages of government support for individual regions, according to the degree of their level of economic development (country's GDP per capita), is another possibility for encouraging a more balanced regional development. Diaspora investors are often found to be more socially responsible compared to other foreign investors, at least in terms of paying higher wages, engaging more local subcontractors, etc. (e.g., Graham 2014).

Loans. When expatriates make deposits in the domestic financial system, the available pool of loanable funds increases. Another option is to earmark remittances for housing loans (remittance-linked housing loans). For example, the inflow of remittances might be used to repay this type of bank loans.

Diaspora Bonds. Appealing to the patriotic feelings, many central governments and/or municipalities have issued a special type of bonds intended for the Diaspora. In order to maximize their participation and responsiveness, the purpose, that is, the use of bond proceeds, is usually predetermined. For example, Diaspora bonds to finance the reconstruction and modernization of a regional road. Because of the sensitive patriotic moment, the coupon interest rate on these bonds is usually lower than that of conventional bonds with the same maturity, thus reducing the budget expenditure on interest payments. Israel and India already have a tradition of successful issuance of Diaspora bonds.

Knowledge. The knowledge (skills) of the Diaspora holds an immense development potential (e.g., (Bamberger 2023). In October 2022, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje established the Centre for Advanced Interdisciplinary Research (CeNIis). It establishes and institutionalizes the collaboration with over 300 Diaspora members working in academia or research institutions across the globe. Its mission is to (re)connect scientists and researchers who work and create in the world, who are born in our country, to network with the scientific staff and young researchers in the country and through synergy to develop scientific interdisciplinary research in different areas. This is expected to improve the visibility of the domestic scientific production and include the domestic academic community in the worldwide research ecosystem.

Another notable example comes from the activities of "Macedonia 2025", a non-profit organization of the Macedonian Diaspora. Among the many activities, the organization provides financing for specialized short-term trainings of senior-level managers of domestic companies at the Kellogg School of Management at the Northwestern University in the United States (source: Business Info, 2023).

Another interesting example is that of a Kosovar expatriate returned to his home country and established a private, Finnish international school, which strictly follows the best practices and curricula from Finland (source: Forbes, 2020). This know-how not only creates value added for the society by increasing current employment, production, and tax revenue collection, but also, most importantly, improve the employability of future graduates and the quality of the human capital in general.

The Birthplace Bias of Diaspora Investors

Attracting Diaspora finance (especially, the transnational diaspora entrepreneurs) into their homeland cannot solely rest on the principles of patriotism and solidarity. Diaspora investment in the Macedonian economy is primarily driven by the profit maximization objective and the untapped business opportunities. The expat entrepreneurs will carefully analyze the business environment and the profit potential of different investment projects. They will assess the risk-adjusted real rate of return on their potential investment in the Macedonian economy. Presumably, the information asymmetry with regard to the business environment in the homeland is much lower compared to the other potential investment destinations. After all, expats have more information about the capacity of institutions and the "rules of the game" when doing business.

What the national authorities count on is that the risk assessment of potential investment will be "corrected" by some degree of patriotism and belonging to the homeland. The impact of patriotism on the investment portfolio may not be universal, but empirical studies do show that indeed it might be strong in small economies (e.g., Krasniqi, 2015). In this case, the allocation of Diaspora finance would contain an element of solidarity or charity. There might be even a specific mode of solidarity, such as birthplace-driven solidarity or preference for the hometown or village.

The birthplace bias is a well-documented phenomenon in the empirical literature on investment (e.g., Lindblom, Mavruk, and Sjögren 2018). To illustrate this in a non-technical manner, let us suppose that a Macedonian expat has to decide between two competing investment destinations: Kosovo and North Macedonia. The expected risk-adjusted rate of return of the investment in Kosovo is 15% (a net profit of 15 U.S. dollars on every 100 U.S. dollar invested), whereas the same investment project in North Macedonia might yield

12%. If she or he, nevertheless, decides to invest in North Macedonia due to patriotism-based solidarity, this would be considered as a risk discount. This risk discount refers to a situation in which an investor is willing to accept a lower expected return in exchange for something, in our case, the feeling of accomplished patriotic duties. At a more mature stage, diaspora engagement could be in the form of development of venture capital funds (e.g., Rodriguez-Montemayor, 2012; Vaaler 2013).

A few limiting factors of patriotism-based solidarity of the Diaspora should be noted. Diasporans who represent second or third generation are less likely to be attached to the country of their ancestors. Mixed marriages also create multiple ancestral roots and might weaken the attachment to a single native country (e.g., Bauböck and Faist, 2010). The mistrust in the sincere intentions of the homeland's institutions and the conduct of business in reality also plays a role. Last but not least, a very significant constraint is the limited pool of wealthy expatriates who could channel their capital into the Macedonian economy.

Appealing to patriotism-based solidarity in terms of greater Diaspora investment requires a commitment by successive governments to improve the governance framework and the business environment. Strengthening the rule of law and government effectiveness, reducing red tape and corruption, and maintaining satisfactory political stability are only a few of the important pillars of the overall business climate. A more favorable treatment of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) investing by the Diaspora should also be possible in the context of a high degree of government transparency and objective, transparent, and clear criteria for state aid. For example, Lescevica et al. (2019) propose a cooperation model with the Diaspora that requires active involvement of the central and local authorities, academia, the private and the civil society sector.

Without offering a credible reform program and maintaining a system of continuous engagement of the Diaspora, it is somewhat unrealistic to expect foreign investment based on pure solidarity. A more feasible scenario is that of conditional solidarity, a type of quid pro quo ("a favor for a favor"), in which the Diaspora will get assurances that they allocate their capital into a friendlier business environment. Once the business climate resembles more to the other competing investment destinations, the country can count on the feelings of patriotism and birthplace bias of expat investors.

Higher government effectiveness, lower corruption, and greater political stability are also necessary prerequisites for attracting portfolio investment in Diaspora bonds issued by future governments. The underlying assumption is that the government could tap into the global capital markets by issuing conventional Eurobonds with a coupon interest rate of 6.9% per annum. Appealing to the principle of solidarity of the Diaspora would imply that the expats would be willing to buy Diaspora bonds with a coupon interest rate that is lower than the current market interest rate. The interest of the Diaspora could be even higher when issuing municipal bonds, which presumably have much stronger links with the birthplace of the investors. Buying the Diaspora bonds issued at the local level would provide financing for certain municipal investment with tangible benefits and visible impact. Again, there has to be a strategic approach, clear commitment and successful track record in project implementation and sustainability of local public finance.

Concluding Remarks

The old saying "East or West? Home is Best" can be valid only if the authorities demonstrate a visible progress and a credible reform agenda for building a sustainable market economy. The investors' preference for their home country (the so-called birthplace or home bias) cannot be a major factor behind the investment decision if a certain threshold is not met in terms of an enabling business environment. Even the most innovative approaches in attracting Diaspora finance will have limited success if the country's institutional capacity and adherence to rule of law are insufficient. This corollary is continuously supported by surveys of remittance-receiving households, indicating that hundreds of millions of euros of Diaspora finance mainly arrive through informal channels. Creating a system of continuous engagement of the Diaspora and improving the institutional capacities can create conditions for patriotism-based solidarity by the expatriate community. A failure or genuine unwillingness to improve the business environment could scare even the domestic investors. To summarize, the solidarity of the Diaspora is in a sense conditional, i.e., dependent on providing credible assurances by successive governments that Diaspora's capital will be safe and productively used in the interest of future generations. In such a case, expat investors would be willing to accept a somewhat lower expected rate of return on their investment in the homeland in exchange for the accomplished patriotic duties.

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Climate crisis and the role solidarity can play in mitigating and adapting to the challenges in North Macedonia

Kiril Ristovski[1]

About the climate crisis

The climate crisis is widely recognized as one of the most significant global threats the humanity and the planet are facing. It refers to rapid changes in the Earth's climate caused by the emission of greenhouse gases originating from human activities such as burning fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrial processes.

The impacts of the climate crisis are already being felt around the world, including rising sea levels, more frequent and severe weather events, droughts, and wildfires. These impacts are particularly devastating for vulnerable communities, including those in low-lying areas, developing countries, and Indigenous populations.

The climate crisis also has far-reaching implications for the economy, food security, public health, and biodiversity. It threatens to exacerbate existing inequalities and undermine progress toward achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN 2022). Addressing the climate crisis requires global cooperation and action. This includes reducing greenhouse gas emissions, transitioning to renewable energy sources, protecting and restoring natural ecosystems, and promoting sustainable practices in agriculture and industry. Failure to act could have catastrophic consequences for future generations and the planet as a whole.

Throughout its historical development, the City of Skopje, due to the climate crisis, faced various types of natural disasters, most often in the form of floods, earthquakes, droughts, extreme winters, landslides, etc. This is primarily due to the geographical position in which Skopje is located, but also due to certain anthropological factors (Dragicevic 2010), such as the amount and distribution of precipitation, the temperature range during the year, the size of agricultural land, the area of forests, etc. Although until four decades ago, the domestic scientific public considered such disasters exclusively as a natural phenomena, with the development of environmental science, the connection between human influence

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and these disasters is increasingly proven. This primarily refers to the increase of knowledge on the impact of climate change, which is a direct consequence of industrial development during the second half of the 20th century, not least, by the uncontrolled use of carbon technology in energy, industrial production, mining, agriculture, etc.

Indeed, the floods of 2016 in Skopje are still a painful reminder of the fact that more than 4,000 residents of Stajkovci, Arachinovo, Smilkovci and Singjelic had to leave their homes, while 22 lost their lives. In those difficult moments, the unity among the residents came to the fore again and the City of Skopje once again justified the epithet - City of Solidarity!
The unpredictability of the weather, which is a consequence of climate change, leaves North Macedonia no other option than to focus on identifying risks and adapting to climate change.
Although measures to adapt to climate change - such as building dams and stabilizing riverbeds - imply additional investment, the profitability of such initiatives is reflected in the reduction of risks, financial losses, and most important – the saving of human lives, which have no price! Therefore, any adaptation to climate change must also mean a change in human behavior and the continuous implementation of laws aimed at preventing unwanted human activities such as land degradation, improper waste management, illegal logging, and even improper construction of buildings.

Historical background of the climate crisis

The history of climate change can be traced back millions of years. The Earth's climate has changed naturally over time due to various factors, such as changes in the planet's orbit, volcanic activity, and variations in solar radiation. However, in recent times, human activities have significantly impacted the Earth's climate.
Climate change was analyzed as far back as the period of ancient Greece when philosophers (Aristotle, Greek Library) of the time believed that humans could change the temperature and influence the precipitation through the uncontrolled cutting of trees, plowing fields or irrigating desert landscapes. However, such observations were exclusive of a local nature, and the fact that humans could in some way change the climate on a global level was passive until the 19th century when the scientists of that time started with deep studies on the linkages between the CO2 emissions and climate change (Joseph Fourier, 1822; J. Tyndall, 1861; Svante Arrhenius, April 1896; Callendar, G. S. April 1938).

Apparently, during the 20th century, human activities, such as burning fossil fuels, deforestation, and rapid industrialization, led to a significant increase in greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. This has caused the Earth's temperature to rise, leading to various impacts on the planet, such as the melting of glaciers and sea ice, rising sea levels, more frequent heat waves, and changes in precipitation patterns.

By the late 1950s, CO2 readings would offer some of the first data to corroborate the global warming theory. Eventually an abundance of data, along with climate modeling and real-world weather events would show not only that global warming was real, but that it also presented a host of catastrophic consequences.

Final warnings by the scientific community

In March 2023 climate scientists delivered a "final warning" on the climate crisis (IPCC, 2023), as rising greenhouse gas emissions push the world to the brink of irrevocable damage that only swift and drastic action can avert.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), made up of the world's leading climate scientists, presented the sixth assessment report on climate change. The report was prepared by hundreds of eminent experts and their final message was very brief and clear: act now, or it will be too late!

The last IPCC report points out the devastation that has already been inflicted on swathes of the world. Extreme weather caused by climate breakdown has led to increased deaths from intensifying heat waves in all regions, millions of lives and homes destroyed in droughts and floods, millions of people facing hunger, and "increasingly irreversible losses" in vital ecosystems.

Furthermore, according to the Report, more than 3bn people already live in areas that are "highly vulnerable" to climate breakdown, and half of the global population now experiences severe water scarcity for at least part of the year. In many areas, the report warned, we are already reaching the limit to which we can adapt to such severe changes, and weather extremes are "increasingly driving displacement" of people in Africa, Asia, North, Central and South America, and the south Pacific.

All of those impacts are set to increase rapidly (IPCC, 1990), as we have failed to reverse the 200-year trend of rising greenhouse gas emissions, despite more than 30 years of warnings from the IPCC, which published its first report in 1990.

The world heats up in response to the accumulation of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, so every year in which emissions continue to rise eats up the available "carbon budget" and means much more drastic cuts will be needed in future years.

Climate justice and solidarity as climate resilience concepts

Addressing climate change and achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement requires transitioning to a net-zero economy. While this is an essential task that can provide significant economic and social benefits, it can also pose significant challenges for countries and communities that are still dependent on fossil fuels and other emissions-intensive sectors.

Achieving a just transition requires tackling the challenges faced by communities and workers as they shift toward sustainable livelihoods, while also ensuring that the benefits of the zero-carbon and resilient economy are shared fairly.

Climate justice is a concept that addresses the just division, fair sharing, and equitable distribution of the burdens of climate change and its mitigation and responsibilities to deal with climate change. It involves recognizing that climate change disproportionately affects marginalized communities and vulnerable populations, such as indigenous people or low-income communities. Climate justice seeks to ensure that these groups are not unfairly burdened by the effects of climate change and that they have a voice in the decisions and policies related to climate action.

Furthermore, this concept includes acknowledging the historical and ongoing role of developed countries in contributing to climate change and the need to support developing countries in their efforts to mitigate and adapt to its effects. Climate justice also strives to create a fair and equitable transition to a low-carbon economy that benefits everyone, including workers and communities currently reliant on fossil fuel industries. In order to

do so, the international community introduced climate solidarity as a model, which refers to the idea of people and countries working together to address the global challenge of climate change. It involves recognizing that the impacts of climate change are not evenly distributed and that those who have contributed the least to the problem are often the most vulnerable to its effects. Climate solidarity aims to build a shared sense of responsibility and collective action among individuals, communities, and nations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, support adaptation efforts, and promote sustainable development.

The financial obligations stemming from the climate agreements are the cornerstones of international public climate finance and represent a critical symbol of trust, international cooperation, climate justice, and solidarity. However, it is really critical for vulnerable and developing countries, because they are facing multiple crises. It's not just climate change, but it is at the same time an economic crisis in relation to the conflict in Ukraine, the economic contraction that these countries have seen, and accented level of inequality that also impacts these countries' priorities and how they can address their development needs. Such a situation hinders the trust and the durability of the process, and the developing ability of the country to deliver and address climate change. However, in order to stimulate the just transition the UN constituted a new financial instrument i.e. the Green Climate Fund which was set up in 2010 and formed part of a compact between poor and rich countries that was the basis for the Paris climate agreement in 2015 (Nigel Purvis and Andrew Stevenson, February 7, 2011). The GCF has been mandated to support developing countries raise and realize their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) ambitions towards low-emissions, climate-resilient pathways. So far it has spent around $20bn in funding climate projects around the world. Despite the GCF, in the European Union, the concerns facing workers in fossil fuel industries are addressed by the Just Transition mechanism in the European Green Deal (Simon, Frédéric, 11 December,2019). The funding mechanism help fossil fuel-dependent regions within the European Union to transition to a greener economy. A just transition from coal is also supported by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development throughout its Just Transition Initiative (JTI) which was launched in 2020, with an aim to ensure that the benefits of the green economy transition are shared, while protecting vulnerable countries, people and regions from falling behind (EBRD, 2020). Last but not least, in line with the ambitions of the European Green Deal, the EU has adopted the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans accompanied by the Action Plan which envisages 58 actions and 7 roadmaps for implementation that are focused on: Climate policy, Sustainable Energy, Sustainable mobility, Circular economy, Depollution, Sustainable agriculture and food supply and Protection of nature and biodiversity (EU Commission 2020).

Step by step to carbon-neutral North Macedonia

The Republic of North Macedonia needs economic recovery from the economic crisis in line with the obligations deriving from the international climate agreements - leading the country into a carbon-neutral economy which in turn will require brave steps by the decision-makers. First, it is necessary to reform the overall energy sector and to find appropriate solutions for the Thermal Power Plants, which means the adoption of appropriate substitution solutions, not just the application of the best available technique (BAT). Creation of alternative employment opportunities must start immediately so that the residents of the Bitola and Kicevo region can coopt to the future which envisages in 20 and more years - cities without coal industry – hence the need for adaptation time and taking advantage of new business opportunities. Moreover, the country must have a comprehensive development strategy that would not look at economic recovery only through the potential income of the economy. Instead of that, the reduction of CO2 and other harmful gases shall be the main criterion in creating opportunities for economic growth not least in selecting new investments. Due to the energy crisis in the previous year, the private sector in North Macedonia has already demonstrated its competitiveness and contributed to the gradual green transition by accepting and introducing innovative practices and business models. The potentials are already envisaged and therefore further financial support provided by the government should take place on a regular basis. The financial supporting mechanisms shall be promptly applied to energy-efficient measures in public and residential buildings and investment in e-mobility, which will play a significant role in achieving carbon neutrality.

What is North Macedonia's importance for the success of the Paris agreement?

Small steps affect big changes and everyone needs positive examples of system transformation that essentially make a difference and show that changes are possible. North Macedonia as a party to the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement undertakes serious obligations that require the harmonization of legislation in accordance with the provisions arising from these agreements. In addition to this, the country should take concrete actions that greatly affect the national economy, which unfortunately still relies on carbon resources. The decarbonization of the energy sector is an extremely sensitive issue at a time when global energy stability is in daily uncertainty, and the principles of solidarity in the field of energetics have yet to be put to the test.

Still, North Macedonia, as a small country with modest economic potential, can indeed be a model for the region and the rest of the world. What we need is more energetic efforts by the government in the achievement of the National Determined Contributions towards the Paris Agreement (MoEPP 2021). This can be achieved by mobilizing all national human and financial capacities in order to achieve the desired goals in lieu of international directives and standards.

Otherwise, North Macedonia, like many other countries that have minor contributions to climate change, will face the harmful and sometimes devastating effects of global warming - rising sea temperatures, dying ecosystems, droughts and floods - which will have an undesirable domino effect on people's health, the economy and sectors that depend on weather patterns, such as agriculture, forestry, tourism. That is why is important to understand and apply the concept of climate solidarity in public policy design in order to recognize that we all share a common interest in a stable and healthy planet and that we must work together to achieve this goal.

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The climate crisis and the role solidarity can play in mitigating and adapting to the challenges in North Macedonia

Elena Ena Utevska[1]

Introduction

The current era of escalating climate change and multiple overarching crises presents a global interdependence that necessitates a new form of global solidarity and collective action (Bazzani, 2023). We are in "a critical decade for climate action and we need to do more", declares the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Synthesis Report (IPCC, 2023a). The existing global agreements and pledges are insufficient to reduce emissions and address the issue of rise in temperature. As a result, it is anticipated that the global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in 2030 will be twice the amount required to meet global targets. Over several decades, the IPCC reports, which is the key input for climate policies and international climate change negotiation, have warned about the rapid climate change and the tragically low action (Sultana, 2021a). This year, climate scientists highlight that only by taking bold steps and acting promptly, we can still ensure *a viable and sustainable future* for everyone (IPCC, 2023b).

Environmental advocates argue that simple making of technocratic changes to the traditional narrative of human progress and modern development is insufficient. The problem lies in the narrative itself, which needs to be fundamentally reimagined to create alternative pathways towards a more sustainable world (Di Chiro, 2019). The climate crisis requires urgent reevaluation of the principles of (in)justice to encompass the human, the natural world and the numerous interconnections between them (Tschakert, 2022).

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that a rapid global response from institutions and the government is possible if taken seriously. Throughout history, there are many instances where people have confronted crisis via collective solidarity, embracing values that extend beyond strategic considerations centered on personal gain. Solidarity, where solidarity recognizes the interdependence among people and the planet, can become a guiding value among individuals and groups for addressing climate mitigation and adaptation holistically (UNDP, 2022a).

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Our future trajectory is a matter of choice. The emergence of unsafe planetary conditions, unanticipated transitions, and societal polarization have compounded the challenges associated with climate change. However, throughout our species' history, we have demonstrated the capacity to achieve significant progress through collaborative efforts, even with limited resources. We possess a range of resources that can help us navigate and correct our course (UNDP, 2022a).

In this article, I focus on how solidarity plays an active role in addressing climate challenges by focusing on vulnerable communities and collective action. It builds upon existing literature and research on solidarity and climate crisis, in an attempt to transfer that knowledge into practice for the climate challenges of North Macedonia. The article focuses on intergenerational solidarity, which is already proposed as a way to achieve the Agenda 2030, while spatial or territorial solidarity, a question concerning the geographical scale, is generally less frequently discussed (UNDP, 2022b; Clément, Rey-Valette and Rulleau, 2016).

The climate crisis globally and in North Macedonia

The urgent global challenge of transitioning to a climate-neutral society requires global emission reductions across all sectors. However, the current policies aimed at mitigating climate change do not align with the objectives of the Paris Agreement, which aim to restrict the rise in temperature to below 2°C and strive to maintain it at 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels (Bazzani, 2023; Di Chiro, 2019).

"Climate justice is crucial because those who have contributed least to climate change are being disproportionately affected," said Aditi Mukherji, one of the IPCC Report authors, calling for action for the population most highly vulnerable to climate change as "human and ecosystem vulnerability are interdependent" (IPCC, 2023a).

The latest annual Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention, COP27, has been presented as making significant progress in enhancing resilience and adaptation in the most vulnerable regions (UNFCCC, 2022). The governments concluded to establish a global fund to cover the cost of loss and damage, providing financial assistance to vulnerable groups and those impacted by climate disasters (UNEP, 2022). Although this

is one way to center solidarity, there are still many uncertainties regarding the financing of the fund. Many were disappointed citing a lack of adequate response to the climate crisis and calling it greenwashing with a substantial gap between the promises made and actual action taken (The Guardian, 2022; McDonald, 2022).

Climate advocates state that what we should be aiming towards is climate sustainability: meeting the current generation's needs while safeguarding and preserving resources for future generations. It is well documented that although the wealthiest 10% of the world's population is responsible for 52% of global GHG emissions, the negative effects of climate change are felt beyond borders. Felt over decades, even centuries, they disproportionately affect the developing populations and will impact future generations, resulting in a double inequality (Sultana, 2021a).

Globally, North Macedonia is not a significant contributor to GHG emissions, emitting less than 0.02% of the total global emissions in 2021 (European Commission, 2022). The effort of the country in reaching net zero emissions by 2050 is most recently shown in the *Long-term Strategy on Climate Action* by embarking on its "road towards a low carbon, climate resilient sustainable development". To achieve the national climate commitments, it's crucial that the goals and objectives of the Strategy are incorporated into the plans of various ministries and integrated into specific policies. At both national and local levels, coordination is vital for reducing emissions (mitigation) and reducing vulnerability to climate change (adaptation). Even though the numbers are small when compared globally, this is a critical issue for the country since climate change is not high on the political agenda of the government or in national strategic planning documents. As stated in the National Strategy, the current institutional capabilities for integrating climate considerations into policies and practices in North Macedonia are low. Confronting climate change is even more challenging when having inadequate funds to address environmental concerns. Consequently, environmental regulation and implementation are insufficient, public involvement is limited, and political conflicts exacerbate the situation (MOEPP, 2021; Knez, Štrbac, and Podbregar, 2021).

The Agenda 2030, the Paris Agreement, and the EU Green Deal on climate change demand *economic and social transformation*. However, it will take significant effort to create a national climate action system, which involves not only development of legal frameworks and capacities but also development of a supportive environment for climate action, allocation of public and private funds, education and public participation. The

country is developing a *Law on Climate Action*, which should have been adopted by the end of 2022 and is still not finalized. The reason for this, as the Ministry states, is the adaptation of solutions at the national level with the new EU regulations (MOEPP, 2021; Meta.mk, 2022).

While institutions are mired in legal and policy obstacles, front-line communities are facing a *multidimensional crisis* of climate, economic, energy and health aspects.

The agricultural sector in Macedonia is a pressing concern in terms of climate change risks because most of the rural population depends on it for their livelihoods. The rural poor will be hit harder due to their heavy reliance on agriculture, limited adaptability, and high-income proportion spent on food, making them a very vulnerable group (Sutton et al, 2013).

Recent global challenges, such as migration, natural resource use, and disease spread, created wide interdependence that requires *multilevel coordinated solutions*, as they cannot be solved by individuals, groups, or countries alone. We are tied in global interdependence which requires a new form of cooperation in *global and intergenerational solidarity* (Bazzani, 2023).

Conceptualizing solidarity

Solidarity is defined as a unity of a group based on shared interests, objectives, and standards (Merriam-Webster.com, n.d.). It is often described as a sense of belonging and prosocial behavior, involving mutual support among group members, consistent with certain ideas of social justice (Bazzani, 2023; Dictionary.Cambridge.org, n.d.). This support may be financial, material, or institutional, and can be either spontaneous or managed. Solidarity is a functional necessity for the existence and survival of any social system, distinguished by mechanical solidarity, which links similar individuals, and organic, which is based on interdependence (Cohen, et al, 2022).

Studies have highlighted the connections between solidarity, environmental inequalities, and social cohesion, suggesting two types: voluntary and imposed solidarity - “assist community members in need” and “mutual dependence to defend a common interest”. Empathy was found to be a driving force behind solidarity due to its altruistic motivations towards the well-being of those less privileged (Cohen, et al, 2022).

Given the unpredictability of our world and limited timeframe to revitalize our structures and establish a safe future for everyone, we need to re-establish a shared sense of *transnational solidarity* to confront challenges while envisioning and constructing a future where we not only survive but also prosper (UNDP, 2022a). Several warnings about the weakening state of the global system have been issued by António Guterres, the Secretary-General of the UN, who urged countries to come together and reconstruct a sense of global *solidarity and collaborative action* in the face of widespread and interrelated dangers (World Economic Forum, 2020). This has contributed to acknowledging the relationship between humans and the environment which broadens the scope of policy-making beyond a local level to consider the *interconnectedness of social and ecological systems* in the Anthropocene era. The latest UNDP Human Development Report implies to aim beyond just working with what we have and calls upon us to unleash our full potential as a civilization, by utilizing our unique and varied skills rooted in trust and *solidarity* (UNDP, 2022a).

One way of practicing solidarity is by acknowledging the shared interconnectedness of our lives, especially when having diverse experiences, feelings, or identities. Solidarity requires a *commitment to work together* in order to address inequities in agency, freedoms, and capabilities that affect all individuals, groups, and societies, and use our privileges to give support to the marginalized and underrepresented communities. It involves recognizing that our choices and actions have *multidimensional impacts* on our shared physical, economic, and social spaces, which we can use for the better of all. In order to achieve solidarity, we must acknowledge and embrace the diversity of people, groups, perspectives, and experiences.

Amidst the climate crisis, the discontent of the people can be a catalyst for fostering solidarity among communities and groups, leading to *collective efforts* toward building community resilience and achieving better development outcomes.

The climate crisis and the role of solidarity

In light of the current crisis faced beyond borders, the only sustainable development is one built by society based on solidarity and justice, which works to strengthen the mitigation and adaptability policies and thus, their effectiveness (Cohen, et al, 2022).
Mitigating and adapting to climate change is not solely an individual or one-institution responsibility but must be a *collective effort,* linked to the concepts of solidarity and climate justice (Keessen et al, 2021). Prioritizing solidarity praxis in all efforts toward climate justice is crucial. Centering local communities is the first step towards it, while looking deeply at the complex intersections of oppression and taking into account aspects of gender, race, class, and the perspectives of Indigenous peoples to ensure interventions are equitable and appropriate for the context. Feminist perspectives can be especially relevant in providing insights, such as valuing local knowledge and practices and deep listening to the community's needs (Sultana, 2021a). Restructuring institutions with this in mind can foster solidarity, redistribute power, emphasize reparations and reciprocity, acknowledge disproportional levels of harm and vulnerability, and challenge universalistic thinking. Solidarity is a way of *addressing the structural inequalities* that are exacerbated by the effects of climate change and transitioning away from those structures that have historically produced and currently reproduce climate injustices (Di Chiro, 2019).

Another step towards collective solidarity actions is *prioritizing care* and *communal practices* over endless economic growth. *Collaboration, co-learning and accountability* provide opportunities for transformation instead of seeking redress within patriarchal, racial capitalism, colonial, extractive, and exploitation-based systems.

Reframing the issues can be another step towards solidarity, for instance when dealing with climate finance or aid from industrialized countries to post-colonial nations. It should not be seen as charity or philanthropy but rather as accountability for historical and contemporary harms and injustices. This includes mechanisms like mobility justice for refugees, adaptation finance to communities and increasing decarbonization investments. To confront structural and systemic changes, it is necessary to use *bottom-up strategies* such as mutual aid, solidarity networks, and shared governance. With this, we can emphasize the interconnections and interdependencies of individuals and systems across spaces beyond the capitalist framework, while noticing the limitations of seeking singular or isolated domestic solutions (Di Chiro, 2019; Sultana, 2021b).

Adaptation policies oftentimes reinforce existing socioeconomic inequalities, introducing a need for greater solidarity between communities to ensure equitable and sustainable practices. Addressing the *root causes of inequalities* that contribute to climate change vulnerability can help build greater resilience across communities. This approach acknowledges the importance of intersectional gender analysis, ethical research designs, and critical reflexivity, and focuses on regenerative economies, systemic solutions, and financial support for care, commoning, repair, and reparation (Sultana, 2021a). Solidarity can be fostered through the development of *shared narratives and common goals*, as well as through promotion of *participatory decision-making processes* that involve all actors. This can help to bridge the divides, build trust between communities and encourage knowledge sharing (Shi et al, 2021).

Social movements offer valuable insights in achieving solidarity and inclusion. Institutions can support these efforts by listening to diverse voices, allocating resources, and shaping research agendas to complement *collective actions*. Shared purpose or identity often drives social movements, leading to significant societal change. When people view government institutions as unreliable, policies and regulations may appear inadequate, prompting the need for collective action. In such cases, solidarity-based social movements are essential for overcoming injustice, domination, and oppression (UNDP, 2022a).

Solidarity has played a vital role in surviving numerous crises, wars and natural disasters. One such remembrance for North Macedonia is the international solidarity demonstrated upon the damaging earthquake in 1963 that greatly affected the capital Skopje and its citizens (UNDP North Macedonia, 2023).
North Macedonia's variable climate, combined with extreme weather events fueled by climate change, make it one of the world's most vulnerable countries. The vulnerability is worsened by its landlocked location, diverse biomes, and geography with tall mountains, deep valleys, four main river basins, and three large natural lakes. Socio-economically, the country remains vulnerable due to relatively high unemployment rates, especially among women and the youth, and a significant population employed in the agriculture sector, which is vulnerable to climate variability (MOEPP, 2021).

Climate mitigation measures in North Macedonia are cross-sectoral, including the sectors of energy, transport, industry, households, waste, industrial processes, and livestock. Communities vulnerable to disasters often suffer from both inadequate planning and limited response, therefore it is important that these communities are involved in policy-making so that they can address long-term risks in a proactive way rather than address short-term risks in a reactive way. Protection of ecosystems and natural resources is a

mitigation measure that is also connected to solidarity, with the people living in these areas and with everyone depending on the natural resources local there (MOEPP, 2021). Although mitigation has been the favored approach for a significant period, adaptation has gained more attention in the last decade. Creating a society that is prepared to cope with the impacts of climate change is a pressing matter that should not be delayed. Therefore, the formulation of strategies for adapting to climate change demands a holistic and multi-perspective approach (Pietrapertosa et al, 2017). North Macedonia does not have a National Adaptation Strategy and faces gaps and barriers regarding climate change adaptation, including weak institutional frameworks and poor data collection systems for science-based decision-making on adaptation, resulting in insufficient information to determine the vulnerability of specific aspects. The current adaptation measures within the National Action Plan are focused on collecting data, monitoring system, research plan and priorities. Measures mention the need for cooperation, specifically intersectoral cooperation and cooperation amongst different stakeholders (MOEPP, 2021). However, it is found that, compared to the other Western Balkan countries, North Macedonia has the lowest adaptive capacity (Knez, Štrbac and Podbregar, 2021; Pietrapertosa et al, 2017).

Solidarity practices in North Macedonia can be implemented on a national, institutional, community-grassroots and international level, specifically by *encouraging collective action* towards reducing GHG emissions and transitioning towards sustainable livelihoods; *building partnerships* between different stakeholders, including governments, civil society, and communities to share resources and knowledge related to sustainable practices; *addressing social and economic inequalities and supporting vulnerable populations*, such as women, children, and local communities, who are disproportionately affected by climate change; *mobilizing political will and public support* for policies and initiatives that promote climate mitigation and *encouraging the development of community-based adaptation strategies* that take into account the unique needs and characteristics of different communities.

Our *climate vision* should focus on promoting a new definition of living in togetherness, which emphasizes interdependence, social justice, and care for communities and the Earth. We must explore paths towards a new solidarity (or caring) economy that prioritizes community self-determination, self-reliance, self-provisioning, self-sufficiency, sharing, participatory democracy, social equity, and cooperation. This can empower people-centered solutions and challenge the gendered composition of the green economy by offering alternatives to capitalism, promoting just and sustainable practices, including food production, co-housing, healthcare, renewable energy production and distribution (Di Chiro, 2019).

Conclusion

Consideration of climate crisis and inequalities with solidarity is crucial for implementing effective and just mitigation and adaptation policies. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated our interdependency and shown us the importance of solidarity across borders and communities. We must work together to develop solutions, prioritizing the most vulnerable populations (Cohen et al, 2022; UNDP, 2022a). In North Macedonia, solidarity can encourage collective action to address climate challenges. Measures for climate mitigation and adaptation should address social and economic inequalities and mobilize support and resources.

Solidarity can play an important role in mitigating and adapting to the climate crisis challenges in North Macedonia by encouraging collective action. Some general insights gained from this analysis are the need to build partnerships in broad collaborations and cooperations, share knowledge and practices for improving resilience and integration of inclusive measures, address inequalities strategically, mobilize efforts and resources for vulnerable groups and mobilize political will and public support for climate mitigation and adaptation initiatives.

Further research is necessary to determine how to push for systemic change and change of values in society, towards one that embraces and practices solidarity as a priority. It would be of particular interest to explore specific measures of climate mitigation and adaptation that are giving rapid response focused on the most vulnerable, front-line communities in North Macedonia.

We need to embrace a culture of sharing and work towards nurturing this culture within our communities. Ultimately, care for ourselves and one another has the power to propel us forward toward a more sustainable and equitable future. We must redefine development to prioritize values and mindsets that promote solidarity and sustainability for present and future generations. It is essential to place solidarity at the forefront of national and regional policies and discussions to create meaningful change. Only by working together can we build a better future for all.

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Building (on) the practice of feminist solidarities through mentorship

Sara Milenkovska[1]

Introduction

In her essay (2006) "Love as the Practice of Freedom", bell hooks[2] consider choosing love as going against a culture of domination based on anti-love, which has been a theme in her feminist and queer writings[3]. In a constructive effort, hooks critiques how love is also missing from the political discourse of the left and identifies the blinds spot in the self-centred longing for change. This holds relevance even today as the current global political and economic system addressing (gender) inequality does not fully offer transformative space for structural improvement. Solidarity in the public discourse has been seen more directly in line with protests and strikes, but the politics of solidarity goes beyond specific political contestations and contributes to continued need for fostering global resistance. Both historically and in contemporary efforts, communities rely on the practice of collective care, among others, to fight structural inequalities (Federici & Linebaugh, 2018).

Drawing on the anti-fascist history of the Balkan region (Hadjievska, 2021), collectives as forms of collaboration and feminist political engagement, have led many efforts in establishing solidarity as a tool in redefining relations towards development and improvement of gender inequality. For example, The Women's Antifascist Front, as Yugoslav feminist, and anti-fascist mass organisation (Boniglioli, 2016) was not only an instrument of political mobilization and social control, but also a way of strengthening solidarity and care through collaborative cooperation in cultural, political, and social capital. To relate to recent events, for example, during 2014 student protests in North Macedonia[4], different forms of solidarity emerged: students protecting each other from police brutality, organising foodbanks, and occupying the universities. In North Macedonia's case, the emergence of Student Plenum[5] sparked political action, which started due to the attack on the University Autonomy and expanded to the students' and citizens' dissatisfaction with living in a hybrid regime (Freedom House, 2015). The joint effort for action was a

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[2] She preferred to have her first and last name written with all lowercase letters, to focus on her message rather than herself.
[3] For more of her work on the relation to love, social change looks at "All about Love" (1999), the rest of the essays in "Outlaw Culture" (2006) and "Teaching to transgress" (1994) among others.
[4] Student Protest Blocks Macedonian Capital | Balkan Insight (The article published on Balkan Insight, December 10, 2014, gives additional context for the start of the student protest in North Macedonia)
[5] Horizontal protest movement more information on this link: which captures the summary of the Student Plenum goals and achievements during the period of 2014-2015 An Unruly Younger Generation? Student Protest and the Macedonian Crisis – Political Critique [DISCONTINUED]

spark in darkness after living under an authoritarian government, and later encouraged more people to practise and seek political changes (Gjuzelov & Hadjievska, 2020). This is important to note, as solidarity can play a crucial role as a political act in relation to political transformation. In even more recent events, solidarity in North Macedonia, has been the key in offering survivors-centered approach to victims of gender-based violence (Javna Soba, Veaposka, Ilovska, and the rise of gender-based violence etc.). And on regional level, solidarity played a crucial role in showing the transnational potential for mobilization around gender equality. For example, #NisamTrazila (Serbia, 2021) started when Milena Radulovic, along with several other women, came out about the sexual abuse done to them by famous director. This inspired women across the region to start sharing their own stories of sexual violence. Specifically sharing more than 4,000 stories anonymously on social media, under the initiative of the Facebook page Nisam trazila (BIH, Serbia, Montenegro). When survivors experience solidarity and understanding, it shows society that approach can offer to question the dominant narratives of intolerance, and normalizations of violence towards women, girls, gender and sexual minorities.

As an activist researcher, I am personally invested in reconciling feminist theories of political change with practical political engagement. My background as a co-founder of Stella Network likely influences my analysis and understanding of the implications of shared knowledge as care and solidarity. This may impact my "objectivity" in the traditional sense, but from a feminist epistemological standpoint, it allows me to speak as a "woman from within" (Mohanty, 1984).

For the theoretical framework in this essay, I use Hemmings' (2012) focus on the "process of moving from affective dissonance to a struggle for alternative values, and even perhaps to mutual recognition and affective solidarity" (p.157). Clare Hemmings (2012) discusses affective solidarity and the tension between ontology and epistemology in feminist theory and methodology. According to Hemmings, affective solidarity can foster a desire for political transformation by seeking solidarity with others not solely based on shared identity or empathy, but also through experiences of discomfort and going against the odds. This leads to "reflexive politicisation" (Hemmings, 2012, p.158), which can serve as a starting point for feminist reflexivity, prioritizing or leading to feminist activity, or "reflexive disruption" (p.158). Hemmings' realization stems from her engagement with Probyn's (1993) work on feminist reflexivity, which can serve as the foundation for affective solidarity. Through affective solidarity, these concepts can engage with analytical perspectives and promote the practice of solidary, such as mentorship and sharing knowledge as a tool for potential political action.

In simple terms, our empathy and identities might be a starting point for understanding, but seeing through the lens of affective solidarity, we are able to truly and deeply understand the discomfort created by inequality. That specific discomfort serves as a fuel to seek better treatment of others. As noted by Hobart & Kneese, the importance of the politics of radical collective care against the work of neoliberal establishment of control and oppression, lies in radical care as a praxis, (2020, p.22).

The feminist praxis of knowledge and experience-sharing rejects hierarchical forms of the master's tools[6] as Lorde suggests might happen if we give in on reproducing violence to fight inequality. If we take into consideration these practices, or transferring knowledge directly, by storytelling, archiving, and writing - have been the reason why, regardless of systemic ignoring of the role of women in building the state and societies, we still have data because of feminist efforts to keep the hidden stories.

To illustrate the potential of mentorship and feminist praxis of sharing, I would like to offer a smaller-scale example of solidarity that complements existing work on this topic: the Stella Network. This feminist organization began as a mentorship collective, offering support to women in their educational and professional pursuits. The work of Stella Network[7] demonstrates how shared experiences and a dissatisfaction with the status quo can create the foundation for affective solidarity. In North Macedonia, as in many underdeveloped countries, feminist organizations, non-formal initiatives, and the civic sector become responsible for efforts to achieve gender equality in all political, economic, and social contexts, due to the lack of state support. Over the last five years, these efforts have led to improvements in institutional recognition of gender equality and strategic government responses. Signing of the Istanbul Convention in 2011, but ratifying it only in 2018, confirms the slow efforts in promoting gender equality. To add, sometimes those endeavours served more as a checkpoint to EU integration process rather than a substantial commitment to equality by the Macedonian Government (Beyer, 2021; Kotevska & Spasovska, 2019). Still, the lack of institutional and formal support is not the only factor in limiting the advancement of gender equality. As there is no institutional interpretation of intersectional understanding of gender inequality, the problem with patriarchal expectations of women and girls, financial violence, and gender-based violence remains a crucial issue in the feminist fight. In the case of financial dependence as one of the key aspects for gender inequality, women and girls get no support in correcting the current state of affairs, such as using employment and education as key aspects for empowerment. Fueling the challenge, based in people's perception, the 2021 study shows that nearly

[6] For the importance look at: Lorde, Audre. "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House." 1984. Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches. Ed Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press. 110–114. 2007. Print.
[7] More about Stella Network grounds for fighting gender inequality is on the website https://stella.mk

everyone who was surveyed[8] perceives the Macedonian society as patriarchal, in which tradition is an important and generally accepted value, by every woman (regardless of their demographic background). Therefore, relying on the feminist initiatives offer women and girls solidarity – when institutions fail to do so.

Starting from yourself and moving towards community

"Collectively generating and sharing knowledge, experiences, dances, food, water, and laughter – attuned to each other's voices and imagination – constitute collective care that counters the depletion and exhaustion that can come with political work." Sargsyan (2018)[9] Sharing experiences creates a space for solidarity and offers a long-term approach to political change for the better. Women's rights and gender equality have been championed by influential figures like Rosa Plaveva and Nakie Bajram, and many others in Macedonian history. Their legacy can serve as a more than a kind reminder, in the face of ethnic tensions and contemporary anti-gender narratives, that solidarity can and will prevail. Called as "Skopje' Rosa Luxemburg and Clara Zetkin" - Rosa Plaveva and Nakie Bajram influenced by socialist ideas, as school teachers worked together with aim to support and emancipate other women and girls against patriarchal and religious expectations and limitations. They were effective, but also punished for their bravery. They used their positionality, as they were able to get support for being outspoke and used that power – into investing in other women and girls. Rosa and Nakijes's individual move towards others, presents the importance of the feminist practices of sharing. What is the feminist perspective of this kind of knowledge, was that aside from being shared, and practiced by the women which were oppressed, it's in emancipatory and political role in engaging women as active actors of society, public life, and public spaces. Feminist praxis of knowledge sharing, seen as a resistance, is one of ways in which solidarity politics demonstrates how it creates space for engagement while challenging the current social norms based on oppressiveness.

Mentorship as a solidarity practice

When Stella Network started as mentorship initiative, it came from co-founders' experiences, vulnerability, and attempts to not let other women and girls to fall under the

[8] For more information on the women in North Macedonia see: STUDY on women in the Republic of North Macedonia: 2020 / authors Marija Topuzovska Latkovic … et al. – Skopje: Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Branch in the Republic of North Macedonia, 2020

[9] For more information access: Sargsyan, N. (2018, March 9). The Importance of Collective Care as a Feminist (Prefigurative) Political Act | Feminism and Gender Democracy. Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung. https://feminism-boell.org/en/2018/03/09/importance-collective-care-feminist-prefigurative-political-act

same traditional gender roles and societal expectations. In terms of the affective solidarity, mentoring is an effective tool of achieving gender equality and empowering women. Mentorship gives women and girls the support, guidance, and opportunities they need to advance and make a difference in their personal and professional life, while simultaneously questioning traditional power dynamics and supporting more inclusive leadership styles. Aside from being important aspect of promoting gender equality and liberation of women, feminist mentorship supports women's professional and personal development by breaking down gender barriers and providing access to networks and opportunities that may not have been available otherwise. How it relates to the affective solidarity, is that feminist reflexivity allows the women who want to share their knowledge, and become mentors, have experienced the challenges in academia, professional sector, politics, which women still fight to change. Those challenges are systemic and in the lack of systemic solutions, solidarity plays a role in disrupting the patriarchal norms. Therefore, mentorship relationships create a safe and supportive space for women to discuss challenges and concerns they may face in their personal and professional lives. By prioritizing empathy, emotional intelligence, and relationship-building, feminist mentorship can create a culture of leadership that is more equitable, diverse, and supportive. Women and girls can obtaine vital insights and direction from individuals who have previously achieved success in their respective areas through mentoring relationships and be encouraged to pursue leadership roles themselves.

However, the whole process is not easy, or goes without two-way street labour. Why this is important to note, is that solidarity presented in the alternative forms of resistive, such as offering support, mutual aid, sharing knowledge and mentorship, serves to fill out the gap which societies should systemically address. As hooks (2006) noted, the 'love ethics allows "our concern about politics of domination and our capacity to care about the oppression and exploitation of others" (p.244) to guide us on the journey for political change. To support that, there have been substantial advances regarding socio-economic wellbeing due to feminist interventions focusing on how solidarity and care are being integrated into practise and theory (Tronto, 2013; Krasny et al., 2022).

The importance of mapping out the historical aspects of solidarity praxis, while also recognizing the current solidarity forms and tools, help us acknowledge the human potential and willingness to change, and challenge the culture of hierarchy, oppression, and inequality. When bell hooks speak about learning from the community (2006), it comes from a place of love, with clear guidance on how to continue building on the community's potential to bear the responsibility of creating a more just futurity.

Roadmap of solidarity

Building on the feminist legacy and activism where creating networks of solidarity and shared knowledge was key process in resistance against oppressive systems, instead of a conclusion, I offer guidance – and share my knowledge of the importance of incorporating the values of solidarity, as a political act:

- Join a mentorship network or create a mentorship practice in your circle, reach out to younger peers or maybe someone in need of support and guidance

- Use strategies for collective care as the process of commoning – according to Federici and Caffentzi (2019) means - the sharing itself, the solidarity relationships, and the willingness to invest in social forms that lead to re-building interdependence (p.94).

- Create possibilities or support Mutual aid (Kropotkin; Spade) in your home, public spaces, neighbourhoods and globally

- Support GBV survivors, and marginalized groups

- Use your knowledge and skills in developing community tool-sharing initiatives, which provide access to tools and equipment that may be costly or impossible for others to purchase on their own.

- Join or create a group of farmers organizing to share resources and knowledge to support sustainable and community-based agriculture.

- Join people or groups who are banding together to provide free meals, supplies, and assistance to homeless people in their town.

- Volunteer in your community to support childcare, transportation, and other assistance to those in need, such as the elderly or disabled.

- Stay informed and critical.

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60th anniversary of the Skopje earthquake, the city of international solidarity

Aleksandar Andonov[1]

Introduction

The tragic event of the earthquake happened on 26th of July 1963 at 05 hour and 17 minutes, when Skopje was hit by a devastating earthquake with a magnitude of 6.1 on the Richter scale. The tragedy destroyed Skopje completely. The earthquake took more than 1 070 lives and left permanent mark on our city. The earthquake was a great disaster for Skopje and its citizens. The people of Skopje were in desperate situation. In those time of desperation and sorrow the entire world was eager to help. In this article we want to remember the people, countries and organizations who wholeheartedly helped our city.

The help that arrived immediately after the earthquake was necessary in order to save a lot of lives and ease the pain of the citizens of Skopje. The versatile help that arrived in a form of tangible goods and people who were united from all over the world and Skopje gave Skopje a new nickname “The city of International Solidarity”(Богдановска, 2022, pp.24-36). In this article we will refer to countries that were the first to send the most necessary materials for the affected city, the people who were fully sympathized with the tragedy of our city and who made tremendous effort in organizing the help from all over the world.

What happened on 26th of July 1963 in Skopje was a great disaster. Many lives were ended and the city was completely destroyed. But the desire of the world to help Skopje breathed a new spirit into the collapsed city, a spirit that made it a city of world solidarity. A city in the reconstruction of which everyone selflessly invested and thus helped Skopje to survive its greatest tragedy.

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60th anniversary of the Skopje earthquake, the city of international solidarity

After the first hit that occurred at 05 hours and 17 minutes two strong vibrations followed shortly afterwards, one only three minutes after the first one and a third one in 05 hours and 32 minutes. The power of the earthquake cut-off Skopje from all communication, almost everyone was home in those early morning hours. This further complicated the situation, given the large number of destroyed buildings.

One of the first reports that was sent from destroyed Skopje, was by Jovan Popovski. He was a journalist and that morning accidentally found a phone with who he announced the tragedy in Belgrade (Поповски, 2003, pp.49-53). The first hours after the earthquake were filled with dead people on the streets and desperate cries for help. In the city there was lack of everything, a help from all over the Federation and other countries was in great need, as soon as possible. The first needs that the citizens of Skopje had were medical material, tents, a field hospital and people to clear the ruins.

Yugoslav People's Army was immediately sent in Skopje, 17 000 army officials were engaged in helping Skopje. The formations of the armies that were closest to Skopje, such as Kumanovo, Nish, Shtip, immediately headed towards Skopje, but had difficulties arriving in the city due to the destroyed infrastructure. Later, all Yugoslav republics sent units composed of engineers, paramedics, doctors and other necessary personnel (SCA,79-1, p.464).

One of the first actions of the Secretariat of foreign affairs of Yugoslavia was to form a group that was going to communicate with embassies in order to organize and prioritize the needed help. it was established on 27th of July and immediately started to communicate with the embassies (SCA,79-1-1). As a result of this communication the first problems were immediately resolved. Those were related to provision of the most necessary needs, such as field hospitals that were sent from Greece and the US army. Lawrence Eagleburger[2] (1930-2011) who was in a constant communication with the committee quickly made contact with the American army, stationed in West Germany. In the night of 27th the required field hospital was sent with a plane on the Belgrade

[2] In the time of the earthquake Eagleburger was an economic attaché at the US Embassy in Yugoslavia.

airport from Berlin. The hospital was deployed near Kumanovo with a capacity of 125 beds. It contained a modern laboratory, an operating room, medical instruments, sanitary material, beds and everything needed for full use (SCA,79-1, pp.637-641). The day after the deployment of the field hospital Mr.Eagleburger was contacted by the committee that the hospital is in lack of blood plasma and medications. Eagleburger immediately organized the shipment (SCA,79-1, pp.644-646). Greek army on the same day sent another field hospital with capacity for 50 beds, the hospital was deployed near Katlanovo (SCA,79-1, p.642). On 29th of July the committee organized meetings with delegations of Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Hungary, France, Finland, USA, Italy, Belgium, Great Britain, Canada, Greece, Austria, Tunis and Norway. All of the countries pledged help and quick reaction of their authorities (SCA,79-1, pp.635-646). One the ardent problem was the issue of tents - around 150,000 people were forced to spent the night outside because of the many ruined buildings. The committee immediately requested tents and their gathering on one place. In a quick action, enough tents where gathered. The first days the help that was so desperate for Skopje arrived quickly and mainly from the countries that are close. The Yugoslavian authorities quickly started to clear the ruins and to give assistance to the wounded. Help in army personnel was also sent by the United States and the Soviet Union. The US Army in Europe was immediately sent to Skopje by order of President Kennedy (1917-1963). The Soviet army provide an engineer company that started to build infrastructural objects. This was a first meet of the two armies after the start of the "Cold War" and the Cuban crisis that happened only few months before the earthquake. The first days the crucial help was delivered, Skopje became the city of solidarity, all over the world the press was full with stories and pictures of Skopje tragic event (Trajanovski, 2021, pp.14-17). The countries, various organizations and individuals started to gather more materials for a quick recovery of Skopje. For this purpose, the committee changed its name into a committee for organizing long term international help from Skopje (SCA,79-1-52). The committee quickly organized consultations with experts in the field of recovery. The experts where from various countries, Japan, USA, USSSR and the United Nations. On 5th of August, the committee organized a visit of 56 diplomatic representatives in Skopje (SCA,79-1, p.672). Most of the donations came from the USA, the UN and the USSR.

The United Nations were very active organization in helping Skopje. Only few days after the earthquake UNICEF requested pictures from the damaged cultural objects. The most

remarkable damged cultural objects were the Peoples theathre, House of culture “Koco Racin”, the building of the University of Skopje, which housed the Faculty of Philosophy, Law and Economics, the Radio-television Skopje studio and several kindergardens, elementary and high schools were completly destroyed (SCA,79-1, p.648). Three representatives of the United Nation came in Skopje on 2nd of August (SCA,79-1, p.665). Two of them Ward and Weissman as United Nations technical assistance representative and expert from UNICEF in charge of making full report of the damages (SCA,79-1, p.662). On 11th of August 1963 on ECOSOC session the 36th resolution was adopted. The resolution made urgent call to all of the governments and organizations of UN to prioritize Skopje in delivering help (SCA,79-1, p.695). From 26th of July until 26th of August the UN delivered help with engaging expert for building in an earthquake area, Jean Despeyroux, who spent more than 10 days in Skopje completing a complete study, which enabled fast repairments of the building. FAO helped with $1 million in food, EFTA sent a team to establish long-term recovery goals. A special UN body was hired to communicate with the Yugoslav committee for organizing international aid (SCA,79-1, p.713). After the first five days, the Yugoslav Committee for the Organization of International Aid began to ask the countries for donations in the form of prefabricated houses, units for the production of temporary dwellings and residential buildings, mechanization, industrial machines. These demands represented a great expense, but thanks to the selfless help shared with the citizens of Skopje, many lives were saved and the reconstruction of the city began immediately.

The aid that was provided by the Soviet Union was of exceptional importance for Skopje. Already in the first days, the Yugoslav committee for organizing international aid contacted the Soviet embassy, which promised all kinds of help. At the beginning of August, an engineering military unit arrived in Skopje, which was very capable and managed to restore in a short time a multitude of infrastructural facilities, which solved the burning problem of access to the affected city. This unit remained in Skopje from August to December 1963. Of exceptional importance is the scientific study made by Professor Medved, which referred to the seismological conditions and a detailed urban plan for reconstruction of the city of Skopje (Милески, 1968, p.105). The Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev (1894-1971), accompanied by the President of Yugoslavia Josip Broz Tito (1892-1980), personally visited Skopje immediately after the earthquake. Total Soviet aid amounted to 2,606,744,317 Yugoslav dinars (SCA, 79-11, p.655). This number includes the aid received in materials and other means.

Assistance from United States and the role of Lawrence Eagleburger

Thanks to the engagement of Lawrence S. Eagleburger, the donations that were provided by the US government, the US Red Cross, the US military and various private benefactors, was quickly organized and sent to Skopje. A person that helped a lot was Lawrence Eagleburger, diplomat in the U.S embassy in Belgrade in the time when the earthquake occurred in Skopje. Eagleburger in that time made a tremendous effort to organize and distribute the donations that were coming all over the world due to the tragedy that occurred. The citizens of Skopje deserve to know his role and everything that he did for our city sixty yearsafter.

In the days that immediately followed the earthquake, Lawrence Eagleburger traveled to Skopje several times, both for the entire duration of the crisis, as well as during his stay in Yugoslavia. As an economic attaché he was in communication with the committee for organizing international aid. In the first days after the earthquake, the residents of Skopje, in addition to the need for a field hospital, also had a serious need for tents. Thanks to Lawrence Eagleburger engagement the American embassy donated 250 tents and a field hospital was enabled (SCA, 79-1, pp.685-687). Clothes, food, blood plasma, medicines, sanitary material, penicillin, intervention sets, bandages, stretchers, gaiters, blankets, sleeping bags, accessories, furniture, electric ovens, construction machines and more materials were also required This type of aid from the US arrived in large quantities until the beginning of August. Care Company sent $30,000 in food donations, Sooatab Leaf Tobacco sent $25,000 to rebuild the tobacco industry and later additional $30,000, Hilswerke construction company sent 39 people and reinforced concrete cutting machines, which were extremely needed to clear the ruins (SCA,79-1-pp. 662,676,668). During the next two years, the USA will participate with great intensity in the reconstruction of Skopje and the arrival of international aid, which lasted until 1977. During August, with the help of the USA, prefabricated houses were built in Skopje for more than 4,000 residents, the largest number of these houses were located in today's "Shuto Orizari" neighborhood (SCA, 79-1-pp.826-828). In the next two years, until the end of his term as the economic attaché of the US Embassy in Yugoslavia, Eagleburger took several more steps that significantly helped the reconstruction of Skopje. He quickly made a commitment and managed to secure

prefabricated houses of the “Butler” type for their installation in “Taftalidze” and “Shuto Orizari” (Icev, 2021, pp.189-194). He had a great understanding of the tragedy that befell Skopje and successfully secured donations of much-needed building materials on several occasions. During 1964, Lawrence Eagleburger managed to reconcile the terms of aid and loans between the US government and Yugoslavia, creating excellent conditions for Yugoslavia to receive favorable loans and many donations to speed up the reconstruction of Skopje. On 17th of November, Eagleburger, at his own request, held a meeting with representatives of the Federal Secretariat of Finance. At this meeting, Eagleburger fully respected the requests of the representatives of the secretariat and strongly appealed to his government to achieve these conditions. The agreement, which was signed on 13th of September 1965, provided for the Freeman offer, which included construction of new buildings, and at the insistence of Eagleburger, the US government increased the fund by half a million Yugoslav dinars. Furthermore, this agreement successfully included a favorable loan that the Yugoslav government took from the US government. During this engagement, Lawrence Eagleburger delivered a request to the president of the city hall, Stavrev, that one of the streets in Skopje should be named after an American president. It was decided that the street should be named after the 32nd president of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882-1945). Because of this energetic engagement, Eagleburger was nicknamed “Lawrence of Macedonia” by the other diplomatic missions in Yugoslavia (Jakovina, 2020, p.327.). The total aid that was sent by the USA for the reconstruction of Skopje was 2,262,430,189 Yugoslav dinars (SCA, 79-11, pp. 538-597). The earthquake in Skopje killed 3 American citizens, an officer in the American army, with his wife and child were buried under the ruins of the “Macedonia” hotel, which was completely demolished.

Conclusion

The catastrophe that befell Skopje in 1963 had enormous consequences for the city. The large number of killed residents, destroyed buildings, the impact on the city's economy, the disrupted normal life, the lack of basic conditions, all meant great pain for the residents of Skopje. Thanks to the expressed empathy from all over the world, Skopje was able to recover quickly and overcome the pain. A large number of countries selflessly and actively invested in helping the reconstruction. Albania, Algeria, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Great Britain, Venezuela, Ghana, Greece, Denmark, East and West Germany, Israel, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Iran, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Cambodia, Canada, Cyprus, Colombia, Mali, Morocco, Mexico, Mongolia, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Northern Rhodesia, USSR, Finland, France, Netherlands, Chile, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, Sweden and Spain are the countries that helped the reconstruction the most. Skopje honored all these cities and countries that helped by naming the new streets after the places from where the help arrived. Skopje and the residents of Skopje will forever remember this tragedy, but most of all they will remember the help that arrived from all over the world in the most difficult moments for our city. The epithet that Skopje received after the earthquake as the city of solidarity is fully justified, because in those difficult days all thoughts and prayers were directed towards Skopje.

As a responsible citizen of Skopje, I believe that expressing gratitude to all those who helped my city in the moments when it was experiencing the most difficult situations, is necessary. Skopje does not forget the tragedy, but neither does it forget those who helped it survive its most difficult days. Our gratitude to those who helped will be eternal and through articles like this we will preserve the memory of all benefactors of the city of Skopje.

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Volunteer work and solidarity: "We" works in networks

Tanja Paneva[1]

Introduction

This essay addresses volunteer work and its contribution to the creation of social ties and networks as the base to enhance empathy, trust and solidarity. The particular focus is on non-formal volunteer activities as they are often not recognized and valued enough as a form of active civic engagement that moves society forward through daily actions. Theoretically, the essay builds on the views on Putnam and the importance of social capital into creating the sense of togetherness that not only encourages cooperation, but also facilitates better performance of public institutions. In addition, the essay briefly calls upon the utilitarian collective principle for maximization of the total well-being with taking into consideration inter-personal well-being; or in other words, it points out the impact of non-formal volunteer work to the common good and the effect of developing "I" into "we" aimed to collective benefit. The essay consists of three parts; the first gives the definition of volunteer work, explains the volunteering types, the benefits and produced values; the second section delves into the theoretical ground of building networks and the role of volunteer work in social capital formation; followed by examples of non-formal volunteer initiatives from the local context in the third part that can serve as a base to facilitate a system change or support social development. The goal of this essay is to depict social activities that have not been labeled as volunteer work so they are better recognized in the future as potential civic initiatives. Such forms of civic engagement may encourage individuals to lead changes starting from their micro environments. In the long-term, the volunteer work should not be considered solely as an activity that repairs systems imperfections, but should be recognized as citizens' contribution to organization of public life. This may eventually lead to wider networks of public-private-people partnerships that support sustainable development.

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Definition and types of volunteer work

Today I helped an elderly person in carrying the bags from the market, you dedicated your time and effort in making bird feeders for the public park, and our neighbor took care for the greenery in front of our building. Each of us strengthened the thread of our networked community. Although some of us were maybe not aware of the formal labeling of our actions, we still made it since it is the way we do it in our community. Countless examples of this type we do and perform daily while unconsciously creating social ties and enhancing the sense of togetherness. More of these actions build stronger communities meaning more vocal communities that urge for accountable and responsive public institutions. Therefore, it is important to recognize activities and initiatives that do not formally fall within the realm of structured volunteerism, civic engagement, or activism, yet contribute to a large extent to establishing social networks based on trust, empathy and solidarity. To better spot and acknowledge non-formal types of citizens' engagement, it is good to start with understanding the wider purpose of volunteer activities. Namely, volunteering is any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group or cause (Wilson, 2000, p. 215). In that regard, multiple intrinsic and extrinsic factors relate to the motivation to volunteer. Motives can be altruistic, mirrored in the selfless dedication to the well-being of others; instrumental, as in the case of young people that strive to learn new skills and gain work-related experience (Smith et al., 2010, p. 69); or simply expressed in the need to connect with the community and establish relationships with a certain degree of familiarity (Degli Antoni, 2009, p. 361). These motives are not excluding each other, so the motivation to volunteer usually consists of variety of intertwined factors, meaning that a student can volunteer in the translation department of the local library to acquire new skills, but also because of the commitment to make books accessible to everyone. In aim to be effective and nurture the sense of belonging, the outcomes of volunteer work should produce the value of mutual trust and support based on the willingness to contribute to the common good even in cases when one's personal material gain is absent. This, on the other hand, does not preclude volunteers from benefiting from their work (Wilson, 2000, p. 215). On the contrary, benefits of volunteer work are two-fold, referring both to the individual and the community. Individual benefits are found in enhanced academic performance, personal skills improvement and developed sense of civic responsibility (Astin & Sax, 1998, as cited in Smith et al., 2010, p. 69); as well as in positive effects on mental health relying upon the integrative role of volunteering that increases self-esteem, self-confidence and overall life satisfaction (Wilson, 2000, p.215). In other words,

well-developed individuals create strong communities and vice versa, strong and resilient communities have the ability to support individuals. When it comes to types of volunteer work, individuals can take part in structured, formal volunteer activities provided by either public or private organizations, or non-formal volunteer activities performed directly without intermediaries. Both volunteering types can advocate for community projects of manifold areas (e.g., environmental protection, gender equality, inclusive sports and education, animal welfare, disaster relief, charity work, etc.) that foster social inclusion and encourage networks formation. The first type, formal volunteer work, refers to activities implemented by associations and organizations driven by a common goal or interest (see more in Wilson, 2000; Smith et al., 2010). In that context, formal volunteers usually have a membership or express an affiliation to a certain organization or association. Non-formal volunteer activities, on the other hand, establish direct, people to people, people to environment or people to community relationships that strengthen community networks. These activities often occur when conditions require prompt citizens' action for questions of significant importance in their immediate surroundings. Although there is no organization in the role of mediator between the volunteer and the activity, still, non-formal volunteering does not exclude group formation driven by a common public goal as an end purpose. Such groups can act in informal manner, exist till the given goal is achieved, become the base for future association formation, or take further forms of structured civic engagement. When a group of individuals comes together to preserve the natural balance of their habitat and prevent the building of a nearby hotel, they begin to undertake organized actions in forms of protests, petitions, public consultations and other means of communication with local authorities. These organized forms of action can result into addressing community requirements to the political system through a local referendum or other means of civic participation urging for a certain revision or decision change to be made. At the same time, these activities have a very strong impact on building networked communities as its constituents, feeling seen and heard, become directly involved into the decision-making process. Additionally, the effect of a commonly achieved goal strengthens the sense of trust and belonging, and the mutual interaction improves the community - public institutions communication (see more in Putnam, 1995; Luoma-aho, 2009). However, the outcomes of non-formal volunteering do not always have to cause a large scale system change. Community transformation can indeed start on an individual, micro-level through daily actions of kindness, support, interest for the public goods and the well-being of others. Expressed in utilitarian terms, maximization of total well-being is righteous when achieved with comparison of the inter-personal well-being (Hausman et al., 2009, pp. 109-120) meaning that actions and choices of individuals, organizations or the government should tend to bring the greatest amount of good for the greatest number (Driver, 2009, p.1), thus adding to the collective social welfare.

Volunteer work and social capital formation

It has been confirmed that people's connections to others create opportunities for economic and political participation, enable access to resources that might otherwise be out of reach, strengthen social ties and personal well-being (Bourdieu, 1984; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1995 as cited in Helsper and van Deursen, 2017, p. 701). Those connections, social networks based on the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness, represent the formation base of social capital (Putnam, 1993, as cited in Luoma-aho, 2009, p. 6). In its earliest conceptualizations, dating back to the work of Marx, Durkheim and Weber, social capital has been understood in different ways, as capital from a social point of view; resource of the community; social commonwealth and peoples' social condition (Coppe et al., 2022, p. 4). Other sources consider the first known use of the concept of social capital in the work of Hanifan (1916, as cited in Putnam, 2000, p. 19) who places the good will, fellowship, sympathy and the social interactions among the constituents of the social unit as the accumulation base of social capital that eventually leads to substantial improvement of living conditions in the whole community. In the later systematic conceptualizations of the term, Bourdieu (1985, as cited in Siisiäinen, 2000, pp. 183-184) relates social capital with the theoretical ideas on class and power relations and identifies three dimensions of capital each with its own relationship to class: economic, cultural and social capital. In the work of Putnam (1993, as cited in Siisiäinen, 2000, p. 184), contemporary scholar known for his study on social capital, the concept of social capital expresses the sociological essence of communal vitality that has three components: moral obligations and norms, social values with emphasis on trust, and social networks with emphasis on voluntary associations. While Bourdieu's approach on theorizing social capital is individualistic in its perspective, rooted on the structuralist tradition and made from the point of view of the actors engaged in certain social relations in pursuit of their interests (Siisiäinen, 2000, p. 190), Putnam acknowledges the collective stance and the larger societal impacts of social capital (Luoma-aho, 2009, p. 17). This individual-collective dichotomy corresponds to the two overarching conceptualizations of social capital that differentiate between individual social capital (network-based social capital), understood as a potential benefit

for individuals embedded in social interactions; and collective social capital (also called civic capital) understood as a collective good shaped by the sum of individual behaviors and rooted in the shared culture of a collectivity (Coppe et al., 2022, p. 2). Encouraging the ability and raising the importance of individuals to build networks (individual social capital) that are not only quantitative in their nature, but produce mutually shared values as trust and support (collective social capital) brings Bourdieu's and Putnam's views at the intersection of social participation. Furthermore, Putnam (1995, p. 225) assumes that dense networks of interaction probably broaden participants' sense of self, developing the "I" into the "we" or, in other words, enhancing the participant's taste for collective benefits. This transformation of the "I" into the "we" does not necessarily have to mean transferring individual into collective freedoms, or accommodating individual choice for the sake of the collective choices, but it can mean cultivating the need to freely and voluntarily choose to dedicate part of our free time to a communal cause. Moreover, the solution to the problem of common action and opportunism presupposes the development of voluntary collective action, and it is connected to the inherited social capital in the community (Putnam, 1993 as cited in Siisiäinen, 2000, para. 2). Therefore, more research nowadays is being conducted on the capacity of volunteerism to produce social capital understood in the meaning of cooperative network of relations. Findings suggest that formations of social capital in relation to volunteering depend on the intrinsic and extrinsic volunteer motives, and the extent till which ones' motivation (functional benefits) has been fulfilled (Stukas, 2005, p. 16; Degli Antoni, 2009, p. 368). In that regard, intrinsic motivations, in terms of ideal motivations, enable people to create relations characterized by a significant degree of familiarity measured by the activities which characterize the relations started through associations; by contrast, extrinsic motivations, and in particular the decision to join an association in order to increase the number of acquaintances or friends, promote the creation of networks from a quantitative point of view, with the absence of relations created on a particular degree of confidence (Degli Antoni, 2009, p. 368). In practical terms, strong social networks, in terms of quality and higher levels of social capital established on trust, enable the creation of mechanisms that can result in better governance, efficient public services provision and overall sustainable social development.

Local context changemakers

Examples of voluntary participation and networks formation on individual and collective basis are often present in the local context. One of the most recent stories of solidarity was initiated by citizens from the village Rzhanichino in Skopje, concerned about the storks not being able to safely construct their nests on the electricity pillars in the village. In aim to help, the citizens contacted the local animal protection organization 'Anima Mundi' that initiated a request to the electricity distribution company EVN to make an intervention. In a couple of days the company put up metal construction that enabled the birds to safely build their nests (K.I., 2023; Facebook page Anima Mundi, 2023). This example depicts the joint citizen-association-enterprise collaboration that encourages the spirit of solidarity for all beings in our immediate surroundings. Another example is the non-formal initiative of environmental protection enthusiasts who created the Facebook group 'Suma vo gradot' ('Forest in the City'), dedicated to crowd-planting and urban gardening in Skopje. Within the group, members exchange which seeds they currently have and coordinate public locations where new plants or trees can be planted in aim to preserve the local eco-balance. In reference to other citizens' initiatives, 2017 was the year to mark the opposition of citizens against opening mines in the southeastern part of the country. To prevent environmental danger posed by the mines, citizens from the municipalities of Bogdanci, Bosilovo, Valandovo, Gevgelija, Dojran and Novo Selo came together to form local initiatives ('Save Bogdanci', 'Save Gevgelija', 'Save Valandovo', 'Youth Against Stuka-Ilovica Mine', 'Healthy Valley') and act in organized forms of protests and blockades (Stojadinovic, 2020). Acting upon the citizens' initiative, the Municipal Councils of each of the concerned municipalities decided to announce local referendums to send the community message to central level authorities. Besides the low turnout in some of the referendums and the contested legal procedure by the Constitutional Court for the referendums that succeeded to pass the threshold (decision number 72/2017), these self-organized citizens' initiatives represent a symbol of communities coming together and sending a strong response to delay or fully prevent government's decision. Their effort resulted in terminated concession agreement for one of the mines, and long, still ongoing, Administrative Court procedure for the case of the other mine (Trajkov, 2017; 2022).

These examples are only a few among the many actions we can undertake on a daily basis to form qualitative networks and support a common cause. On individual level, each person can take the lead and propose an initiative for a question that matters to them personally, from building shelter houses for animals without a home, organizing a fundraiser with homemade products, to simply visiting elderly neighbors to support them in keeping up with the latest technology developments. If family and neighborhood are considered to be the bastions of social capital (Putnam 1993, as cited in Siisiäinen, 2000, para. 9) then it can be stated that network formations could start within individual's micro environments. Furthermore, individual cases can set up the foundation for further network development, and the multiplication of individual actions that promote empathy, solidarity and support can set the standard for mutually shared community values. These examples of non-formal volunteer engagements are the catalyst of change especially in times of apathy or decreased trust in public institutions. However, individual or collective non-formal volunteer activities should not permanently replace or take over the work and responsibilities of public institutions. One initiative can serve as the base or the alarm to take action, but it is on the public institutions to further support or facilitate the process. People from a rural community could support public institutions in mapping the village infrastructure for building a flood resistant system, but it is institutional responsibility to take over and implement the project in a timely manner based on citizens' needs. Non-formal volunteer initiatives and citizens' engagement without institutional support in the long- term can cause the opposite effect of losing trust in institutions and the system. In addition, non-formal volunteer citizen initiatives can serve as a base for a wider network of cooperation between people, private or public organizations, formal volunteer associations, companies and public institutions. This coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit promotes the sense of togetherness and solidarity and at the same time develops the sense for civic responsibility, people to people, and people to the environment as a whole. In certain cases, the immediate results of non-formal volunteer activities cannot be measured in standard quantitative units of numbers and percentages, but their effects can be indeed assessed by measuring the level of trust within communities and towards the public institutions or the system in general. Development of profound social connections can indeed contribute to healthy, prosperous and sustainable communities.

Conclusion

To sum up, both volunteering types, formal and non-formal, engage in activities that can result in outcomes of wider benefit for the community. Furthermore, when based on altruistic motives, volunteering advances social connections, encourages networks formation, supports accumulation of social capital and facilitates the process of building trust within the community. Still, the goal of this essay was to recall forms of non-formal volunteer engagement and situations in which one does not need to wait on intermediaries to take action or to move things of common interest forward. Every day, there is an opportunity for individual or collective action for showing empathy and solidarity. Knowing that every time we initiate a process, individually or collectively, that contributes to a common purpose, we contribute to strengthening social ties, to accumulation of social capital and development of more resourceful and resilient communities as an end result. And it is not something we do because of expecting anything in return or just because we are in more powerful position, but because of the mutual benefits that are multiplying through more interactions in the created trustworthy and dense networked connections. Establishing a community with a strong civic base would make our communities stronger in our position to communicate with local or central government bodies, adding to sustainable and healthy personal and communal development. Through repeated patterns of joint action we can start changing the mindset from "what is not mine is not of my concern" to development of communal awareness and protection of questions of our common interest. Can we do it?

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Overcoming disasters through kindness

Izabel Eritsyan
Aliki Vidouri

Introduction

This paper explores the concept of solidarity through a case study of Yugoslavia's aid to Armenia following the earthquake in 1988. Solidarity can be defined as a deep feeling of unity and support among individuals or groups, especially during difficult times. The concept of solidarity can be observed in the way communities come together to support each other during natural disasters. The Armenian earthquake was a national disaster after which the Soviet Union government permitted international rescuers and aid, leading to the formation of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) and the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) to improve international disaster response efforts. It was in this context that the people of Yugoslavia at the time, a country that no longer exists, responded with overwhelming solidarity, sending aid and rescue teams to help their fellow humans in Armenia. This act of kindness and support from Yugoslavia towards Armenia forged a meaningful international relationship between the two countries, rooted in the shared values of compassion and solidarity. The bond between the people of the two countries during this time exemplifies the power of solidarity to transcend borders and bring people together in times of need.

Deadly Earthquake

On the 7th of December 1988, a 6.9 magnitude earthquake struck the northern part of the Armenian Republic in what was at the time still part of the Soviet Union. Considered one of the strongest earthquakes in the region in 80 years, it destroyed nearly 60 villages, and the Soviet Union estimated that 25,000 people died — although the unofficial death toll was believed to be much higher (NADLER, 2007). The aid and support that Yugoslavia provided to Armenia after the devastating earthquake, left a lasting impression on the Armenian people. A number of countries from around the world, including most of

the republics of the then Soviet Union and many individuals, sent humanitarian aid to Armenia. Despite the ongoing Cold War at the time and the Soviet Union, the West also provided support to Soviet Armenia (NCBI, 2019). This showed the power of international solidarity and the willingness of countries and people to help each other in times of need. The earthquake that occurred caused significant destruction and loss of life. In response, numerous countries and organizations around the world offered humanitarian aid and support to the Armenian people. North Macedonia, at the time, was a part of Yugoslavia, and its government and people also provided support, assistance, and showed solidarity in the aftermath of the earthquake. The response was at the time coordinated by the Yugoslav Red Cross, which mobilized resources and volunteers to help with the relief effort. The authorities of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, then a part of a federal unit within Yugoslavia, also dispatched a team of medical professionals to Armenia to offer medical assistance and aid (AP News, 1988). Additionally, a significant amount of humanitarian aid, including blankets, food, medicine, and other supplies, were sent to aid the Armenian people during this difficult time. The help was transported via a military transport aircraft that landed in Yerevan. The resources and the aid provided consisted of a combination of resources provided by the government and voluntary donations from various organizations, individuals, and companies ("1988: The International Aid").

The Plane Crash

Tragically, one of Yugoslavia's airplanes carrying humanitarian aid crashed during this aid mission, killing all 7 people on board, while trying to land at Yerevan airport ("LA Times", 1988). Unfortunately, two Macedonian pilots were on board the aircraft carrying humanitarian aid, resulting in the loss of both pilots.[1] Despite this, Yugoslavia continued to provide support to Armenia, which was greatly appreciated by the Armenian people. Among the many countries that provided assistance, North Macedonia stood out as a true friend to Armenia during its time of need.

The tragedy of the airplane crash highlighted the risks and sacrifices that aid workers face when providing assistance to those in need. Now, in the location of the crash, stands a statue serving as a remembrance of the help provided by Yugoslavia, and the tragic deaths of the people on board (AP News, 1988). The aircraft used to transport the aid was an

[1] This information was obtained from a interview conducted with Oganes Eritsyan, former minister of transport and aviation, military and commercial pilot, and a doctor of psychology.

Ilyushin Il-76, which is a large military transport aircraft capable of carrying heavy cargo over long distances. The plane carried more than 40 tons of humanitarian aid, including medical supplies, food, clothing, and other essentials (NADLER, 1988).

Armenia and North Macedonia share a special bond due to their historical relationship stemming from North Macedonia's aid to Armenia during the devastating earthquake that struck the country in 1988. Yugoslavia, and by extension North Macedonia was one of the first countries to provide assistance to Armenia, sending a team of doctors, engineers, and rescue workers to aid in the rescue and recovery efforts (Armenia, 1988). This gesture of support and solidarity left a lasting impression on the Armenian people, and the two countries have continued to maintain friendly relations in the decades since. The support provided by Yugoslavia helped ease the suffering of the Armenian people and fostered closer ties between the two countries.

Saving the Victims

Furthermore, volunteer work played a critical role in the relief efforts following the airplane crash. The selflessness and dedication of these volunteers during a time of crisis was a powerful example of international solidarity and kindness and left a lasting impression on the Armenian people. Local volunteers worked tirelessly to search for survivors and provide aid to the injured, while international organizations sent teams of experts to provide medical care and other forms of assistance. Many volunteers also helped with the cleanup and recovery efforts in the weeks and months following the crash including 190 men sent from France. They worked to clear debris, rebuild damaged structures, and provide emotional support to those who had lost loved ones in the disaster ("USSR Earthquake Dec 1988 UNDRO Situation Reports 1-14 - Armenia"). Overall, the volunteer efforts in the aftermath of the Armenia airplane crash demonstrate the power of community and the resilience of the human spirit in the face of tragedy. Through their selfless actions, volunteers helped to bring comfort, hope, and healing to those affected by this devastating event.

After the earthquake, many Armenians decided to share their stories. One such example is Arusyak Simonyan, a film director, that made a film about the event, in which she

talks about the loss of her mother during the earthquake, and how her father was digging graves for his fellow countrymen. Reflecting on the documentary she notes: “From the moment I enrolled in theater school, my friends knew that I was going to shoot a film about the earthquake.” (Harutyunyan, 2022). This is one story of the many (un) told about the victims of earthquakes, and that is precise to whom the director dedicated the film.

In conclusion, the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia made a significant contribution to providing humanitarian aid and support to the Armenian people in the aftermath of the 1988 earthquake. Despite the tragic loss of the two pilots, the determination and resilience of the Macedonian government and citizens ensured that the aid was delivered to those in need. The incident demonstrated the power of international cooperation and solidarity in alleviating suffering and promoting relief efforts in times of crisis.

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SOLIDARITY

FROM OVERCOMING CRISIS TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

60

SKOPJE
REMEMBERS
1963-2023