

# Monitoring the Discourse of the Presidential Candidates as a Peace Building Factor **POSITIVE PEACE**

Preliminary report



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*Oblivion can be done with wise thoughts  
to conquer the spirit,  
and with kind words to pardon his ear,  
to lift the hearts of the people,  
to dispel the doubts of the judge,  
give decisive advice,  
to protect the innocent,  
to help the needy,  
to rescue the annulled,  
to release the persecuted,  
to summon the deceived,  
to lift the weak,  
to humiliate the insolent,  
to overpower opponents,  
to win over the reluctant,  
to transform the ancients,  
to shut down the outcasts,  
to uphold justice,  
to bring down injustice  
with the same force to defend and attack.*

Cicero, I-st century BC

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## Subject of the research

The subject of this research is political discourse, ie. the vocabulary used during the presidential campaign by presidential candidates in correlation with the factors for the development of positive peace.

The monitoring process began with the official start of the presidential campaign. This is a preliminary report only and does not contain all data until the final report is published after the monitoring is completed.

Peace is only established and regulated through democratic policy-making processes. All politicians should be held accountable if their rhetoric points to or calls for conflict, as the conflict itself implies causing fear and intimidation rather than respect for human rights and democracy. Many factors of social, economic, political, cultural, geographical, historical and other nature influence the establishment and maintenance of peace.

According to the Institute for Economics and Peace (<http://economicsandpeace.org>), positive peace can be described as **creating an optimal environment** in which human potential can be developed. Further, positive peace is defined as a **set of attitudes**, institutions and structures that create and maintain peaceful societies.

## Objectives of the research

Policies are key milestones that every political party designs within its work program. However, they all fail to meet them as they increasingly focus on the political environment and design them according to the processes in the country. The purpose of the research paper is to show the true relation and influence of the rhetoric used, that is, to try to extract semantics based on the discourses used in such advocacy steps. The purpose is to investigate how one or another political party referred to the same policy and how it reacted, whether or not it supported it, with different rhetoric.

In this sense, it is quite interesting how the rhetoric is used by various party representatives/supporters and members, and especially by the presidential candidates in this period behind the political parties. The research aims to discover and explain political discourse, lexica and elements of rhetoric that indirectly influence the development of positive peace in the country. After all, at what level should there be political accountability for the views expressed, as the failure to implement the policies they advocate through the views expressed should be taken as a responsible and accountable measure for the politicians involved and the candidates they represent.

The political rhetoric used in this geographical area is similar, but not unknown, but not so much researched and interpreted in public about semantics. Statements by various institutional representatives were taken very seriously as a serious threat to democracy and peace stability in the country. However, for the most part the citizens are not aware. The larger audience takes everything the politician says for granted.

## Findings

Public speaking, as a leading means of communication, is a frequent factor in the selection of candidates for leadership positions, as it is the speech that reveals the capacities, ambitions, attitudes, thoughts of the speaker, and the future planned actions that they intend to take. In the run-up to the 2019 presidential election, the vocabulary of candidates for the presidency, as well as party leaders, as their supporters, abounded in abusive, indecent, but not as fierce rhetoric as it was full of accusations, accusations on personal and political basis.<sup>1</sup>

In the rhetoric of the cycle of public appearances of the candidates for the post of President, the following elements were monitored and the following findings were established:

## Facts and information

It is necessary for the speaker to be well aware of the subject he is speaking about, to possess all the facts and information in the field. In this regard, presidential candidates in their addresses, as well as in their Election Programs, very rarely, almost never,<sup>2</sup> used sources, and / or forgot to mention the sources from which the information, or statistics, was cited. It is not only important to state the (exact) number, but also the source from which the information is transmitted. Thus, the reliability and relevance of the source and figures can be considered as a way of placing incorrect information, i.e. an attempt to spread propaganda in public. Especially as the Election Programs (some of them) abounded in percentages, which the public could not determine to be accurate and reliable for analysis, and were presented as the main arguments for political persuasion.

## Election program

All three candidates emphasized the content of the political program, the political and economic priorities, and offered (any such) solutions to the situation in certain areas. It was striking that similar issues were treated within the framework of the program activities, but from a different point of view and with a different approach. They were completely different only in the part of "good neighborly relations", which is a key indicator for the development of positive peace in the country.

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<sup>1</sup> Пендаровски: Ќе бидам претседател на сите граѓани и внатрешен „камшикар“, 01.04.2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AEBkqwUAblw&fbclid=IwAR0erTwwysC08SNMobyCGEkZPBhAqqmjvLL24VEcy3WpoMEg--fYXkpUZFW>

Заев: На претседателските избори имаме лесен избор, спротивната страна има слаб кандидат, 04.04.2019, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YHNpMyEuqLg&fbclid=IwAR3TI4AS4QXOTIIA1b3AiMXz9VIEhbpCt8Tgf\\_uBeEL2YOyx2kuQIGKIOU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YHNpMyEuqLg&fbclid=IwAR3TI4AS4QXOTIIA1b3AiMXz9VIEhbpCt8Tgf_uBeEL2YOyx2kuQIGKIOU)

VMRO-DPMNE RALLY FROM NEGOTINO MACEDONIA, 03.04.2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IctAhVALri8>

<sup>2</sup> Noted only in few TV interviews when sub-questions are asked by a journalist (Researcher's Note)

Presidential candidate no. 1 - Blerim Reka<sup>3</sup>, set aside 5 points to focus on. The five priorities were clearly defined, with precise and comprehensible language for all citizens, in both Albanian and Macedonian. Structurally and stylistically, such a language is acceptable to the electorate, given that it also includes topics that concern social living and working but are not within the competence of the President of the State. Lexically it causes disagreement when it uses an expression that violates the constitutional set-up of the state, which could semantically affect the index of positive state peace. Namely, the statement, which even at the beginning of the text itself is a leading sentiment, should be reformulated in order not to create confusions, dilemmas and / or fears for possible conflict situations: "Macedonia is a state, but not a Republic". Although there is an attempt to elaborate on it below in the text, it remains a matter of great concern, as it only refers to a certain period in the independent existence of the state, as well as the terms: "republican status" and "depersonalization of the state".

At the same time, it remains unclear how the competences of the President of the country would have a strong link with EU integration. Although it is a strategic commendation in this program, it is still a pale and empty flask that can do nothing in that process, as it is a process that affects all the authorities in the country.

Of all the five elements in his program the lexicon used in the pursuit of rights, law and democracy, can be praised, but it correlates again with the indications of potential change or the initiation of new multi-ethnic challenge procedures. Especially the sentence: "This demographic content needs to be institutionalized in the form of a multi-ethnic republic", which is in line with the party leader's statements on television<sup>4</sup> that one should think about renaming the streets in order to have a greater sense of belonging. Such seemingly parallel statements are complementary and clarify the ideological indicator, and within the discourse they become clearer and visible as a possible breakthrough to nationalism, which is one of the factors that reduce the level of positive peace in the country.

**Presidential candidate no. 2 - Gordana S. Davkova** again uses inappropriate approach to the electorate in her program<sup>5</sup>, which looks much more like a declaration form, especially in the introductory part, than a document addressing the citizens. The public is an auditorium that is supposed to lack all the facts and information, is not a government body operating or acting on legal formats and is simply not reduced to a level of comprehensibility and clarity.

Content structuring and shaping only indicates a high level of erudition that not everyone can follow. Researchers have made such remarks in the candidate's public speeches, especially when using lexicons and expressions in Latin that did not correspond to collective spirit and action. This way of presentation presupposes public manipulation, but also an attempt to exalt the Other, as it shows a position over ordinary citizens. At the same time, the use of vocabulary and claims such as: "Destruction to unrecognizability, de-Macedonianization and falsification of

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<sup>3</sup> <http://blerimreka.org/mk/programi/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/AlsatMTTelevision/videos/327634201285705/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://gordanazapretsedatel.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/programa.pdf>

historical and cultural heritage; The rule of law and justice are mere declarations, and reality faces arbitrariness and injustice; the phrase "Democracy and the economy are in deep crisis" still in the introduction points to negative lexicon, semantic implications for extreme crisis situations, which should not fit into the initial part of the discourse of this type of program. The program as an essential part of politics and rhetoric should reflect the strategy by which the candidate will be initiated and acted, not containing accusations and past actions in order to impose himself on the Other.

In terms of content, the program abounds in projects and is too large to be read at all, whether consciously or not, it also challenges the capacity of the ordinary citizen to deal with all those topics and projects. As in the previous example, initiating constitutional changes and reforms is the first indicator of potential crises and changes in the process of building positive peace in the country. Especially since the state has for many years suffered a series of conflict situations that have led to or brought about changes, additions, and tense solutions to problems.

Worrying is the fact that the candidate in his program is referring to the majority, although it is extremely cognitive bias and logical inconsistency in all further statements of the candidate for acceptance of the Prespa Treaty, so he writes; "Citizens are rightly asking whether the treaty is a violation of mandatory international law (jus cogens): the right to self-determination, the principle of equality of states, interference with the sovereign state's internal affairs, and serious violation of collective and individual human rights?"

It is not permissible, by all ethical standards of good oratory, to refer to the majority, that is, to present an inclination to the truth of a statement only if the majority supports it. In such situations it is clearly a matter of manipulative behavior, especially emphasizing that it uses a rhetorical question rather than a verifiable statement.

**Presidential candidate no. 3 - Stevo Pendarovski<sup>6</sup>**, unlike previous candidates, abounds and emphasizes the use of the word "chance", which implies a positive connotation. Only in introductory addressing, which has the indirect form of a letter, through indirect addressing, evocation - which is acceptable to citizens, does not raise negative theses, nor does it use negative language. He even uses the word "chance" four times, and "solidarity" twice. The meaning of the paragraph concerning the incumbent President, Mr. Ivanov, because it does not imply new and unfamiliar information, but on the contrary signifies a reversal, which in its content sense is not his place. The same remark is made by the researchers in the past as well, as in the example given in candidate no. 2, but given the difference that there is no lexicon in the negative connotation.

The focus of such emphatic elements that have echoed in the public is far from the essence of the power of rhetoric in political speech. The omission of answers to real political problems drives them into digression, into thoughts that are prone to attacking the opponent, and in them the absence of an essential concept that in itself will make us have a sequence of

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<sup>6</sup> <https://zaednonapred.mk/programa/>

thoughts, which unfortunately was left out in so far offered speech from the presidential candidates.

The messages sent by the election programs should be unambiguous, concise and clear, with their own proposal to get out of the current situation, as opposed to the currently dominated rhetoric in which credibility falls on statements like "greetings of Kavadarci residents in Negotino", "The anchor pulling forward", "if you had a child for employment no one was watching it for you" or "the Turks were against Ottoman slavery".

The inventiveness of some parts of the electoral programs, as well as the real timeframe for implementing all those projects and initiatives, is also questionable. In other societies and countries, a positive example of a success indicator is the presentation of a team that would hire a presidential candidate to present a realistic and feasible implementation of the program offered. There is a dilemma here and a dilemma is assumed regarding the scope and applicability.

### **Style and language**

The high level of expression and the use of complex terminology is used precisely in deliberative rhetoric speech, but often has the opposite effect on the auditorium.<sup>7</sup> Too many Latin expressions, unclear and incomprehensible to ordinary citizens, using legal terminology that is not peculiar to the general public is an indicator for only one of the candidates.

The first part of the campaign was conducted in both languages, with one candidate using two languages in his speeches, and the other candidates using the Albanian translation of the ads as well as social media.

From the point of view of the use of the language, the slightly different non-verbal communication, i.e. the reaction of the candidate for President - Blerim Reka when speaking in Albanian, was noticeable. Hence, in the interest of the research we will only note this, but we will continue to follow it in the second phase, in order to clarify this part.

### **Sincerity and persuasion**

Motivation is directly related to persuasion in performance, that is, the basic purpose of speech - persuasion. Here one has to find the bridge between the tendency to impose one's own attitude without intoning excessive modesty. It was noted that all three candidates at the very beginning of the campaign expressed strong conviction in their intentions, as well as elaborate explanation of the reasons for joining the campaign. This was considered as a positive connotation of the candidates themselves, as it clearly stated their personal and professional background and investment background.

In the further part of the campaign, (notably in the Election Programs, especially the I am/Me- reference section), this has changed significantly. Statements and frequent guest appearances by political party leaders after various debate shows, interviews, reduced the factor

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<sup>7</sup> Даниела Блажевска, Јавно говорење (Прирачник) USAID-SEA Project, Скопје, 2006

of conviction and sincerity in positions that were stated and set up from the outset, especially noticeable in the presidential candidate no. 2.

### **Reputation and credibility**

“Only the good man can be a good speaker”, Quintilian argued. Leading ethical value involves the ability to clearly separate good from evil and to judge what is harmful to society and what is not.<sup>8</sup> In the cycle of events, it was often possible to see a black-and-white picture of the situation, which made such polarization within the speech more likely to betray the credibility of what was said versus the truth of what was said. Candidates were "not sparing" themselves and their reputation by clearly making such statements, thereby reducing their own credibility. Party statements and speeches, although not the subject of this research, nevertheless appeared to be relevant for consideration, as they also affected what was said, the candidates' positions and the reduction of value judgments. It seems that such appearances and statements have done more harm than good to the candidates, but in the public interest and being aware of the precise views on many issues is far from good, and would also be useful for civil determination.

### **Speaker's position**

It was interesting to see the different approaches to formally presenting candidates. And while one did it in most cases in a hall, indoors with a particular ethnic community, others did it as a one-to-one meeting with citizens and / or in square form. One had a strictly controlled stage / platform for expression and calling, in fact intonation and vocation was quite another on the stage, as opposed to talking in a square, in a square in which there were no two levels continuously: one above the stage, the other below listening. Square as a form implies equality on all sides, a level of communication with those who are present, and an opportunity for "vulnerability" and openness on all sides. It showed more transparency than the "top" position.

The fact that the position of the candidate no. 2 is always to the right of the center, where the party leader was always located. The body position, the straightness, or the inclination of the head, insinuates a position of subordination, which inevitably raises additional dilemmas and questions.

### **Verbal communication (articulation and modulation)**

#### **1. Articulation**

As part of the presidential campaign, it is obvious how each individual candidate uses his or her power of voice. Aristotle concluded long ago, "We do not hear the word, but the man who speaks", so it is not enough just to produce a great speech with all the parameters and rules, after

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<sup>8</sup> Ivan Ivanji, Razgovori o veštini govorništva (Retorika), Bratstvo - Jedinstvo, Novi Sad, 1953, str. 50

all political campaigns have PR agencies and individuals who have sufficient subject matter known and worked out, we need a way to get a successful public appearance.

In order to have a successful public performance that is backed by well-designed and sufficiently prepared text it is necessary to have a good voice.

Narrow definition by auction means: Emphasizing words with their volume and color according to their importance.<sup>9</sup> The emphasis and color of the voice create preconditions for how the audience will react, whether our speech will attract or irritate them. Good articulation is conditioned by proper breathing, which means breathing slowly and deeply, the way voice is formed and the technique of speaking.

Non-separation of the essential elements in the accentuating process leads to a straight-line speech which, with the very rate of non-separation of the main elements, leads to incorrect articulation, i.e. shortening of the vowels and consonants due to the accelerated pace of speech that is accentuated by the existing non-stress. Thought fading offers a conflict zone in the process of separating the less important from the less important for the listeners.<sup>10</sup>

Creating a good speaker also emphasizes what you as a speaker experience and want to convey to your audience, so it is necessary to “serve your feelings” to some extent to convey your spiritual energy and created a bridge of closeness to that audience, but not a continuous highlight that would have contributed to the pathetic emphasis crossing the line of normalcy.<sup>11</sup>

Highlighting words is a characteristic of a good speaker that would mean that they would have a logical emphasis on certain words in the sentence that would make the speaker aware of what he was saying and knew what he was emphasizing in order to convey what he was experiencing how others would experience it and understand it.

The following elements were noted during the monitoring:

- Strong grammatical emphasis and respect for accentual completions that contribute to a more beautiful sentence rhythm. Grammatical highlighting should determine each voice's place and the correct color of the word. Even the presidential candidate no. 1 in his speech while using the Macedonian language attempted to speak with the correct grammatical emphasis of the word, which added an important meaning to the identity element. Unlike the use of the Albanian language, his speech was faster and more fluid, which is understandable.
- Logical emphasis - Presidential candidate no. 1 and the Candidate for President no. 2 used quite a bit of pathos in separating individual parts of the sentence to emphasize the message, but in content it did not change much. Such a goal is achieved by the speaker through his or her emotions, through the color of the voice, the intensity, the loudness,

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<sup>9</sup> Даниела Блажевска, Јавно говорење (Прирачник) USAID-SEA Project, Скопје, 2006

<sup>10</sup> Стево Пендаровски вечерва во Сарај, Кисела Вода и Карпош, 07.04.2019,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tawdq3bfWKQ>

<sup>11</sup> Гордана Силјановска Давкова - Македонски Брод, 08.04.2019,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1YEZzDN0D4>

and not by overstating each word.<sup>12</sup> In the first case we suppose that the Macedonian language is not his native language of expression, and in the second case the deliberate vocabulary and tendentious pathos of expression were evident.

## 2. Modulation

A good speaker can keep the audience's attention from the beginning to the end by applying virtuous voice changes. The speaker should change the volume of his speech, increase or decrease the volume depending on what he is saying and the reaction of the audience.

If the same volume of tone is spoken without modulating each new sentence, then the speech will grow into an unbearable monotony. Such an example is particularly pronounced in presidential candidate no. 2.

On the other hand, the candidate for president no. 3 concludes the fast pace of speech, which is a bad tempo, because the speaker in one breath utters the whole concept that with that lightning speed is hardly remembered by the audience, and vice versa, the slow pace results in the inability to maintain clarity and traceability of thought.<sup>13</sup>

The candidate with the number 1 - Moderate was noticeable, but again we will doubt it, as the modulation changed depending on which language he used. If he used the Macedonian language, the moderation was more visible and the researchers could only assume that it was the result of error prevention.

Political speeches create public opinion, influence development processes, and are often used for the purposes of persuading and reassuring listeners. The greatest use of political speeches lately is to send political messages to the adversary, but also to specially targeted groups of the general public, as well as to partners in the international community.

Political discourse, expressed at a specific place, location, and date, contains precisely foreseeable messages intended for the audience. It is a question of interest and competence to receive, or to understand, the other side. In our society, political gatherings, events, celebrations, festivals and even celebrations are often used to convey the message. Very often lately the general public has become indifferent and passive towards such behavior of politicians, and this is an issue that they should be seriously concerned about. Gatherings of the old kind, in which political speeches were delivered, are almost non-existent today, except in well-organized campaign formats. But in times of digitalization, the audience is becoming more diffused in its reception of messages. There is no ONE place where political speeches are delivered. We have a different audience that comes up with information in a different way. That is why conveying political messages have become a difficult task.

But the place, the time and the way it is communicated is not so controversial, but the variety of manipulative techniques is increasingly used. Too often, political speeches do not contain the answers to the questions asked, but on the contrary, political discourse is entirely

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<sup>12</sup> Даниела Блажевска, Јавно говорење (Прирачник) USAID-SEA Project, Скопје, 2006

<sup>13</sup> Blerim Reka për President, Kumanovë, 07.04.2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7fO15VsnNhM>

directed at twisting the thesis in order to direct the thought to what the listener wants to hear, i.e. the voter. For the political discourse, it is important to be focused on the electorate, the collective body that does not have its own amorphous, but is a collection of individuals who might not be able to react individually. But in this case they are part of a larger group, a passive environment that is ready to do what individualism would not even condemn. Good political speech should contain all three elements: pathos (emotions), logos (reason) and ethos (morality). But campaigns always use far more pathos than reason and morality.

Recent rhetoric has particularly noted: the inclination to make a false analogy between two unrelated things and then to use the analogy to make an assumption, and a false dichotomy by drawing one alternative as correct, simply because the other is incorrect. Such political rhetoric undoubtedly shows no democratic maturity for fighting arguments and facts, but rather a strong attempt to manipulate the public and public opinion. This results in a lower level of political despotism that does not imply public interest, nor is it an indicator of a society in which issues of interest to the citizen is a priority. On the contrary, such political speeches are learned, practiced, and held by the citizen, not the voter. In this way, the process only damages processes, since neither public opinion is formed on some important issues, nor is it alarmed about important situations that have an impact, nor are they socially oriented. On the contrary, they only make sense in intra-party squabbles. And it is no longer the political rhetoric nor the level of discourse that this text addresses.

### **Positive peace and politicians**

Political structures, whether in power in the particular state or in opposition, have a major influence on the actions of stabilizing factors of peace and security. With them, the state provides peace, security and stability, which significantly reduces the risk of destabilization and conflict. The stability of a state is of particular importance in order to strengthen individual and collective awareness of the existence and significance of the state and its ability to improve the quality of life of citizens in every respect.

Without an understanding of the factors that create and sustain peaceful societies, it will not be possible to develop programs, create policies or understand the resources needed to build peaceful and sustainable societies. The same factors that create peace also lead to many other positive outcomes for societies, such as prosperous economies, better inclusion, high levels of resilience, and societies capable of adapting to change. Other factors positively associated with peace are better environmental performance, well-being and happiness. On this basis, when referring to the positive aspects and characteristics of peace, the term positive peace is referred to.

According to the Institute for Economics and Peace (<http://economicsandpeace.org>), positive peace can be described as creating an optimal environment in which human potential can be developed. Further, positive peace is defined as a set of attitudes, institutions and structures that create and maintain peaceful societies. Positive peace is not only associated with

higher levels of peace, but also with stronger macroeconomic performance, as the factors that sustain a more peaceful society also provide a framework for strong economic development.

Every year since 2014, the Institute for Economics and Peace publishes reports on positive peace (<http://visionofhumanity.org/reports/>), analyzing the factors that affect peacekeeping. The measurement of the Positive Peace Index in these reports is calculated through eight main factors, the pillars of peace:

- A well-functioning government
- Healthy business environment
- Equal distribution of resources
- Accept the rights of others
- Good relations with neighbors
- Free flow of information
- High levels of human capital
- Low levels of corruption.

A well-functioning government provides high-quality public and civic services, builds trust and participation, demonstrates political stability and upholds the rule of law.

A healthy business environment is about the strength of economic conditions, as well as the formal institutions that support the functioning of the private sector. Business competitiveness and economic productivity are also linked to the calmest countries.

Peaceful countries tend to provide equality of access to resources, such as education, health and, to a lesser extent, equity in the distribution of income.

Peaceful states often have formal laws guaranteeing basic human rights and freedoms and informal social and cultural norms relating to citizens' behavior.

Peaceful relations with other countries are as important as good relations between groups in one country. Countries with positive external relations are more peaceful and tend to be more politically stable, have better functioning governments, be regionally integrated and have a lower level of organized internal conflict. In the last two years, in terms of neighborly relations, progress has been made with the signing of two key neighborly and partnership agreements.

We live in a time when information is a very important resource and influences the development of social, political and economic processes in the country. Free and independent media in a society disseminate quality information in a way that leads to greater information and helps individuals, businesses and civil society make better decisions.

Human capital is an important factor on which the quality, efficient and effective performance of work tasks and duties within public and private sector bodies and institutions depend. Human resources contribute to the development of social processes and relationships and to the improvement of the quality of services provided to other entities in society. The qualified human capital base reflects the extent to which societies educate citizens according to market needs and promote the development of knowledge, thereby improving economic productivity, youth care, political participation and social capital.

In societies with high levels of corruption, resources are under-allocated, which often leads to lack of basic services and contributes to civil riots. Low levels of corruption can increase citizens' confidence in public institutions. Corruption is particularly prevalent in developing and transition countries due to fragile socio-political and economic relations. The study of corruption is particularly important for identifying the factors and causes, creating measures and activities for its suppression and better adapting public policies and strengthening anti-corruption bodies.

All of these factors that influence the development of positive peace in the country need to be discussed more publicly. Presidential candidates in the election campaign have very little mentioned that a well-functioning government (candidate 2), acceptance of the rights of others (candidates 1 and 3) and good relations with neighbors (candidate no) are needed for the development of society. No. 1 and candidate No. 3.). The treatment of these topics in their performances was not appropriate nor in the interest of the public and the citizen. To a large extent, it seems that they were targeted solely as a constituency and depending on the location of the campaign, specific topics and segments of the areas of positive peace were treated.

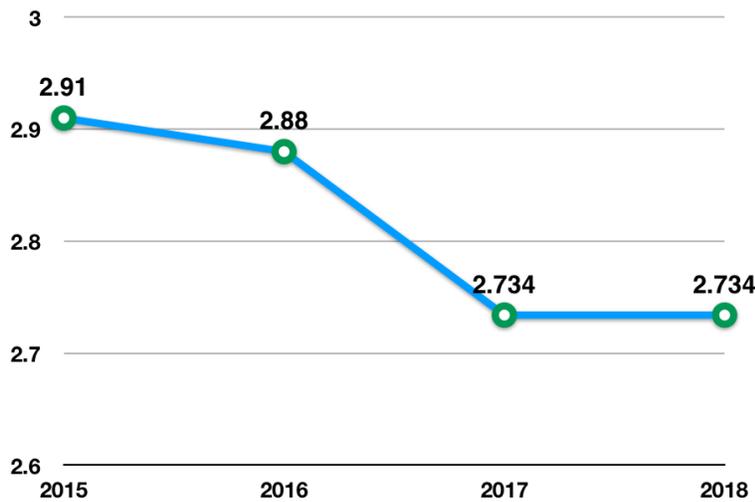


Chart 1: Trend of positive peace index in the Republic of North Macedonia

Data source: <http://economicsandpeace.org> <http://visionofhumanity.org>

Developed by: IMPETUS

Chart 1 shows the trend of positive peace in the Republic of Northern Macedonia in the period 2015-2018. In 2015 the index reached its maximum, and in the last two analyzed years (2017 and 2018) it reached the minimum of this index. The average of this index for the analyzed period is 2.8145. The data show a steady decline in the value of this index. These value judgments are influenced by political and social developments both in the country and in the neighborhood.

With the very fact that 2017 and 2018 were the years when there was a change of government, as well as a series of ongoing reform processes, then changing the name of the country, unfinished trials, etc. a decline in the index of positive peace is also expected. All of

these factors are influenced by the narratives used by the parties, the media, the statements and the messages that are sent, which in certain situations and contexts call into question the stability of certain processes. So, if we are to speak of development in some of the factors listed above, we are obliged to note the discourses in which a particular policy is run, especially when it comes to the rhetoric of candidates for President of the State.

## **Conclusion**

Political structures, whether in power in the particular state or in opposition, have a major influence on the actions of stabilizing factors of peace and security. With them, the state provides peace, security and stability, which significantly reduces the risk of destabilization and conflict. The stability of a state is of particular importance in order to strengthen individual and collective awareness of the existence and significance of the state and its ability to improve the quality of life of citizens in every respect.

Rhetoric is a science that in a highly structured way, through actions, speeches, media guest interviews, press releases, even when undertaking some activities and initiatives, is monitored and studied. All these forms and many more are considered as informal policy advocacy and affect the state of development processes in the country.

Indicators of the Peace Index are exactly those types of activities and thematic forms of public speaking, how to address those topics that are relevant to the indicators of peace and which can be very sensitive in different contexts of narratives and discourses.

How did the presidential candidates talk about these topics in public?!

From the key findings we have seen that some of them addressed the thematic factors of building positive peace in their programs, but did not remain consistently committed to the discourse of the program, but changed attitudes and positions in public appearances or in direct appearances by party leaders, it also diminished the credibility of candidate rhetoric.

One of the most striking examples is the change of attitude and position regarding the Prespa Lakes Treaty. The issues of good neighborly relations, as one of the factors for peace building, then economic processes and development issues, are clear indicators of the level of democracy, measured through the policies and political language policy used as an indicator of building positive peace in the country, so and in the region.

Presidential candidates in the election campaign have very little mentioned that a well-functioning government (candidate 2), acceptance of the rights of others (candidates 1 and 3) and good relations with neighbors (candidate no) are needed for the development of society. No. 1 and candidate No. 3.). The treatment of these topics in their performances was not appropriate nor in the interest of the public and the citizen.

It is extremely important HOW the views will be set, both lexically and politically. The language of politics must reflect development processes, positive vocabulary and, in cases where challenges arise.

We must learn how to build policies that address all of the topics of the positive peace building index, but also rhetorically remain consistent with what we stand for. This is the only way to achieve political and electoral credibility.

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