

# CONNECTION BETWEEN NATIONALISM, RELIGIOSITY, AUTHORITARIANISM AND SOCIAL DISTANCE

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## Abstract

*The purpose of the survey was to determine the relationship between accepting of nationalistic views, authoritarianism, religiosity and social distance among Macedonians to the members of the 5 most common ethnic minorities who lives in Republic of Macedonia: Albanians, Roma, Turks, Serbs and Vlachs. The survey was conducted on 120 subjects, students from Macedonian nationality. The results showed a statistically significant correlation between authoritarianism, religiosity, acceptance of nationalistic attitudes and social distance. Authoritarian personalities and those who are more religious are more inclined to adopt nationalistic views. Authoritarian personalities manifest a higher degree of social distance towards members of the other ethnic communities. Has not been established quite a connection between religiosity and social distance.*

**Key words:** national attachment, authoritarianism, religiosity, social distance

## Introduction

The acceptance of a system of views and values, which include attitudes towards their national affiliation and attitudes towards members of other national groups, can be influenced by a numerous social, socio-economic and cultural factors, but also by the individual factors, such as personality traits of the individuals. Some authors, such as Adorno et al, consider that the accepting a system of values and attitudes is associated with a particular structure of personality, which they call authoritarianism. Also religiosity is thought to be an indicator or predictor of accepting certain political attitudes and values.

In this paper we will focus on the relationship between authoritarianism, religiosity and degree of national commitment, as well as, the degree of social distance.

## Theoretical framework

Belonging to a nation, national consciousness and the sense of national attachment often determines the behavior of the individual and the group. The system of attitudes and values related to their own nation, is a motivational force for individual behavior towards their nation and relations with other nations.

Attitudes towards their own nation and the other nations are socially conditioned. Factors that influence their formation are: the social system that is dominant in a particular community, belonging to a certain group (nation, religion, class, socio-political organization, family) current social, political and economic situation, the mass media etc. The study of attitudes towards their own nation is particularly important because often determine the relationship of the individual to other nations and peoples, contributing to finding ways to combat chauvinistic nationalism, ethnic stereotypes and social distance, which is especially important in multi-ethnic societies as Republic of Macedonia. Nikola Rot i N. Havelka (Havelka, 1975), national attachment determines as “a system of interconnected views in which apparent relationship of the individual to his own nation, their national state and territory, their culture, language and history, to national values and symbols, then to other nations, including both, those that own nation is politically and economically in a friendly or hostile relations, and to other nations, in general, and the relationship to the national definition as a social phenomenon”.

Acceptance of certain forms of national attachment is considered to be associated with certain personality traits of an individual, that there is a certain structure of person who is inclined to accept certain nationalistic positions and anti-democratic forms of behavior. Adorno felt that there is a correlation between certain structure and dynamics of personality, called authoritarianism, and anti-democratic attitudes of acceptance. Adorno et al. considered that antidemocratic orientation is associated system of attitudes, values and opinions, which contains anti-Semitism, ethnocentrism and conservatism and that such a system is correlated with authoritarianism. Authoritarianism define as "a tendency towards fascism, inclination to accept anti-Semitic propaganda and readiness to participate in the anti-democratic social movements (Adorno et al. 1950; according to Rot, 1977).

There are nine characteristics of authoritarian personalities: conventionality, authoritarian submissiveness, aggressiveness, anti-intracaptivity, rigidity of thought, projection, propensity to superstition and stereotypes, destructiveness and cynicism, excessive interest in sexual kinkiness. To the formation of such a structure of personality, according to the authors, affects political and socio-economic circumstances on the one hand, and the relationship between parents and children, such as the way of education, on the other. Altmeyer believes that authoritarianism is a composition of three groups of attitudes: authoritarian submissiveness, authoritarian aggression, and conventionality. Authoritarian personalities are often prone to accept religious views.

Religiosity implies certain norms and rules, and such classifications are followed by simplicity and rigidity in thinking, which is characteristic of the authoritarian structure of personality (Dušanić, 2007). Fromm, talking about the authoritarian and humanistic religiousness. According to Fromm, authoritarian religiosity means that there is a higher power that has power over man and requires submission and obedience, while humanist religiosity God understood as an expression of their strength. Religiosity is a complex phenomenon which involves cognitive, affective and connotative components. Acceptance of religious attitudes among individuals, despite being carried out by means of internalizing the attitudes of family and loved ones important figures for the child in the process of socialization, however, and the social context and environment influence the severity of an individual's religious views. Some authors think that religiosity has a dominant compensation function and that is a consequence of some status deprivation amid, distanced livelihoods, social marginalization and un emancipation (Pantić, 1988 according to Dušanić, 2007). Some studies treat religiosity as an important predictor of ethnic intolerance (Hudson, Sekulić, Massey, 1994). It is considered that the authoritarian personalities are more prone to accept the nationalistic and religious views and beliefs.

Very often authoritarianism and nationalistic views are associated with the ethnic prejudices and stereotypes, which results in the manifestation of social distance towards members of other nationalities or minorities. Social distance implies acceptance of certain types of relationships with members of other nations. Under that term sociologist Park means "degrees and measures of understanding and intimacy that mark pre social and social relations in general (Park 1924; according to Lazarovski, 1994).

According to Triandis, social distance comprises several components: the acceptance of intimacy, acceptance of friendship, acceptance by status and categorical refusal (Triandis 1964; according to Lazarovski 1994). According to Bogardus (1925), it indicates the level of understanding and feelings that individuals express to each other. It expresses the nature of their interaction and the nature of social relations. Bogardus first constructed scale for measuring social distance towards members of different national or ethnic groups. Scale represents a continuum of social relations, from the most intimate, close contacts, to active non-attraction, intolerance and rejection.

It is considered that there is a certain connection between accepting nationalistic views and authoritarianism, religiosity and social distance. Some studies have found an association between religiosity and authoritarianism as the study of Adorno et al (1950), the so-called authoritarian personality, which showed an association between authoritarianism, conservatism and religiosity. Ferguson (1973), in his research, found an association between religiosity and anti humanitarianism and nationalism. Altmeyer et al (1988) found an association between religiosity and authoritarianism. The research of Rot and Havelka (1975) showed that greater social distance appears together with emphasized national attachment, while a greater degree of acceptance of the other nations appears together with the international orientation.

## Method of research

### The objective of the survey

The purpose of this researching is to determine whether there is an affiliation between the acceptance of the nationalistic attitudes, authoritarianism, religiosity and social distance, or whether those individuals that manifest more pronounced level of national attachment, manifested more pronounced degree of religiosity and authoritarianism and greater social distance towards members of the 5 most represented nationalities living in Macedonia, Albanians, Roma, Turks, Serbs and Vlachs, as well as, to determine the differences between the sexes in terms of the researched variables. The research was conducted on a sample of 120 respondents, all high school students of Macedonian nationality, of which 48.3% were male and 51.7% female.

### Instruments

For examination of the national attachment we used the scale of Havelka and Rot (1971), which consists of five subscales. The authors distinguish five forms of national attachment: exclusive national attachment, which means affection only for their own nation and highlighting its exceptional superior value relative to other nations; prominent national attachment, which means a pronounced affection for their own nation without displaying its superior value relative to other nations; divided national attachment characterized by simultaneous attachment to their own nation and to the humanity as a whole; general human commitment, characterized by emphasis on loyalty to general human community; and lack of national allegiance or denying the importance and value of national loyalties at all.

Authoritarianism is measured by F-scale constructed by Adorno, which measures the degree of expression of authoritarianism, religiosity is measured by the Scale of religiosity RO-3 (Ljubotin, 2008), which measures the level of expression of religiosity and social distance is determined by the Scale for measuring of social distance constructed by N. Rot, which is a modified version of Bogardus scale, which contains the following seven relations: to be a citizen of my country; to live in my neighborhood, in the same building or street; to hang out with him as a friend; my sister (brother) to marry him (her); I married to him (her); to be my supervisor; to have a high managing position in my country.

### Results

According to the results of the survey, we established that the most evident form of national attachment in the sample is divided national attachment ( $M = 12.08$ ,  $SD = 2.25$ ) or so-called international orientation, which means that most of the respondents equally valued adherence to their own nation and to the humanity in general. Following, the second form of national commitment - a prominent national attachment ( $M = 11.76$ ,  $SD = 2.27$ ), which means closeness to their own nation, but without highlighting its superiority over other nations. The third is general human attachment ( $M = 11.59$ ,  $SD = 2.50$ ), which means accepting the values of humanity as a whole. Less pronounced form of national attachment is the exclusive national attachment ( $M = 10.13$ ,  $SD = 3.11$ ), which means accepting nationalistic views and highlighting the importance of their own nation and its superiority over other nations. The least form is the absence of national attachment ( $M = 8.91$ ,  $SD = 2.25$ ), who deny the importance of any kind of national attachment and it's considered that belonging to a nation has no value.

**Table1. Inter correlations between five subscales of national attachment**

Subscales	I	II	III	IV	V
I – exclusive national attachment	1				
II – prominent national attachment	.451**	1			
III – divided national attachment	-.193*	.107	1		
IV – general human commitment	-.391**	-.379**	.401**	1	
V – lack of national attachment	-.170	-.234*	.130	.392**	1

$p < .05^*$

$p < .01^{**}$

From the calculated inter correlations between five subscales, i.e. between five different forms of national attachment, we can see that there is a statistically significant correlation between exclusive and prominent national attachment, then that divided national attachment, so called international orientation, is negatively correlated with the nationalistic orientation and a prominent national attachment, meaning that those respondents who prefer international orientation, fewer express nationalistic views. A significant positive correlation was established between the international orientation and general human attachment, which indicates that those who stress the importance of their own nation and the other nations, also value the universal human values and belonging to humanity as a whole. Regarding the differences between the sexes, men are more prone to accept the nationalistic views of women, while women more than male respondents accept the general human attachment and lack of national commitment.

**Table 2. The coefficients of correlation between the forms of national attachment, authoritarianism, religiosity and social distance**

<i>National attachment – subscales</i>	<i>authoritarianism</i>	<i>religiosity</i>	<i>social distance</i>
I – exclusive national attachment	.398**	.204*	.245**
II – prominent national attachment	.263**	.149	.102
III – divided national attachment	-.024	.062	-.212*
IV – general human commitment	-.118	-.045	-.099
V – lack of national attachment	-.101	-.098	-.188*
authoritarianism		r=.448**	r=.243**
religiosity			r=.001

p<.05\*

p<.0.1\*\*

In relation to the connection between the forms of national attachment and authoritarianism is determined statistically significant correlation between authoritarianism and exclusive national attachment ( $r = .398$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and between authoritarianism and prominent national attachment ( $r = .263$ ,  $p < .01$ ), which means that the authoritarian personalities are more inclined to accept and manifest the nationalistic attitudes, the glorification of one's own nation, ethnocentrism and more accept the ideology of nationalism.

As to the connection between religiosity and national closeness significant correlation is determined in relation to the first form – exclusive national attachment ( $r = .204$ ,  $p < .05$ ), which underlines the fact that the respondents who are more religious more manifest nationalistic attitudes.

We determined statistically significant association between authoritarianism and religiosity ( $r = .448$ ,  $p < .01$ ), which points out that those respondents who are inclined to be more religious, more accept authoritarian attitudes or manifest authoritarian worldview. Not determined sex differences in relation to authoritarianism and religiosity.

Regarding the social distance in the research, we examined the social distance in Macedonians in relation to the five most abundant ethnic communities in Macedonia: Albanians, Roma, Turks, Serbs and Vlachs. We obtained the following results:

**Table 3. The severity of social distance (SD) in the sample as a whole**

Intervals	Frequencies and percentages of respondents in certain intervals	
	f	%
Without distance (0-6)	0	0 %
Insignificant social distance (1-7)	1	0.8 %
Very low expressed SD (8-14)	4	3.33 %
Low expressed SD (15-21)	11	9.17 %
Moderate (average) SD (22-28)	30	25 %
Pronounced SD (29-35)	58	48.33 %
Very strong SD (36-40)	16	13.33 %
<b>Total:</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100 %</b>

From the results we can see that in the sample as a whole social distance range on the border between medium and strong social distance ( $M = 28.98$ ,  $SD = 6.64$ ). The largest percentage of respondents manifested strong social distance 48.33%, a very strong 13.33%, and 25% average level of social distance. Male respondents demonstrate greater social distance than females.

As to the severity of social distance in terms of individual ethnic communities, the mostly emphasized is in terms of the Albanian ethnic community. Even 70.8% of respondents did not want to make any close relations or connections with the members of the Albanian community. This is somewhat expected because of the conflict that occurred in Macedonia in 2001, so this tells us that there is still no readiness to establish the close relationship between Macedonians and Albanians, there is no confidence, there is a sense of threat among the Macedonians and Albanians, which indicates that despite the distance of 14 years that has passed since the military conflict in 2001, ethnic relations are still quite fragile.

Quite pronounced social distance is expressed in terms of members of the Roma community, 56.7% do not want to establish any relationship with a members of the Roma community, less social distance is expressed in terms of the Turks, Vlachs, while the least is expressed in terms of Serbs, i.e. only 7.5% of Macedonians do not want to establish any relationship with a member of the Serbian community. This is expected according to the fact that a large part of the Macedonian nation Serbs perceived as fraternal people, which may be due to the proximity and similarity in language, religion, life in the same state etc.

As for the relationship between national loyalties and social distance, we can see that those respondents who accept the nationalistic ideology and nationalistic attitudes manifest more social distance in relations to members of other ethnic groups ( $r = .245$ ,  $p < .01$ ), while those who are more receptive to international orientation exhibit a lesser degree of social distance ( $r = -.212$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and those respondents who deny the importance of national commitment, that we have in the absence of national attachment, also exhibit low social distance ( $r = -.188$ ,  $p < .05$ ). As for the relationship between social distance and authoritarianism, we established that authoritarian personalities manifest a higher degree of social distance ( $r = .243$ ,  $p < .01$ ), while in terms of religiosity is not determined statistically significant correlation.

### **Conclusion and discussion**

From the survey we can conclude that the dominant form of national allegiance is divided national attachment or so called international orientation. The same finding has been confirmed in other studies done in these areas, such as the research of Rot. & Havelka (1975).

The same results were obtained in a survey done in Macedonia when it was part of the former Yugoslavia (Lazarovski 1972), in which, as in our study, the predominant form is divided national attachment, than prominent national attachment, following general human commitment, exclusive national attachment and lack of national commitment.

Divided national attachment as a dominant form displays and the research done in Macedonia in 1992 (Lazarovski, 1992). By contrast of the research of Lazarovski (1992), where prominent national attachment is to the last place, in our study we can see that that form is more preferred, it can even suggests some degree of increasing of patriotism and nationalism among young people in recent years, which may be due to the current social and political circumstances in our country. It's not about the chauvinistic type of nationalism, but rather the form of nationalism that emphasize the values of their own nation, its idealization, but without other nations perceived as inferior relative to there own nation.

We have increased the social distance among young people in relation to some previous research, such as the research of Lazarovski (1972), where a strong and very strong social distance manifest only 11.51% of respondents, unlike our study where 74% manifest strong and very strong distance. Also in the research of Lazarovski 18.16% shows no distance, while in our study that percentage is zero. The high degree of social distance can be due to the military conflict in Macedonia in 2001, because it is the biggest social distance to the Albanian minority, but it is also quite high in relation to other minorities, with the exception of Serbian.

Severity of authoritarianism in participants is over the average values, which may be telling us that we have a more pronounced degree of authoritarianism among young people, who are more prone to accept the authoritarian values, which may be due to socio-political context of recent years, when dominates the right political option, which promotes patriotism, nationalism and authoritarian way of governing.

Religiosity is also above average values although not very pronounced, suggesting a tendency towards greater acceptance of religious values, that can be seen as a trend in all post-communist countries, and can be interpreted in the context of socio-political developments in Republic of Macedonia, where currently is the dominant right political option, who promotes the right-wing values, one of which is the promotion and respect of religion and tradition. The relationship between religiosity and authoritarianism suggests that religious people are more inclined to accept authoritarian values. This relationship is explained by the influence of parents or socialization (Beit - Hallahmi, Argyle, 1997) and may be the result of socio-political circumstances. Religious individuals are more authoritarian and they are in the tendency to accept the authorities and obedience to authorities, and often manifested hostility and intolerance towards others and social distance. The armed conflict in Macedonia in 2001, and the current socio-political situation in Macedonia, contributes to the growth of distrust between ethnic communities and a state of insecurity among citizens.

The results of this work have shown that although there is no significant phenomenon of some trends in the emergence of nationalistic attitudes among young people and among them the dominant form of national attachment is the attachment to their own nation and to the humanity as a whole, however, the high percentage of social distance tells us that in our society there is distrust towards members of other nationalities, which is particularly significant to the Albanian community and that there is still much to work on improving interethnic relations and building a multicultural society. Although, from the conflict has passed 14 years, however inter-ethnic relations are still quite fragile, the wounds are not healed yet, and we need a lot to work on improving relations between communities. The fact that authoritarian personalities are more prone to accept nationalistic views and to demonstrate the greater social distance from others, tells us that we need to invest quite a lot about the way we educate our children, because we know that much of our attitudes and values we get in the process of socialization and education. As a society we need to invest more in building a relationship of mutual tolerance, respect for diversities, building democratic values and overcoming ethnic prejudices and stereotypes.

However, the results of this study should be taken with certain restrictions because of the sample, but they could use as a guideline for future research that would be conducted on a larger representative sample, involving all the complex socio-economic variables that has multidimensional impact.

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