

The Art of Survival

*Intersecting Inequalities
in Social Protection in Macedonia*

Results of an Empirical Inquiry

This page intentionally left blank.

THE ART OF SURVIVAL

Intersecting Inequalities in Social Protection in Macedonia

- Results of an Empirical Inquiry -

European Policy Institute - Skopje, 2016

Title of publication:
The Art of Survival: Intersecting Inequalities in Social Protection
in Macedonia – Results of an Empirical Inquiry

Authors:
Biljana Kotevska, LL.M, MA
Elena Anchevska, MA
D-r Simonida Kacarska

Publisher:
European Policy Institute – Skopje

Year:
2016

About the publisher:
D-r Malinka Ristevska – Jordanova

Design:
Saša Pavlović

Photo:
Utemov Alexey

Print:
Gaia-Design

CIP – Catalogisation

KOTEVSKA, Biljana The art of survival : intersecting inequalities in social protection in Macedonia: results of an empirical study/ [authors Biljana Kotevska, Elena Anchevska, Simonida Kacarska ; translation Ana Vasileva]. - Skopje : Institute for European Policy, 2016. - 138 pages. : illustrations. ; 30 cm

Title. page. of printed text: The art of survival : intersecting inequalities in social protection in Macedonia: results of an empirical inquiry / Biljana Kotevska, Elena Anchevska, Simonida Kacarska. Both texts printed in opposite direction. – Text in Macedonian and English language. - Footnotes. - Bibliography: pages. 68-[73] ; Bibliography: pages. [59-64]

ISBN 978-608-4702-22-1

1. Anchevska, Elena [author] 2. Simonida Kacarska [author]. - I. Kotevska, Biljana see Kotevska, Biljana
a) Social protection – Gender aspects – Macedonia b) Social policy - Discrimination- Macedonia
COBISS.MK-ID 100700682



DISCLAIMER

The RRPP promotes social science research in the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia). Social science research aids in the understanding of the specific reform needs of countries in the region and in identifying the long-term implications of policy choices. Researchers receive support through research grants, methodological and thematic trainings as well as opportunities for regional and international networking and mentoring. The RRPP is coordinated and operated by the Interfaculty Institute for Central and Eastern Europe (IICEE) at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland). The programme is fully funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent opinions of the SDC and the University of Fribourg.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| INTRODUCTION | 7 |
| 1. METHODOLOGY AND METHODS | 9 |
| 2. INDIVIDUAL LEVEL | 12 |
| 2.1. RECOGNITION OF BODY CAPABILITY | 13 |
| 2.2. MAKING ONE'S OWN WAY THROUGH LIFE | 16 |
| 2.3. SECURING THE FUTURE OF THE CHILD/DEPENDANT | 19 |
| 2.4. FIGHTING FOR BARE SURVIVAL | 22 |
| 2.5. OVERCOMING ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS | 24 |
| 2.6. RELYING ON FAMILY SUPPORT | 25 |
| 3. SYMBOLIC LEVEL | 28 |
| 4. STRUCTURAL LEVEL | 32 |
| 5. INTERSECTIONALITY ACROSS LEVELS AND CATEGORIES | 38 |
| 6. ADDRESSING INTERSECTIONAL INEQUALITIES IN SOCIAL PROTECTION | 45 |
| CONCLUSION | 56 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 59 |

This page intentionally left blank.



Introduction

Social protection and the welfare state have been in the focus of academia, policy makers, civil society organizations (CSOs) and activists for many years now. A true battlefield of power and principles, needs and priorities – social protection has been studied from many perspectives – from the policy makers, the international financial institutions, the CSOs, Human Rights lawyers and academics, developmental actors, security actors, and so on. The list is too long to mention all of them. Few studies on social protection have been conducted from a user's perspective. They largely focus on quantifying needs and are guided by questions which stem from the systems in place in an attempt to evaluate these, and with strong single-axis approach, meaning focus on compartmentalizing the users (i.e. for example, being consulted because of being a woman, or being a minority, or being a person with a disability). In fact, this is how most of the studies in social protection have been tailored.

Such research does aid mapping out the general context in Macedonia after its independence in 1991, when society embarked on political, social and economic changes. The transformation of the socio-economic-political system resulted in high unemployment rates, lower living standards, and increased exposure to vulnerability of many of its citizens. The World Bank reports that almost one quarter of Macedonia's population lives in poverty.¹ But, the numbers according to other sources are higher, reaching 30.9%. The percentage of unemployment in 2015 has been calculated to reach 25.5%.² Women earn 12.5% less for work of equal value, and the gap increases as the education level decreases; namely, it goes up to 28.4% for persons without formal education or with primary education. Women are paid 17.3% less than men for jobs of equal value, with the same levels of experience and education.³

But despite these distressing numbers, very few studies engage the perspectives of persons living on the margins of society. The single-axis approach persistently applied has a limited potential to skew existing power relations, as the users are consulted only in an effort to slightly modify or comment on the system itself. This approach does not include the accounts on the lived experiences of the users of the social protection systems, thus leaving the complex realities of their everyday lives largely out of the realm of the known. This is a major gap in the existing knowledge, which our study aims to fill in by employing an intersectional approach to studying the field of social protection.

Intersectionality has been a challenge and a focus for feminist scholars for decades and, with other scholars picking up on intersectionality relatively quickly, intersectionality turned into “the most important theoretical contribution that women's studies, in conjunction with related fields, have made so far”⁴. Intersectionality opens possibilities for studying the multi-

- 1 World Bank, “Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of population)”, *World Bank Website*, <<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.NAHC/countries/MK?display=graph>>, Last accessed: 25.11.2015.
- 2 “State Statistical Office, Indicators,” *State Statistical Office Website*, http://www.stat.gov.mk/KlucniIndikator_i_en.aspx, Last accessed: 26.11.2015.
- 3 Source: Finance Think, *EdPlako Application*, <<http://www.edplako.mk/истражувања/>>.
- 4 Leslie McCall, “The Complexity of Intersectionality”, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* Vol.30 No.3. (2005): 1771.

ple realities of disadvantages, power relations, privileges and exclusion beyond a single-axis approach and on multiple levels (the individual, the symbolic and the structural level). It is a challenging approach, but also a challenged one. Scholars have ventured into an in-depth critique of intersectionality as both a theory and a methodology, including in how it is put to practice by researchers.⁵

It is exactly because it enables study of power relations and privileges and disadvantages, that we chose intersectionality as a field to situate our research project “(In)equality in social protection: Multi-level analysis of intersectionality in social assistance provision – A comparative study” conducted in two post-socialist and post-conflict countries – Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. We understood intersectionality as the system of “interactions between inequality-creating social structures, symbolic representations and identity constructions that are context-specific, topic-orientated and inextricably linked to social praxis”⁶ The aim of our research was to study social need from an intersectional perspective, identifying and mapping out the dynamics and characteristics of power relations as potential sources of inequalities, and to see in what ways these are either reconfirmed, perpetuated, and reconstructed, or alleviated and eliminated at the individual, symbolic and structural levels, as well as to study the interactions between these levels. We were, then, concerned with the question how social protection policies in Macedonia address multiple inequalities of persons that are or ought to be users of the social protection system, with a particular focus on the inequalities at the intersections, what impact this has on the livelihood of these persons, and how this can be improved.

Our findings suggest that intersecting categories of inequality produce a diverse set of self-reported needs and coping strategies. This will be demonstrated with the six groups discussed below. The narratives of our interviewees reveal overwhelming dissatisfaction with the social protection system because it fails to address their basic needs, but even more so – because of its punitive character. Further inquiry in the social protection system suggests that existing policy framework (at least declaratively) makes initial steps towards acknowledging intersecting inequalities of users or ought to be users of the social protection system. Nevertheless, further efforts are needed to assess and address existing vulnerabilities of persons situated at the intersection of various categories of inequalities.

This paper presents the findings from the research conducted in Macedonia. It is structured as follows: First, we report on the methodology and methods employed to conduct the research and provides how we understood some of the terms which we frequently use in our study.⁷ Then, we focus on the findings on the individual, symbolic and structural level, followed by an investigation into the intersections across these, i.e. of both categories and levels. The last section presents the findings of the intersectional analysis of the existing laws and policies in the field of social protection. We summarise our findings in the section on the conclusions. We close the section with the main concerns stemming from the lived experiences of our interviewees, phrased as recommendations issued by our interviewees themselves. We kindly refer the readers to our Policy Brief for a detailed overview of all recommendations issued.⁸

5 An up to date recent overview can be found in: Vivan M. May, *Pursuing Intersectionality, Unsettling Dominant Imaginaries* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

6 Gabriele Winker and Nina Degele, “Intersectionality as multi-level analysis: Dealing with social inequality”, *European Journal of Women’s Studies* Vol.18 No.1 (2011), 54.

7 Due to space limitations, this paper does not include an overview of the theoretical framework. In stead, the readers are kindly directed to consult Chapter I from our Collection of Working Papers, which can be found on the websites of both our organizations: www.epi.org.mk and www.analitika.ba

8 To be found on EPI’s website: www.epi.org.mk



1. Methodology and methods

The epistemological foundations of feminist studies, where intersectionality originated, are lived experiences, or, as May puts it, engaging with the “knowers’ social location on an intimate or personal level and within wider, macropolitical frames”⁹ whilst its ontology “accounts for multiplicity and complex subjectivity, reconceptualises agency, and attends to simultaneous privilege and oppression”¹⁰. These foundations informed our research design.

We asked ourselves the following two main questions:

Q1: What categories of inequality can be identified as shaping lived experiences of persons that are or ought to be users of the social protection system, including their experiences with the symbolic and structural environment, if looking at self-reported everyday needs and coping strategies?

Q2: Do the social protection systems in place in the two countries capture and/or address the categories of inequality of the persons that are or ought to be users of the social protection system, as identified in Q1? What does this tell us about the potential of the systems to tackle inequalities, and how this can be improved?

In order to answer the first question, we put to practice the multi-level intersectional analysis model of Gabriele Winker and Nina Degele. This model proposes using eight steps for analysing the data, which can be repeated as many times as needed; the order is not prescriptive. Steps 1-4 deal with single cases, whereas from step 5 onwards, one moves from a single case to comparing and clustering. This model offers a possibility for looking into the individual, symbolic and structural level, as well as at the intersections of these three levels. We start by delving the complexities of everyday lives of persons that are or ought to be users of the social protection system to identify categories of inequality linked to their self-reported basic needs and the coping strategies they employ to overcome hardship. The starting premise is that different forms of exclusions and disadvantages produce specific inequalities that manifest differently in the lived experiences of the interviewees.

Firstly, we look at the ways in which combined rather than cumulative effects of these categories of inequality create specific realities and everyday practices in the lives of persons that are, or ought to be, users of the social protection system in Macedonia. Thirty-three persons that are or ought to be users of the social protection system were interviewed and provided us

9 Vivan M. May, *Pursuing Intersectionality, Unsettling Dominant Imaginaries* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 34.
10 Ibid, 34.

Figure No.1: Research process



with insights into the realities they live. Our interviewees comprise a diverse group of persons with disabilities, carers of persons with disabilities, single parents, homeless person, LGBTIQ persons, and domestic violence survivors.

Secondly, through the narratives of our interviewees, we seek to gain insight in the norms, values and ideologies they embody, perpetuate or reject. Since these symbolic representations do not exist in a vacuum, we analysed media articles covering our topic of interest and we conducted a focus group discussion with non-users of the social protection system to reveal dominant norms, ideologies and representations that operate in the Macedonian society.

Thirdly, in order to understand how interviewees relate to social structures, the experiences and perspectives on the system of social protection by its users or ought to be users were evaluated against existing policy documents, and primarily social protection laws, policies and strategies.

Whether inequalities at the intersections are targeted in social protection, and how, was the main focus of our second research question. We answered this question by analysing national laws and policies through Lombardo and Agustin's quality criteria for assessing intersectionality in EU gender policies¹¹, which we complemented with Lombardo and Verloo's suggestion for looking at whether the policy applies a transformative approach to intersectionality, how "gendered" policies are, as well as whether the policy at stake avoids stigmatization of people and groups at different points of intersections.¹² We explain this approach further in the relevant section below.

11 Emanuela Lombardo and Lise Rolandsen Agustin. "Framing Gender Intersections in the European Union: What Implications for the Quality of Intersectionality in Policies?" *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, (2011). 488-512..

12 Emanuela Lombardo and Mieke Verloo, "Institutionalising Intersectionality in the European Union? Policy Developments and Contestations" *The International Feminist Journal of Politics* Vol. 11 No. 4 (2009).

Notes on Terminology

We have used consistently the following terms with the following meaning:

Intersectionality: a system of “interactions between inequality-creating social structures, symbolic representations and identity constructions that are context-specific, topic-orientated and inextricably linked to social praxis”.¹³

Gender: Includes the male-female binary and their normalization, including the ‘natural’ heterosexuality of gender and gender relations, i.e heteronormativity.¹⁴

“Race”: Social construct which is a result of the normalisation and ascription of ‘natural’ quality to existing power and domination relations, on grounds of alleged natural (genetic and body) differences, but is actually based on symbolism and is an outcome of the power relations existing in society.¹⁵

Body: Product of culture, resulting from perceptions and understanding rather than nature, and encompassing its potential for mechanical, genetic and other alterations, aiming for increasing ‘bodily capability’ for achieving ‘performativity’.¹⁶

Class: Class includes social origin, cultural resources acquired through education and profession, as well as resources stemming from social ties and contacts; it includes a process of ‘naturalisation’ of class, seen through the belief in mobility and possibility to move up the class ladder by personal improvement and optimisation.¹⁷

Social protection: A key component of social policy which prevents, manages and overcomes situations which adversely affect people’s wellbeing, and “helps individuals to maintain their living standard when confronted by contingencies such as illness, maternity, disability or old age; market risks, such as unemployment; as well as economic crises or natural disasters”.¹⁸

Social assistance: A form of social protection which, seen in its more narrow and definably functional scope, encompasses providing minimum income as a means to prevent poverty.¹⁹

13 Gabriele Winker and Nina Degele, “Intersectionality as multi-level analysis: Dealing with social inequality”, *European Journal of Women’s Studies* Vol.18 No.1 (2011), 54.

14 Inspired by: Ibid, 55, 64

15 Inspired by: Ibid, 55

16 Inspired by: Ibid, 55-56

17 Inspired by: Ibid, 55.

18 United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, *Combating Poverty and Inequality: Structural Change, Social Policy and Politics* (Geneva: UNRISD, 2010), 135.

19 Thomas Bahle, Michaela Pfeifer and Claus Wendt, “Social Assistance” in Francis G. Castel et al (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of the Welfare State* (OUP 2010), 448.



2. Individual level

It is well known that inequalities are generated through interplay and intersection of personal characteristics and power relations. Their effects shape our interviewees' lived experiences and everyday realities. Furthermore, intersecting categories of inequality pre-determine their available coping strategies and hamper their ability to satisfy basic needs. The following section focuses on the interactions and dependencies of categories of inequality on individual level stemming from the data gathered from interviews with persons that are, or ought to be, users of the social protection system.

Using the model of Winker and Degele's multi-level analysis,²⁰ we analysed the data from the interviews following five steps. We first sought to understand interviewees' identity constructions by looking for markers of both belonging and "otherness" and identifying categories of differentiation that serve as "self-positioners". Secondly, we identified symbolic representations such as, norms, values and dominant ideologies that impact the livelihoods of our interviewees. Some of the symbolic representations, which serve as self-positioners, were overtly expressed by the interviewees, while others remain invisible in their expression, yet could clearly be identified to have had a role in shaping their worldview and experiences. Thirdly, we looked at how our interviewees relate to social structures in place such as, institutions, laws and policies. In the fourth step, we identified central categories of difference on all three levels – the individual, symbolic and structural level to uncover most important subject constructions for each interviewee. As suggested by Winker and Degele, we took note of the occurrence of categories on several levels as a marker of higher importance. Finally, once we identified the most important individual subject constructions, we clustered and compared them. The groups were constructed around social practices related to our dimensions of analysis, namely the interviewees' self-reported needs and coping strategies. The groups reflect biggest internal homogeneity and biggest external heterogeneity.

The six groups presented in Table 2.1. are the outcome of this analytical process. These groups are discussed in greater detail in the following sections. Each section explains who the interviewees included in the constructed group are, what are their self-reported everyday needs, and what coping strategies they have developed to meet their basic needs. To safely preserve their anonymity, all interviewees are referred to using pseudonyms.

Table 2.1.: The types of relationships between the two dimensions of analysis (self-reported needs and developed coping strategies) in the case of Macedonia

| Groups | Interviews [pseudonyms] | Self-reported needs | Coping strategies |
|--|--|--|---|
| Recognition of body capability | Orhan, Bekim, Jadranka, Drita, Dragana, Petar, Fatmir | Being recognized as a valuable member of society | Active engagement in civil society and seeking (public) employment |
| Making one's own way though life | Stojan, Marina, Stasha | No financial or other support | Relying fully on oneself |
| Securing the future of the child/dependant | Beti, Petra, Violeta, Stefan, Irena, Sasho, Blaga, Lutvija, Arta, Dushanka | Child/dependant | Organizing one's whole life around the dependant |
| Fighting for bare survival | Ramiz, Mersiha, Senad, Nenad, Stojna, Goran, Ana | Struggling to make ends meet | Multitude of coping strategies to provide for basic needs such as food for oneself and the family |
| Overcoming abusive relationships | Marija, Pavlina | Abusive relationship | Support from family/children to cope with abusive relationship |
| Relying on family support | Fitim, Senada, Iva, Nina | Perceived full incapacity to work | Family support |

2.1 Recognition of body capability

The first group is comprised of seven persons with acquired disabilities whose primary identified need is recognition of their body capability. For this group, the quest for such recognition manifests in their attempts to engage in the (formal) economy and materializes in a specific form of agency linked to their disability activism.

All interviewees in this group have acquired a disability,²¹ resulting in their primary construction of the self via their disability. However, their disability experiences cannot be generalized, as each of them is unique and distinct. This diversity is reflected in their attitude towards the disability and the meanings attached to it, which are multifaceted and nuanced. For example, Orhan, a person with sight impairment portrays himself as “*equal to those that can see*”. In contrast, others have identified themselves with the mobility aid they use to the extent that the object becomes the personification of the individual. Dragana, for example, refers to herself and her peers as “we, the wheelchairs”.

Disability is the primary identity marker whereas “healthy” persons, equated with the able-bodied, constitute “the other”, or in the words of Petar: “*You’re an invalid, you’re not healthy*”. The “healthy vs. invalid” dichotomy feeds their struggle with the dominant norm about the abled body (a body fit to work) prevalent on the symbolic and structural level. For both the interviewees on individual level and, as we will later see the focus group participants on the symbolic level, “healthy” signifies better social standing. “Healthy” persons do not need social protection because “healthy” persons are able-bodied and are considered as capable of engaging in income-generating activities. In this sense, ability and disability are viewed in direct opposition.

21 Half of the interviewees in this group acquired disabilities as adults, while for the rest the disability was acquired via accidents and/or illness as children.

The “healthy vs. invalid” binary is reconfirmed on a structural level, as the two main financial benefits are distributed to those that are able to work and to those that are not, namely social financial assistance recipients and permanent financial assistance recipients. All the persons in this group receive or used to receive permanent financial assistance. To receive permanent social assistance, a person must be “incapacitated to work” and have no income (or household income from all sources is lower than the amount of the permanent financial assistance- 3.677 MKD in 2015²²). Thus, the main criteria to continue receiving social assistance is linked with an inability to work and having no or limited income. In fact, receiving financial means other than general social assistance is a ground for discontinuance of financial assistance.

However, there is an overarching consensus among our interviewees as to the insufficient amount of social assistance. For this reason, five out of seven interviewees (all of the women and two of the men) in this group actively seek work and/or are engaged in informal economic activities. Drita, an ethnic Albanian rural woman provides cleaning services in the nearby town. Jadranka, an ethnic Macedonian woman with a disability makes jewellery and sells it using social media; while Orhan plays music at weddings and other celebrations to make ends meet. Their coping strategies are predetermined by their gender, with women undertaking what are perceived as classic “female appropriate jobs” (pink-collar jobs), while men rely on tasks seen as “male appropriate jobs”.

Although assistance would be discontinued if they engage in formal economic work, the majority of the interviewees prefer this option rather than relying on the amount of social assistance funds provided by the state. The interviewees in this group reject the notion of social freeloaders, but acknowledge a need of assistance on grounds of disability. They insist that the State should provide the necessary accommodation for them in order to enable them to live under their full body capability. All of them face challenges navigating their daily lives in non-accessible environments in public spaces:

“*In [home town] all the institutions are situated on the second floor, social services, employment agency, everything... with all the stairs, they are completely inaccessible... someone has to come down and help a person to reach social services.*”

Only two persons in this group do not rely on informal economic activities. Petar is an ethnic Macedonian father and husband harbouring feelings of hopelessness in terms of improving his situation because of his perceived inability to engage in the labour market. Similarly, Bekim, one of the ethnic Albanian male interviewees with a disability, also perceives himself as incapable to work and relies heavily on the financial assistance provided by his brother. However, both men stated that the State should do more in terms of providing reasonable accommodation for them to be able to function autonomously as much as possible.

All interviewees recognize age as an important factor influencing their ability to improve their situation. Similarly, previous studies note that age-based discrimination is mostly predominant in employment and labour relations.²³ According to the Equal Opportunities Barometer Survey, almost 40% of respondents believe that age-based discrimination is very common in the country and it is perceived as a fifth ground of discrimination, after political affiliation, ethnic background, sexual orientation and disability.²⁴

22 Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, “Right to Permanent Financial Allowance”, *Ministry of Labour and Social Policy Website*, http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/uslugi-ns_article-pravo-na-postojana-paricna-pomosh.nsp, Last accessed: 27.11.2015.

23 Bekim Kadriu and Bujar Ahmedi, “Age Discrimination in the Republic of Macedonia and the Approach of the Constitutional Court,” *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, (2015), 244.

24 Jasmina Mihailoska and Misha Popovic, *Equal Opportunities Barometer* (Skopje: Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, 2013), 11.

In their narratives, our interviewees reflected on the lack of jobs for “young people” let alone for older ones pointing to difficult economic circumstances in the country. Smaller towns and villages have been particularly affected by the lack of employment opportunities. As Dragana said:

“They don’t employ healthy people, let alone invalids... and even if they want to employ me, there are no jobs in [her hometown].”

Significant gender differences are also at play in this group. In terms of their marital status, all of the women are presently single (one divorced, one separated, and one never married) and live alone or with members of their parental families. The four men are married and live with their wives and children. None of the women in this group have biological offspring. It has been previously noted that women with disabilities are largely perceived “to be asexual and unfit to live with a partner and be mothers”.²⁵ The possible source of this is viewing mothers as caring figures, which women with disabilities cannot be, and especially not in circumstances marked by lack of public services to assist them in undertaking such a role.²⁶ This can be additionally burdening for our female interviewees as, in the Macedonian context, motherhood is a valued social status. Furthermore, a woman is not perceived as “complete” if she hasn’t experienced the “bliss” of motherhood. Thus, womanhood is highly associated with motherhood, since it is considered to give meaning to women’s existence, a purpose in women’s lives.²⁷

One of the women took over mothering responsibilities over her younger family members. Jadranka’s life story is framed by several tragic events: she survived a car accident in which she lost her partner and the ability to walk. Shortly after she lost her mother as well. While still struggling to navigate her daily life in a wheelchair, she took care of her niece (as her older sister left the child to her) since she was six months old. The caring work she performs constitutes a large part of her identity. Except for her, all the other interviewees have secured housing. Jadranka attempts to obtain social housing for her and her niece:

“I wish for my girl to be secure...during the time that we still have together until she gets married... I want for us to live our lives better.”

Without exception, the men in this group, see themselves as the breadwinners in their families. Their female spouses assume caretaking roles. The women are either self-sustaining, or also benefit from the help of another female family member, which signifies that caring work is predominantly carried out by women. In addition, the women in this group are less educated than the men. Only Jadranka has completed high school education, whereas the other women did not study further following elementary education. In comparison, Orhan has a university degree and the other three men have completed high school.

Explicit intersection of ethnicity, disability and place of residence is identified in the lived experience of Drita, a rural ethnic Albanian woman who faces numerous mobility obstacles. She observed that the able-bodied persons in her surrounding are reluctant to provide help because they perceive disability as shameful:

“I have had sixteen surgeries, and people stare if I wear something short in the summer. I don’t have scars but still it is visible I’ve had surgeries. I think it’s the mentality;

25 European Disability Forum, *2nd Manifesto on the Rights of Women and Girls with Disabilities in the European Union: A Toolkit for Activists and Policymakers* (Budapest: General Assembly of the European Disability Forum, 2011), 8.

26 Ružica Boškic et al, “Everyday Life of Disabled Persons in Slovenia”, *Revija za sociologiju* Vol.39, No.4 (2008), 251–265.

27 Illká Thiessen, *Waiting for Macedonia: Identity in a Changing World* (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2007).

people don't mind their own business and stare. If you don't want to help, the least you can do is not to stare.

Drita experiences this association particularly in her village, noting a harsher stigmatization of disability in rural areas, which according to her is in sharp contrast to how persons with disabilities are treated in other countries. Similarly, Bekim also mentions better treatment of persons with disabilities abroad.

Religion plays a role for some of the interviewees. Fatmir, an Albanian Muslim man, believes the accident in which he acquired his disability as “God’s will”. In addition, his financial coping strategies are linked with belonging to this specific religious and ethnic group. He noted that the mosque as an institution, along with his community of friends and relatives, has been very helpful in collecting donations for him to be able to afford medical services and to make ends meet. This was particularly beneficial after the discontinuation of the social assistance, which he suffered on the grounds of receipt of remittances.

In terms of coping strategies, for three of the interviewees (one male and the two females), borrowing is a coping strategy that they rely on, whereas for one of the male interviewees, borrowing is a desired, yet unattainable coping strategy. Saving on food is a coping strategy employed by two of the female interviewees in this group, as Dragana illustrates:

“If you buy a loaf of bread you will make it last for two days. You’ll buy cans of tuna (the larger ones) only when there are discount sales on, so you can get three for the price of two. You’ll mix one can with onions, and eat half for breakfast and half for dinner.

In the face of their personal struggles, all seven interviewees in this group play an active role in the civil society sector in Macedonia. The majority of them hold decision-making positions in their respective organizations. They move beyond their individual hardship to contribute towards overall positive societal change.

It is through their quest for gainful (formal) employment and their disability activism that they actively refute societally imposed notions of passivity and dependency linked with disability. In their everyday practices, they continuously challenge stereotypes about persons with disabilities as passive, helpless, unproductive members of the society through their activism and engagement in the labor market. They embrace an empowering stance and move away from the abovementioned stereotypes, but also a take stance against the neoliberal notion of productivity and what an able-body is.

2.2 Making one’s own way through life

For the three interviewees in this group, self-reliance is at the core of their self-identification. They perceive themselves as having responded with resilience to their challenging life trajectories and employ various coping strategies to make their own way through life. This group consists of a single father of a child with intellectual disability, a trans-gender sex worker, and a single mother of a three-year old.

Stojan is a single father and widower who cares for his child with disability. Aside from losing his wife, Stojan also lost his job in the transition period, due to the privatization-related processes. He is still formally unemployed. He lost his parents at a young age and has not been in touch with his brother in several years. As Stojan begins his story as follows:

“I come from a village, I live in a city, was raised in a miserably poor family. I paid for my education, I did everything by myself as a bachelor, bought an apartment, all alone, without the support of my parents (...) I never asked for help from anyone.

Similarly Marina, a young single mother of a three-year old, has been rejected by her family because of her choice of partner and for deciding to keep the child. Her decision to leave her “irresponsible partner” left her homeless during pregnancy. Having nobody to turn to for help, she sought shelter in a religious institution. Although she found a safe space to carry her pregnancy to term, she developed a chronic illness constraining her from undertaking jobs that require her to stand on her feet for long hours.

Stasha is a Roma transgender sex worker and a survivor of various forms of gender-based violence, ranging from domestic violence to street harassment. Her account highlights the disadvantaged situation Roma face in Macedonia, particularly in terms of poverty and limited access to education, employment, and housing. She was born and raised in the largest Roma settlement - Shuto Orizari - and substituted regular schooling for evening school in order to get more free time to engage in financially gainful activities. She reports to have resorted to sex work at the age of 15, as a result of her quest for a life away from poverty:

“I was young, I didn’t think it through, maybe I was also eager to taste hazelnut chocolate, and I tried hazelnut chocolate [in the bar] and I was very happy about it, and that I could drink original juice, to get a phone. I never had a phone before.

Her family’s inability to understand the fluidity of her gender identity and sexual orientation coupled with disapproval of her line of work led to multiple instances of domestic violence. In addition, she experiences street harassment almost on daily basis. Stasha has also been subjected to structural violence perpetrated by the police and institutions:

“[The police] will find out what you do for living and they will harass you, sometimes they ask for sex and abuse you, and then they will tell you: it’s your fault, what were you doing there. So what if you report violence, if you don’t watch your own back, nobody will, not the police, not the social service.

72.2 % of Roma women in Macedonia have experienced domestic violence.²⁸ LGBTIQ persons who provide sexual services face an even greater danger of violence and abuse.²⁹

For both single parents, care work occupies much of their time leaving limited space for social life and personal development. Similar to the third group of interviewees, for these two single parents caring for their children is their primary concern. Unlike the majority of parents/guardians in the third group, these two interviewees carry an additional burden that stems from lone parenting, having to both care and provide for their children, while frequently lacking support networks.

The two single parents receive social assistance, whereas the transgender sex worker’s social assistance has been discontinued because she received a small honorarium on her bank account from doing work for a civil society organization. In terms of their class positioning, the similarities are further visible through the resolved housing issue, which brings much pride and alleviates a large portion of the worry of all three interviewees. Of the three, the single mother

28 Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *National Strategy on Prevention and Protection against Domestic Violence*, (Skopje, 2012), 7.

29 Kristefer Stojanovski, et al, ““It Is One, Big Loneliness for Me”: The Influences of Politics and Society on Men Who Have Sex with Men and Transwomen in Macedonia” *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, (2015).

is in the most precarious position in terms of housing. She currently lives with her parents, but in the past occasional conflicts resulted in her relatives forcing her out of the household.

All three interviewees rely on the occasional provision of informal services. Stasha, the transgender person relies on sex work, hairdressing services and occasional work for a CSO. She managed to save for a small house by herself, through a work abroad she undertook some time ago. This house is her biggest pride, as she saved for it all by herself. Stojan, the single father provides sewing and taxi services and assistance to elderly persons from/to hospitals and other places when his child is at the day care centre. Afterwards, his time is completely occupied with caring for the child. All these obligations leave Stojan with no time for anything else. What some would label as “time poverty” has resulted in cutting family ties with his brother. He reports that his brother and his family stopped visiting him after he failed to return the visit on a number of occasions, saying that they simply cannot understand the time and resources that such a visit entails for him.

Marina, the single mother, actively seeks “any type of employment”, but is struggling to find one, as an artist with a postgraduate degree in a country with a high unemployment rate. In addition to her caretaking responsibilities that cause time constraints, it is her illness that prevents her from undertaking a job that includes long hours on her feet. Still, she is very resourceful in developing strategies for satisfying basic needs. For example, she doesn’t use public transport and walks everywhere to save money, buys discounted food, and provides clothes for her son from Facebook groups in which parents exchange baby clothing. Whereas she formerly often attended cultural events, following the birth of her child she now sees even the events with the cheapest tickets as being out of her reach:

“A few months ago, a band that I really like came to town, but I couldn’t afford to go. The price of the ticket and transport fare was too much for me.”

In this group, the body is a source of inequality for all interviewees, but in a very different way when compared to the first group, as well as within the group. Being completely consumed with caretaking over his child with a disability, Stojan almost embodies the disability himself, but he also highlights facing ageism on both a symbolic and structural level. Stojan believes elder people are not “employable”.

“I am almost sixty years old, nobody is employing [the elderly] anymore, everybody wants to hire 25-30 years-old people.”

Marina, on the other hand, has been subjected to appearance-based discrimination when seeking help from social services. She has been told that she “dresses too good to receive social assistance”. Yet, being highly educated, she is very informed about her rights; she navigates the system well and is very critical of it. This, in turn, frequently results in conflicting relations with social services employees. In addition, in terms of physical ill-being, she is the only person in this sample reporting that a simple cold can push her into serious deprivation because of costs of medicines, transport and an inability to work.

For Stasha, the transgender sex worker, her body alongside gender and age is central to her experiences. She feels excluded because of her appearance, and feels trapped in her body. She is convinced that hormonal therapy is no longer an option due to her age, which she mentions in the context of close family and their possible reaction to such a change should she decide to start the process now. Because of her appearance, persons working in the social service system and other state services have openly ridiculed her on several occasions.

Gender plays an important role in the case of Marina, the single mother who is very much gender-aware and critically voices her disapproval of the disadvantaged position of women in society. She has faced exclusion from the family due to her choice to become a single mother, and currently struggles with juggling between searching for a job, dealing with social-assistance related bureaucracy, being an active member of the society and taking care of her child.

Gender norms create a sense of low self-worth for Stojan, because he is struggling on a daily basis with having to do, as he says, “women’s work” by himself – a concept he repeated several times throughout the interview:

“I clean around the house, I make breakfast, lunch and dinner for my son, I do all house chores a woman does.

One of the most complex and nuanced accounts of intersecting gender, ethnicity, body and class inequalities identified through our research was in Stasha’s lived experiences. Being a trans-gender Roma and living within a Roma community limited her opportunities for so-called ‘upward mobility’. She stated that the quality of education is low in her municipality and that dropping out of school is seen as acceptable. Furthermore, substituting regular primary education for an “evening school” was not only seen as “normal”, but also as a better option since it allowed persons to engage in financially gainful activities. Thus, she sees following such a life path as only one in the path of many. Having regretted dropping out from school, years after she returned from working abroad, she enrolled in further (vocational) education and completed a hairdressing course. This has both filled her with pride and enabled her to rely on a socially acceptable provision of services, as opposed to the previous engagement as a sex worker.

Embedded in their narratives, and common to the three employees, is a sense of pride in achieving everything by themselves through hard work, resourcefulness and self-sacrifice. Faced with disrupted family relations, their sense of self-worth is further amplified because they have developed mechanisms to deal with the difficult circumstances in their lives even in the absence of familial support. They demonstrate strength in the face of hardship, each of them in their own particular manner, carrying much pride in their small everyday victories. Their determination to improve their livelihoods and those of their families is remarkable, even though their everyday struggles differ depending on the variety of intersecting grounds, as is shown in the examples above.

2.3 Securing the future of the child/dependant

All persons in this group parent and/or care for children/dependants with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities. Having felt the complete failure of the social welfare system to assist them with child/dependant care, the primary concern of this group of interviewees is to secure the future of the child/dependant. This is intensified by the worry of the child’s/dependant’s fate after their death. This responsibility not only places the body at the centre as a source of inequality, acquired by association, but it also takes priority over the interviewees’ genders and ethnicities, rendering their own body capability irrelevant. They exhibit a similar type of otherness as the interviewees from group one, regardless of the fact they themselves are not persons with disabilities. They too reiterate the perception that people without a disability can never know how it is to be a person with a disability, which brings to the surface the notion that having a child with a disability “brings disability” to whole family. As one of our interviewees explained:

“Nobody asks how you are, but I know how my soul hurts, both for me and for the child. Even if you talk to someone, people that have not been through this cannot understand, they’ll just hurt more for nothing. You have to be strong, and that’s it.”

What distinguishes groups one and three is that persons from the former reject the notion that people with disability are “punished by God”, which is a dominant belief of members of the latter group. As Stefan, a father of two children with disabilities who embodies this notion, explains: “*If God punished [children with disabilities], we should not do it as well*”. Since disability in their belief systems is seen as God’s punishment, there is implied victimization, along with a sense of helplessness in lieu of forces that are beyond their control.

The interviewees of this group are filled with feelings of isolation and self-sacrifice as well as with difficulties in accessing information and obtaining assistance and support from the institutions, ultimately resulting in significant levels of stress over the uncertain destinies of their children/dependants. Fear of the future is an overwhelming emotion for this group, since ensuring the children’s wellbeing upon parent/guardians’ death is a major source of concern. Their own emotional and physical wellbeing are subservient to the needs of their children. When describing herself Violeta stated: “*I am not a needy woman, I am fulfilled when my children are healthy, that’s what makes me happy*”. Similarly, Petra explained: “*even if we have to eat, we don’t; we save it for the children*”.

In the two-parent households, it is the women that assume the role of primary caregivers, while reporting occasional help from male spouses. The exception is Sasho - the retired father of a daughter with schizophrenia. He shares caring responsibilities over the daughter with his wife, who still works. He is also the primary caregiver of his ill mother. For the women in two-parent households who assume primary caring responsibilities involving intense family work and personal sacrifices, entering the labour market seems impossible due to the lack of services and support. Petra’s account emphasises the inequality by association:

“I want to work somewhere, but I can’t. [The child] sleeps till 8 o’clock, I have to take him to school at 9 o’clock, and if I were employed, I would need to be at work at 7-8 o’clock. I simply can’t.”

The school Petra refers to in the excerpt above is a daily centre for children with intellectual disabilities run by a non-governmental organization with the support of the municipality. Unlike Petra and some of the other caregivers in this group that have access to this type of services, Blaga, the single mother living in a rural area, is deprived of this opportunity. For her, along with inaccessible facilities for care and socialization of her child, stigmatizing societal attitudes and lower acceptance of children with disabilities in her village raise concerns. This instigated her (unsuccessful) advocacy for the provision of additional services.

The lived experiences of the two Roma women in this group show that ethnicity seems to complicate things further for these caregivers. Previous studies have also identified gender, ethnicity and poverty of Roma women as intersecting axes creating specific vulnerabilities and potential for discrimination.³⁰ The two Roma women in group both face dire financial conditions and struggle to put food on the table, with Petra occasionally selling flowers on the market and cleaning houses, and Lutvija asking for food from large stores. At the same time, these two interviewees also have the responsibility of caring for 4 and 5 children, respectively.

30 Amy J. Schulz and Leith Mullings, “Intersectionality and Health: An Introduction” in *Gender, Race, Class & Health: Intersectional Approaches*, Amy J. Schulz and Leith Mullings (eds) (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005).

The two single-parent households in this group are female-headed, but they both rely on pensions as a financial coping mechanism in addition to the social assistance they receive. In terms of their class positioning, the interviewees in this group who can rely on pensions usually perceive themselves as financially better off, since the pensions alleviate a considerable amount of stress associated with paying bills and making ends meet.

Residence in rural areas provides specific difficulties for the parents/caregivers associated with transportation costs and lack of appropriate childcare services, as reported by the three female interviewees in this group who live in villages. Arta takes her daughter from the village to a special school in the town every day by car and waits for three hours there until her classes are over:

“We bought the car just because of [daughter], so we don't have to wait for taxi in case she has a seizure.

She doesn't go back home during those three hours to minimize distance in case of a seizure and to decrease transportation costs. Subsequently, she is not able to engage in a financially gainful work, which is why she relies on the social assistance they receive and the income from her husband's occasional seasonal work. The other two interviewees rely on public transport.

The only two male interviewees in this group (Sasho, an ethnic Macedonian, and Stefan, an ethnic Serb) exhibit strong Yugo-nostalgic sentiments and a longing for the loss of social life resulting both from the transition and the occurrence of illness/disability in the family. Stefan mentions that at the time of Yugoslavia they regularly went to the theatre and cinema; now there is nothing to do:

“They can lie to someone else that we are now living better, but they cannot lie to us – adults. [...] We forgot what a theatre is, what a cinema is. All that we have now are TVs and we are all sucked into them TVs.

They also feel deprived due to not being able to enjoy their former rich social life, by regularly eating out, or hosting and entertaining guests in their homes as they used to. “I know all of the things that I could do with my money back then” remembers Stefan. Or, as Sasho reminisces his daughter's first birthday: “We had 70 guests in our house, singing, dancing for hours... Nowadays, nothing”. Irena, the young rural Macedonian woman who cares for her brother suffering from down syndrome also reports lacking a social life and personal time, even though she makes substantial efforts to include her brother in her group of friends and to increase others' awareness and acceptance of persons with disabilities:

“[We] are taking him out on Friday. All my friends are like: sure, sure he should come as well. It's not like I'm asking them if he should come, I am letting them know that he's coming, and nobody objects to it.

While the majority of women assume traditional gender roles of mothering and caring for their families, the strictest adherence to gendered division of labour is manifested by Violeta and Dushanka - Serbian and Macedonian, aged 63 and 73 respectively. Violeta believes that:

“A woman's job is to iron, to clean/wash. [...] He [the husband] does not help around the house, no, no, no. That is a woman's job. He helps only when guests come - cuts the cheese, brings the buns, or the drinks. And of course he helps with eating everything.

Similarly, Dushanka explained that women's tasks include “going to the market, cleaning, washing... men have other duties, like chopping wood”. Previous studies have also shown that older

respondents tend to have a more traditional outlook on appropriate female and male roles and responsibilities in the household.³¹

All the interviewees in this group report needing assistance in rearing their children and see a lack of services and late and insufficient social assistance as the main problems. Class, in terms of level of education, employment status (or status of a retired person) and social capital, plays an important role when assessing the positioning and accompanying underlying values. Persons with secondary and high(er) education seem to navigate the system better, and are either employed or retired, thus in a better financial situation, but also have better social capital. Although all interviewees were all openly critical of the State, it can easily be said that those in a more stable social and financial position were even more outspoken and critical of the state on their own behalf.

2.4 Fighting for bare survival

Bare survival is central to the fourth group of interviewees. All of them live in dire financial conditions and make extraordinary efforts to literally survive through to the end of the month. Except for one, none of the interviewees receive social assistance benefits. In two cases social assistance has been discontinued, while the rest of the persons have never received it.

Out of all thirty-three persons that participated in this study in Macedonia, these interviewees live in the most precarious conditions. The glimpses in the realities of their lives show everyday struggle to secure livelihood for themselves and their families. They all report material deprivation, physical and emotional ill-being, and mistreatment by institutions. The majority of them have also experienced violence. Feelings of exclusion, rejection and loneliness are overwhelming in this group. In addition, their narratives suggest powerlessness manifested as disbelief in their own ability to improve their living conditions.

Their basic needs revolve primarily around food and housing, with food being the foremost concern. One meal per day is the norm, frequently provided by soup kitchens on weekdays or their extended families. Considering that soup kitchens are the main providers for their daily meals and they do not work on weekends, acquiring enough food to survive through Saturdays and Sundays frequently poses insurmountable challenges. All of the interviewees in this group report housing and shelter as a source of distress. While some live in deplorable conditions with houses that are falling apart, deprived of electricity, heat, and basic appliances, others are homeless.

The origins of their situations differ, as do their coping strategies. For two persons (both Roma and living in the largest Roma settlement in the country) it seems that living in poverty is just the way it has forever been. This has had a strong impact on their class position and ability to improve their situation, leaving both of them without completed elementary education. Previous surveys have demonstrated low levels of educational attainment among Roma, with approximately 17% of adult Roma being illiterate coupled with lower levels of compulsory enrolment in elementary school.³² This significantly constrains their ability for so-called 'upward mobility'.

31 Reactor - Research in action, *Finding the key to the glass door: demystifying the reasons the women's low participation in the labour market* (Skopje, 2012), 18.

32 Christian Brueggemann, *Roma education in comparative perspective. Analysis of the UNDP/World Bank/EC Regional Roma Survey*, (Bratislava: UNDP, 2012), 22.

In an effort to make ends meet and provide food for a family of eleven persons, Ramiz relies on waste collection as the main financial coping strategy, given that the amount of social assistance which he receives is insufficient to cover basic living costs for all of them. His primary belief is that it is the individual's responsibility to provide for oneself – “*if we do not work, we will not eat; it's as simple as that. [...] Today it rains, so we can't go to work, so no food today*”. In doing this, he keeps some of his children from going to school in order to help with the work, however says he is “no fool” and knows how important education is and that his children will need to complete formal education at some point in time.

Senad, the second youngest Roma father in this group, relies on remittances and sex work as coping strategies, hiding the latter strategy from his wife, as well as his bisexual orientation. Being young and “able-bodied”, yet unable to find (public)³³ employment, he justifies sex work as the only way he can provide for his family: “*I do it for them, for the children, they have to eat. I don't take the money for myself.*”

Sexuality also comes into play for Mersiha, the lesbian Roma woman who is publicly open about her sexual orientation. Yet, her inability to find a suitable partner causes her significant distress. Living with her mother, she survives by providing occasional cleaning services.

In addition, it is noteworthy that all three female interviewees in this group state that it was exposure to violence that resulted in their lack of will to live and with depression. The ill and elderly widow was abused by her husband for decades. Following his death, she moved in with her son, and now lives in substandard conditions on a small pension. She relies on the soup kitchen for food. Feeling lonely and helpless, the only support she receives is from her daughters who occasionally provide her with food and medication. Access to medication for her is a major obstacle, as she is not able to provide prescribed therapy for herself. She manages by saving on medicines; she takes one pill per day instead of the prescribed three, in order to “have enough medication to make it through the month”.

On the other hand, two of the interviewees (Goran and Nenad, both male), describe themselves as drifters (with Nenad being also homeless) and both exhibit a strong sense of self-worth in having risen above their situation; both refuse to ask the system for assistance; as Goran explains:

“*I am not interested in social assistance. I don't need that; they should give it to other people who need it more than I do.*”

Nenad, considers himself highly intelligent, yet unacknowledged and disrespected by people and institutions. For him, homelessness is the source of many injustices he claims he has suffered, such as appearance-based discrimination by institutions. Explaining the treatment he received by the social services in his hometown, he stated:

“*They reject me, they tell me you're crazy, you come here dirty, you have a beard, you want to get us all sick.*”

‘Lookism’, in terms of dressing well and appearing well is seen as a sign of being better off. While Nenad reported mistreatment because of not looking well enough, Senad claimed that he had to justify to social services employees how he can afford to be well dressed, and still

33 The state is the biggest employer in Macedonia and the state employment is still perceived as more stable and a preferred option for majority of the population. See: *European Commission, Macedonia 2015 Report* (10.11.2015) <http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2015/20151110_report_the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia.pdf>. Last accessed: 28.11.2015, 48.

apply for social assistance. In his case, Senad's sister who lives abroad sends remittances and clothes, which he occasionally sells so he can provide food on the table for his children.

Faith and religion are a strong component of the interviewees' narratives in this very diverse group. All interviewees mention God, finding help, faith and comfort in religion. Disillusioned with humanity, faith in God is particularly strongly exhibited in the case of the two male drifters to the extent that they rely on God to help them through the day.

“Thank God I have perfected myself to a point where I don't need food and water for days. Yoga, meditation and a strong faith in God. Jesus Christ will show his almighty, merciful hand and protect me.

It is only in this group that religion stands out as unanimously important for all interviewees. Its most dominant presence is as a coping strategy. Previous studies have similarly shown a direct link between religiousness and poverty.³⁴

Despite their diversity, the interviewees in this group are experiencing marginalization and invisibility. They also experience neglect by the State, including by not providing any assistance and protection whatsoever and in relation to any aspect of their daily lives. Their struggles revolve around securing the 3 basic substances: food, shelter and personal safety.

2.5 Overcoming abusive relationships

The two women in this group are struggling with overcoming abusive relationships. The combination of gender (including by embodiment of traditional gender roles), low level of education (these are the only two women with incomplete elementary education from among the ethnic Macedonian women), rural background and experiences of domestic violence has barred them from any opportunities for improvement of their personal situation and has trapped them in poverty.

Central to their lived experiences is the domestic violence they have survived, perpetrated by their intimate male alcohol-dependent partners. Both have been left to manage the consequences of these relationships without any support from State institutions.

Marija has left her abusive relationship after enduring years of severe battering of both her and her children leaving her with an officially estimated 90% "incapability to work". She has two teenage children, on which she relies for emotional support, and her family (primarily her father) for financial support. Although benefitting from State provided social housing, she is overburdened with worries of paying the bills.

Pavlina is formally married and lives with her husband, yet she explicitly states she does not feel married because her husband fully relies on her to cater to all of his needs. She manages acquiring some food by helping in the local soup kitchen and bringing home food from there. She formerly cleaned houses for work, however she now has injuries due to which she cannot do this type of work any longer. Her daughters have been very supportive of her, including by providing finances whenever possible, and by encouraging her to divorce, which she does not want to do as she sees divorce as shameful. In both cases the emotional support comes from the children.

34 Tomas James Rees, "Is Personal Insecurity a Cause of Cross-National Differences in the Intensity of Religious Belief?" *Journal of Religion and Society* 11 (2009): 1-24.

The two women have been raised in rural areas and have not completed elementary education. They embody traditional gender roles assuming that it is the men's responsibility to be the breadwinner, as illustrated in the words of Pavlina: "*We know how it should be done, the man should work, he should bring money in the home*".

Bodily constraints prevent them from working and improving their situation, which seem to have resulted from the abusive relationships to which they have both been subjected to and the reasons for enduring in the relationship are, as mentioned above, related to the embodiment of gender norms and social stigma tied to the divorce. Their class - rural environment and lack of education, seem to have contributed further to fortifying the embodiment of these norms.

For Marija, the single mother and social assistance recipient, the amount she receives (even though insufficient to cover basic costs of living) still provides a source of financial stability. This is not the case for Pavlina; she can only rely on the financial support of her daughters and meals provided in the soup kitchen. Lack of financial means and support network, along with upholding beliefs that divorces is shameful, contribute to her inability to leave her abusive husband and exposes her to further abuse.

The children's age is a factor which determines coping strategies for Pavlina since her married daughters provide occasional financial support. However, age is a cause for further distress for Marija as she can barely afford to educate her teenage children. The financial constraints worsen her already complicated family relations, as she also needs to deal (on daily basis) with her younger son's misunderstanding as to the origin of the dire financial situation in which they are in.

Although both women are ethnic Macedonians, so are their abusive partners, it seems that ethnicity is the only category of the four that did not come to the fore. Despite this, special attention needs to be drawn to previous research which found that the highest percentage of alcohol abuse to be among ethnic Macedonians. That research also suggested that such prevalence is expected, considering the ethnic representation of ethnic Macedonians in the overall population. However, the numbers clearly show that it is only among ethnic Macedonians that the percentages of representation among alcohol (ab)users are higher than the representation in the overall population.³⁵

2.6. Relying on family support

Faced with an inability to work, these four interviewees fully rely on family support. They are beneficiaries of social assistance, yet the amount they receive is insufficient to grant them any degree of economic independence. In absence of support from the State, to escape impoverishment and deprivation, their reliance on family support is the primary (or even the only) attainable coping strategy.

This diverse group consists of three persons with a disability (two women and a young man) and a single mother. Nina is a married mother of two living in town near-by the capital. Senada is a divorced mother of two who was abandoned by her husband following an accident in

35 Valentina Ivanoska, The Impact of Alcohol on Fat Metabolism among Alcoholics [Влијанието на алкохолот врз метаболизмот на масти кај алкохоличарите]", *Website of the University "Goce Delcev*, <http://eprints.ugd.edu.mk/10285/1/_ugd.edu.mk_private_UserFiles_katerina.hadzivasile_Desktop_magisterska.....pdf>. Last accessed: 25.11.2015.

which she acquired a disability. Iva is a single mother that has recently given birth to her first child, and Fitim is a young man with a disability living in a small town near the border.

For Nina, Senada and Fitim, their experiences with disability have shaped a large part of their identity. They primarily identify with their disability, as it tops other facets of identity. For the women in the group, however, it is not only disability, but also motherhood that shape their experiences. Having married young and acquired her disability soon after having her first child, Nina's experiences of disability and illness are deeply intertwined with those of motherhood. For Iva, the single mother, motherhood is the primary marker of her identity. It is also the cause that pushed her into being dependent on her parents, as the only way to cope with adverse economic conditions and looming poverty.

Senada is the only person in this group who relies on remittances, whereas the other three rely on financial support from their family – parents in the cases of Iva and Fitim, and spouse in the case of Nina. Save for Senada, who has completed primary education, the other three interviewees have high school degrees. Before giving birth, the single mother was employed. Nina, on the other hand, has (unsuccessfully) attempted to start her own shelter company. Nina's husband works two jobs to support the family:

“*This is a very expensive disease. We would have been rich if it wasn't for this disease. I have to eat special food, nuts, vitamins, fresh juices...if you don't have the money to buy vitamins you won't be able to recover.*

The place of residence is a significant factor in their lives, yet in a very different manner. All of them live in smaller towns. For the persons with disabilities this means limited/non-existent mobility and accessibility infrastructure, whereas for Iva, the able-bodied single mother, it brought certain privileges in dealing with the social services. Describing her encounters with social service employees, she noted that:

“*I might have had an advantage for knowing both of [social service employees], they were nice to me.*

For Nina, the ethnic Macedonian woman with a disability, keeping her status of social assistance recipient a secret is also related to the place of residence, along with the perception that receiving social assistance is shameful and those who receive it are freeloaders. For Fitim, the young Albanian man with a disability, living in a smaller town, facing high unemployment rates and youth migration affects his social life adversely, as many of his friends have migrated:

“*The situation is very difficult at the moment, young people leave, and every day you hear about new persons leaving... there are no young people left here anymore...*

In terms of gender, all three women in this group are mothers and they all share concern for the future of their children. The two mothers with teenage children, Nina and Senada, particularly worry about children's employment. Senada, the divorced ethnic Albanian woman feels as if she is a burden to the family, fully dependent on their mercy:

“*I don't pay any bills, I cannot pay for anything else, the social assistance barely covers some medicines... I live as a subtenant here, if my brother decides to kick me out of the house tomorrow, I will be left on the street. I have nothing.*

Her hope is that her children will provide for her. This is also related to the common expectation that children should care for aging parents. Her mobility is limited and dependent on support from other members of the family. Movement outside the household is also con-

strained because, as she explained, when she needs a helping hand men are not willing to assist her because “touching women that are not your own is shameful and not allowed”.

An additional explanation for this attitude could be that she lives in a very small town that is largely inhabited by ethnic Albanians. As Dimova explains, Albanian women’s bodies are perceived by Albanian men as carriers of culture and preservers of the heritage (as in the case of other ethnicities), with dire need for their sexuality to be controlled to protect the “purity” of the lineage.³⁶

For Nina, the ethnic Macedonian woman with disability, gender roles are also important because she made a conscious effort during the interview to make it clear that she is a “good housewife and a mother” (capable of cleaning, cooking, and caring for the family) despite her disability. For Iva, the single mother, it is the combination of a small child (16 months at the time of the interview), lack of childcare services and ageism are obstacles to job finding that put her in a position of relying on her family to provide housing and financial support (from her parents’ pensions). The manner in which families care for their children in need reflects the widely accepted and repeated norm in our sample, and that is that *children’s needs come first*.

Unlike the first group of persons with disabilities who actively strive towards full participation in society, the interviewees with disabilities in this group are less inclined to refute societal norms portraying persons with disabilities as passive, unproductive members of society. However, that does not change the fact that the persons in this group are trapped in economic dependency on their families. They are unable to undertake gainful employment, yet the amount they receive is too small to cover for their basic expenses. For these persons, their respective families compensate what the State fails to provide.

36 Rozita Dimova, *Ethno-baroque: Materiality, Aesthetics, and Conflict in Modern-day Macedonia* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), 88.



3. Symbolic level

On the symbolic level, we sought to find dominant hegemonic norms and values that explain the position of persons that are, or ought to be, users of the social protection system. In order to analyse the symbolic level, we have resorted to two sources of data – media articles and perceptions of the general population. For the first we used media articles, sampled and analysed as described in the section “Methodology and methods” above. For the perceptions of the general population, in lack of existing data on the very specific symbolic representations raised by our interviewees, we resorted to generating data via a focus group of the general population, the details of which are also elaborated in the section “Methodology and methods”.

The most widely held belief among the users of social protection in our sample is “better something than nothing”. In sum, this encompasses an exculpation of the State’s responsibility to provide protection, acknowledgement of the provision, and of its insufficiency. Thus, although there is shared agreement as to the insufficient amount of social assistance, the notion of “better something than nothing” was reproduced by almost all recipients of social assistance in our sample. Interviewees consider social assistance as something that the State gives them gratuitously, rather than something the State is Constitutionally obliged to provide. This notion of gratitude associated with receiving social assistance can be explained by expectations stemming from the previous system. During socialist times, the State took the role of a parent by establishing and catering to the needs of the citizens-children.³⁷ In this set of relations, the citizens “were presumed to be grateful recipients - like small children in a family - of the benefits their rulers decided upon them” a state which Verdery terms as “socialist paternalism”.³⁸

Focus group participants expressed similar opinions in relation to the assistance being small and insufficient. The participants wonder how persons that are, or ought to be, users of the social protection system manage to survive, “while living in misery”, and “practicing the art of survival” lingered throughout the discussion. Similarly, “surviving” is how some of the interviewees describe their everyday lives.

However, according to the focus group participants, not everyone is equally entitled to social assistance benefits. The focus group discussion revealed a “hierarchy of entitlement”. Able-bodied, and particularly young persons should work instead of relying on State support. For the participants, persons with disabilities and ill persons are “entitled” to receiving social

37 Katherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 63.

38 Ibid.

assistance as they are perceived as fully incapable to work and to provide for themselves, further reinforcing the widely accepted norm that the state should help the persons with disabilities:

“Only persons with natural handicap should receive social assistance, people who are born that way, or become that way later in life, people who cannot work to provide for themselves” (MK-FG-04).

Linked with the notion of entitlement is the frequently stated belief among the focus group participants, that receiving social assistance is shameful. According to them, many social assistance recipients conceal their reliance on social welfare because they are ashamed of it, as the following discussion illustrates:

“MK-FG-05: I don't know anyone who is proud to be a social case, I've never heard of it

MK-FG-01: they are hiding it, they are ashamed.

Moderator: is it shameful to receive social assistance?

MK-FG-03: it is shameful.

MK-FG- 04: if you are healthy, it is shameful, you should not receive social assistance at all. There are justifications for which persons it is shameful and for which it is not.

On the individual level, many interviewees reject this notion by openly stating that they are not ashamed of receiving social assistance. Interviewees that keep their social assistance recipient status a secret claim they are ashamed from their children or from someone telling their children that they receive social assistance.

Closely related to the belief that receiving social assistance is shameful is the conviction (primarily held by the middle-aged men in the focus group) that it is the individual's responsibility to provide for oneself, stemming from the belief that you make your own luck and that being rich or poor is a choice:

“You choose whether you are rich or poor. If you're waiting for someone to offer you a job, and the employer doesn't even know that you exist, if you don't sell yourself on the labour market and offer quality, you're done. But if you don't, you move up the ladder” (MK-FG- 10)

This attitude is also primarily present among middle-aged male interviewees. Even interviewees that are struggling for bare existence have stated that whether you will have food to eat depends on whether you work. Able-bodied persons (especially if young and healthy), who receive social assistance and are perceived as refusing to work, are seen as social freeloaders. The notion of shame in receiving social assistance is not attached to persons who are ill and with a disability. In contrast to the male participants, female focus group participants were more inclined to demonstrate compassionate understanding towards adverse situations and hardships that might drive them to the need of receiving social protection.

Interviews with persons with disabilities have also shown that the prevailing societal perception portrays them as fully incapable to work and to provide, further proving that “[i]n

a society which idealizes the body, the physically disabled are marginalized.”³⁹ Among our interviewees, the response to this perception varies. One group fully rejects the socially imposed norm that portrays persons with disabilities as “incapable” and demands for reasonable accommodation which will enable them to use their bodily potential (these are also the persons that take an active role in civil society). The other interviewees seemed to have embodied this norm and rely on their families and the State for help. This is also further reflected by the parents of children with disabilities, as they see the children as fully incapable to do anything by themselves and, in lack of State support, their main worry focuses on what will happen to their children after they die.

A dominant picture portrayed by the media is the difficult/vulnerable situation of recipients of social assistance. In the title of an article for additional assistance, the activity is explained as assistance to the most socially vulnerable families. Similarly, when writing in general about social assistance, the recipients are portrayed as the most vulnerable groups of citizens. Secondly, there is a prevailing attitude that the State does not do enough and the “better something than nothing” attitude is embraced both symbolically, and on a structural level – as can be seen from the statement of the Minister for Labour and Social Policy who says exactly this when talking about the assistance provided by the State, and the same is also repeated in statements by other persons working in the social services.⁴⁰ Third, when the State does do something – the words “granted” and “provide for” were often used. Finally, the attitude that the State should help the ones in need is also dominant.

Overall, representation of social assistance is largely linked to class and body, with persons that are worst off financially and persons with disabilities being the ones that deserve assistance. Persons that should not receive assistance are also those with an abled-body, which are never persons with a disability and are always young people.

In terms of gender, women are seen as the main bearers of household responsibilities.⁴¹ More than half of the female population (54,7%) in the country is economically inactive, compared to one third of the male population (30,7 %).⁴² Out of the total inactive population, 29% are women who declare themselves as homemakers,⁴³ performing unpaid household work. A previous study has shown that 74.7 % of female respondents view majority of household duties as their responsibility, in contrast to 67% of the men who see only a small part of the household duties as their responsibility, or not their responsibility at all.⁴⁴ Recent statistics show that it is exclusively women that leave the labour force to care for children and elderly.⁴⁵ Both interviewees and focus group participants express similar views on the role of women in the family. In addition, focus group participants perceive men as more prone to push the household into poverty because of alcoholism, drugs or gambling. Similar studies have pointed to the same representation of men among the general public.⁴⁶ Furthermore, there is an implied expectation of women to both financially support and perform household duties,

39 Susan Wendell “*Toward a Feminist Theory of Disability*” in Lennard J. Davis (ed) *The Disability Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 248.

40 Kanal5, “The Prilep Center for Social Assistance Currently Distributes Assistance to the Socially most-at-risk families [Во прилепскиот Центар за социјални работи во тек е распределба на помош за социјално најзагрозените семејства]”, *Kanal5 Website*, <http://kanal5.com.mk/vesti_detail.asp?ID=28204>, Last accessed: 11.09.2015.

41 Reactor - Research in action, *Finding the key to the glass door: demystifying the reasons the women’s low participation in the labour market* (Skopje, 2012), 15.

42 State Statistical Office, *Labour Force Survey 2014* (Skopje, 2015), 22.

43 Ibid, 87

44 Reactor - Research in action, *Finding the key to the glass door: demystifying the reasons the women’s low participation in the labour market* (Skopje, 2012), 14.

45 State Statistical Office, *Labour Force Survey 2014* (Skopje, 2015).

46 Patti Petesch and Giorgia Demarchi, *Gender, Mobility and Middle Class in Europe and Central Asia: Insights from Qualitative Research*, (World Bank, November 2015), 12.

particularly in cases of financial deprivation when women are more likely to take up any job to provide for the family.⁴⁷

Ethnic identity, much like gender identity, was rarely explicitly referred to in the narratives of our interviewees. In the delineation from the “other”, ethnic belonging became more visible in their accounts. For example, several of our ethnic Macedonian interviewees expressed mild astonishment when they received assistance from ethnic Albanians: *“even though he was Albanian, he still helped me.”* This points to the existing ethnic distance between the two ethnic groups.⁴⁸ Some of the ethnic Macedonian interviewees living in rural areas expressed more stigmatizing attitudes towards Albanians, as demonstrated in the excerpt from the interview with the single rural mother of a child with intellectual disability and her refusal to allow her child to go to a facility with special care services situated in an area mostly inhabited by ethnic Albanians: *“Albanians harass the children a lot, even if I had 10 children, I wouldn’t send any of them there”*.

Similarly, persons living in smaller town in a homogenous ethnic environment express stereotypical beliefs, as illustrated by one of the ethnic Macedonian interviewees with a disability who felt the need to justify her friendship with Albanian person with disability by stating: *“My friend is an Albanian, but that’s not important, you know, disability does not distinguish between ethnicity or religion”*. Although referring to a different social context, our study confirms previous findings that in absence of personal experience, stereotypes inform interaction.⁴⁹

The most open and direct display and verbalisation of stereotyping and prejudices registered in our research are either directed towards Roma or are related to them. When describing his problematic encounter with social service employees in his attempt to obtain social assistance, the homeless person in our sample explained that he received the following answer: *“You come here every day, constantly asking for something, like the Gypsies.”* Roma persons in our sample also express the largest level of internalized oppression: *“We, the Roma, are like that, we wait for other people to do something for us, we don’t do anything for ourselves.”*

The dominant norms, values and ideologies that inform our interviewees’ understanding of their social positionality largely point out the interplay of sexism, racism, bodysm, classism and other forms of exclusion present on the symbolic level. The next section discusses our interviewees’ relationship with the structural level, focusing on the laws and policies in place.

47 Ibid, 2.

48 Kire Sharlamanov and Aleksandar Jovanoski, “The Ethnic Relations in the Macedonian Society Measured Through the Concept of Affective Social Distance.” *American International Journal of Social Science* Vol.2, No. 3 (2013), 33.

49 Iyiola Solanke, “Putting Race and Gender Together: A New Approach To Intersectionality” *Modern Law Review* Vol.72 No.5 (2009), 723-749.



4. Structural level

The list of characteristics and qualifications for the structural level, which we were able to compile from the data provided by interviewees who explained their needs and coping strategies vis-à-vis the system is overwhelming. The range of experiences described extends from being rejected by social services either for looking too good to receive social assistance or for looking too dirty to enter their offices, to not being able to take care of administrative issues because of physical or sensory inaccessibility of institutions. By discussing their experiences, in this section we look at how interviewees perceive the social protection system and contrast and compare their criticism to the existing legal and policy framework.

An opening note here is needed on the methodology applied for this section. Namely, the Winker and Degele model which we followed suggested that, when discussing the structural level, we are seeking to identify (un)qualified criticism.⁵⁰ As the lines below will show, the criticism voiced by our interviewees is overwhelmingly qualified and points to areas where through reforms are necessary, if the system is to grow into a proactive one, instead of remaining, as the lines below will show, barely reactive and largely punitive and discriminatory.

The social protection system in Macedonia offers services for risk prevention, institutional and non-institutional care. Recently, a trend of de-institutionalisation and pluralisation brought to the fore other non-residential forms and providers, including non-governmental organizations and private organizations.⁵¹ Nevertheless, most of the services and benefits are provided by the state. Studies show that the social assistance provision is the most important function of the system since it secures persons to their sole source of income.⁵² This finding is confirmed by many of our interviewees. However, in addition to being the sole source of income, the amount provided is insufficient, or as Marina says: *“You can barely survive on social assistance, let alone live a decent life.”*

Insufficient assistance is the most pertinent issue cutting across our typology. Like Marina, all interviewees in this sample express grievances on the small amount of social assistance:

“Fifty euros is nothing for today’s standard of living. What are you going to do with fifty euros? You can’t even pay the electricity bill, the water bill...”

For persons with disabilities and illness, the situation is further aggravated by the need of (often expensive) therapy. As Violeta, a mother of a child with intellectual disability explained:

50 A comparison of the overall empirical findings vis-à-vis the national policy and legal framework follows in section 6, below.

51 Vanco Uzunov, “Socio-economic transformation and the welfare system of the Republic of Macedonia in the period of transition”, in *Welfare states in transition: 20 years after the Yugoslav welfare model*, eds. Marija Stambolieva & Stefan Dehnert (Sofia: Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2011), 128.

52 Ibid.

“Until the age of 26, my son used to receive around 400 denars more than he receives today. Does he eat less now? Is his clothing less expensive? After he was diagnosed with epilepsy his medication became costlier, and God forbid he has a seizure, then it gets even worse and even more expensive.”

In addition to being insufficient, the provision of assistance is also frequently late. Petra also cares for a child with a similar disability, however, unlike Violeta who lives in a four-members household, Petra’s family budget is divided among eleven family members. Petra explained:

“We haven’t received social assistance in two / three months already. And when they finally decide to send money, it’s only for one month, not for three. It happens very often. Sometimes I find myself in a situation where I cannot buy medicines for my child.

All of the interviewees share the same every day struggles regarding insufficient and late social assistance, irrespective of the grounds on which they receive it. Dragana, a woman with physical disability provided insight on her processes of waiting and deciding how to spend the social assistance money:

“What do I do when I get the money? Well, the question is first WHEN will it arrive? I am constantly online, checking my bank account, because it is frequently late. And when it finally arrives in my account, I immediately get upset. I have to pay bills, and I can’t... I have so many expenses I cannot cover...”

A deeper look into the structural level shows that this criticism is qualified. Namely, if we start from an average monthly value of the social assistance, which is around 50 EUR (depending on the type of assistance), and then take into consideration that the average net salary in the country is 355 EUR,⁵³ and that the monthly consumer basket for a household of four members is 522 EUR,⁵⁴ it is clear that the amount is very small. Similarly, Kostova-Milevska and Kotevska show that the financial assistance provided:

[D]oes add a substantial amount to [the families in social risk/in social need] close to non-existent family budgets. However, it is not bringing them closer to a position of being able to pay for all monthly expenses, let alone to consider undertaking activities that will assist them in improving their position, such as increasing their employability or opportunities for employment.⁵⁵

The process of obtaining social protection is long and complex. Our interviewees consider administrative procedures as burdening and costly, or in the words of Dragana:

“First you need to pay a lot of money, on average you have to pay the amount of a monthly assistance beforehand just to get all the needed documents to apply for assistance.

Considering that the monthly average amount of the assistance, as stated above, is around 50 EUR, and that the lowest administrative tax for the processing of one document is 0.9-euro

53 “State Statistical Office, Indicators,” *State Statistical Office Website*, http://www.stat.gov.mk/KlucniIndikator_i_en.aspx, Last accessed: 26.11.2015.

54 “Consumers Basket: 160 Euros Missing in the Family Budget.” *Faktor*. <http://faktor.mk/2015/03/10/potroshuvacka-koshnitsa-vo-semejnot-budhet-dupka-od-160-evra/>, Last accessed: 25.11.2015.

55 Neda Milevska Kostova and Biljana Kotevska, “Equity vs Efficiency” in Predrag Bejaković and Meinardus (eds) *Possibilities to Lessen the Trade-Off in Social, Employment and Education Policy in South-East Europe* (Sofia: Friedrich Ebert Foundation Bulgaria, 2011), 111.

cents, costly administration would in any case be a significant problem for our interviewees. Or, in Jadranka's words: *"Too many documents for very little money"*.

Administrative procedures seem to be additionally burdening from an accessibility perspective for persons struggling with literacy or facing language barriers, and for persons with disabilities. A short excerpt of Jadranka's narrative illustrates the hurdles our interviewees go through in the process of social assistance renewal:

“Why do I have to prove that I am disabled every single year? On top of it all, I have to bring my old and disabled father to prove that we don't live together and that the amount of his disability pension is too small to cover costs. First I have to pay a taxi to pick up my father, and then pick me up and then go to social services centre. Then you have to ask the taxi driver to wait for you because it can take only five minutes for the job to be done and for you to sign. But before you get to that point of signing, it takes a whole month to gather all needed documents. And then social services employees will tell you, it's ok, come in 10 days. You go in 10 days, and they tell you: your documents are not ready, come in two days...All of this costs so much money...

The length of the procedures is also a cause of concern. Many of our interviewees describe the period of waiting as marked by discomfort and protracted feelings of being “stuck”, considering that persons sometimes have to wait prolonged periods of time⁵⁶ to get a decision on their requests for either awarding or discontinuing social assistance:

“I cried so much when I finally received the social assistance, after waiting for so long. Those were tears of joy. (Jadranka).

Similar studies also describe that the process of obtaining social assistance is “extensive and difficult” due to the number of required documentation, the financial means necessary to compile the documentation, and other requirements such as not possessing a motor vehicle or not receiving alimony.⁵⁷

Although the State claims to provide other support to persons receiving social assistance, such as covering electricity and water bills, and covering debts (bank loans and overdue bills), it is clear from the interviews and from media reports that actually persons continue to receive these bills which are not paid by the State. Our interviewees have received warrants and faced visits from bailiffs because of unpaid debts, although they have filed requests for the covering of their debts by the State. Aside from stress and burdensome administration, this also means additional costs for them:

“I had to deal with a bailiff, even though I submitted a request for the State to cover my debts. I had to pay 11 0000 denars to pay the electricity bill. I have no money, how can I pay? (Dragana)

In terms of costs, transportation is an issue for many of our interviewees. The centres for social services are usually situated in the city centres. Persons living in remote and rural areas face bigger obstacles and higher expenses. The additional costs include travel tickets (for some of our interviewees from rural areas no public transport was available), a meal and, in the

56 Interviewees report waiting for a decision between several months to three years. Recent media articles have revealed that complaints submitted by citizens for rejection or discontinuance of social assistance have not been processed for ten months on behalf of the Ministry for Labour and Social Policy.

57 Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *On the Road to EU, Contribution of the Civil Society to the Policy Creating of the Social Inclusion in the Republic of Macedonia* (Skopje, 2008).

cases of dependants, finding someone to care for the dependant while the caregiver deals with the institutions. The situation is further aggravated in cases of lone parents and two-member households.

The system and many of its features are described as unjust. The overarching impression of both persons that are users, or ought to be users of the social protection system is that the system fails to protect persons most in need of social assistance. Stefan, an employed father of two children with disabilities explained:

“There are lots of people in worse situations than me, and still, they don't receive assistance. It is unreal for you to pick garbage and not receive assistance, those people should also get help. I don't know if anyone notices, or if they just don't want see what's happening on the ground...”

Similarly, the criteria for acquiring and extending social assistance, along with the manner in which procedures are conducted are also seen as unjust. In relation to the distribution of social housing, Petar adds: “People living on the street don't get social housing. People that own houses, apartments and cars do.” This is in line with previous studies that point out the inability of the social protection system to reach those in greatest need.⁵⁸

Women and men do not have equal access to the right of receiving social assistance benefits.⁵⁹ Gender disparity has been noted in the number of holders of social assistance benefits, with women being significantly less represented. Out of twenty women in our sample, none of them currently holds the right to social assistance benefits. This type of assistance was discontinued for the Roma transgender sex worker, and the lesbian Roma woman.

Reasons for discontinuing assistance are particularly frowned upon by our interviewees. Assistance was to be discontinued if they received *any* funds in their bank accounts and/or via wire-transfer (including from remittances)⁶⁰, regardless of the fact that it cannot be expected that these persons could live on 50 EUR per month only.

This stringent policy has also raised the criticism of the system as punitive, invasive and that it stimulates inactivity and passiveness. The interviewees state that they feel trapped because engagement in any sort of income-generating activity will cost them their assistance:

“The moment you receive money in your bank account- you're done, you loose the social assistance. It feels like there's a rope tied around your neck, you want to live but they are holding you back, tightening the rope” (Dragana).

“Kafana as every other kafana – you are offered alcohol, drugs; you are scared, you have to take it. Then the violence you are subjected to [...]I said enough of this and went back to Shutka. I filled for social assistance. [...] I found out about an NGO, so I went there to work [for a small honoraria] in order to gain experience and to learn new things. [...]I got a letter that I need to go to the social services and that my assistance was discontinued because I was working. And, can you imagine, they punished

58 Vanco Uzunov, “Socio-economic transformation and the welfare system of the Republic of Macedonia in the period of transition”, in *Welfare states in transition: 20 years after the Yugoslav welfare model*, eds. Marija Stambolieva & Stefan Dehnert (Sofia: Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2011), 131.

59 Amalija Jovanović, Vesna Jovanova, Neda Maleska – Sačmaroska, Slobodanka Markovska, *Gender-budget analysis of social protection and active employment policies in the Republic of Macedonia* (Skopje: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, 2010), 36.

60 In January 2016, it was announced that social protection bylaws are being re-examined. In particular, the provision on wire-transfer was cancelled. By the time of closing of this text this was still not published in Official Gazette.

me for two years, and in those two years we were left without money. My family was without money. So, my father started collecting bottles, and my mother with her old age started cleaning houses, imagine that. She has never engaged in such work and now she had to do it on her old age. But there was nothing else that we could do. [...] The deal is you do any work and you get no social assistance.” (Stasha)

Article 55 of the Law on Social Protection allows up to 5 working days of engagement in performing public works in one month for social assistance benefits recipients⁶¹. This measure is designed to stimulate activity among social assistance benefits recipients. However, such provision is not foreseen for permanent financial assistance recipients. Some of our interviewees with physical disabilities (and disability is one of the main grounds for receiving permanent financial assistance) feel additionally constrained because, as they noted, the fact that their potential to perform physical work is limited, that does not mean that they cannot engage in intellectual work and receive small amounts of payments for it. As Jadranka explained: “*I am physically incapable to work, but I can write an article or a poem and get some money for it.*” Similarly, the single mother recipient of permanent financial assistance noted: “*the system makes me feel like I am a victim, as if I’m incapable to do anything, even though I’m active 24/7*”.

A strict system of surveillance and control is in place:

“*They [social services employees] showed up for one of their unannounced check ups and saw me patching up an old pair of pants on the sewing machine. They discontinued my assistance immediately because apparently I was making additional money by sewing for other people. The sewing machine was for personal use only, I didn’t sew for other people” (Jadranka).*

If persons receive additional funds, not only will their assistance be discontinued, but they would have to return all the funds transferred as social assistance. The retroactive application of this bylaw, which, although entered into force on January 01, 2015, is applied as being in force since the date of adoption in 2013; it additionally burdens the social assistance recipients. This legal change resulted in discontinuing the assistance of many, and further in the State requesting that they return the money that recipients have received for almost two years. In some cases, people have even faced criminal charges for filling a wrong statement on funds within the procedure for continuation of the procedure, though this has not been the case with any of our interviewees. Following calls from CSOs,⁶² a draft-law, on “amnesty” for these cases was at the time of writing of this analysis put forward and adopted by Parliament. This legal uncertainty is further worsened by frequent changes of laws.⁶³

The situation on the structural level is further complicated by claims of corruption (confirmed by international indexes of corruption) and arbitrariness in the procedures, as the quality of service depends on the persons providing it and on the social networks of the persons.

Another obstacle is the accessibility of the institutions. Constraining physical and sensory accessibility conditions largely prevent an independent execution of all private matters for persons with disabilities (dealing with institutions, banks, etc.). When Fatmir discussed the

61 Law on Social Protection, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia*, 79/09, 36/11, 51/11, 166/12, 15/13, 79/13, 164/13, 187/13, 44/14, 116/14, 180/14, 33/15, 72/15, 104/15, 150/15, 173/15, 192/15; Constitutional Court decision: 07.04.2010.

62 The build up to the legislative changes achieved by CSOs activities was officially not acknowledged by the parliamentary ruling majority. In fact, any causality leading from these activities to the legislative changes was denied.

63 Macedonian Young Lawyers Association, *USAID Human Rights Protection Project Bulletin No.3 and 4* [Билтен бр.3 и 4 на Проектот за заштита на Човековите права на УСАИД], (January 2016), <http://www.myla.org.mk/images/pdf/bilten_br_3_4.pdf>.

(in)accessibility of public institutions, he noted:

“*I need to go to the Public Revenue Office, but I cannot get there, you see everyone running around, and you cannot, there are stairs in front of you, and it bothers you. It doesn't only bother you, it kills you on the inside.*”

The lack of reasonable accommodation noted above was frequently raised as a form of discrimination of persons with disabilities in our research. However, what our interviewees have reported is that the system overall degrades persons with disabilities. For instance, varieties of terms are used to refer to disability in laws, policies, even in names of institutions and educational programs.⁶⁴ The list of characteristics as to what accounts for disability at the national level remains unrevised for many years. A medical approach to the understanding of disability seems to be prevailing, with some forms of disability escaping the radar at national level.

Additionally, interviewees also report appearance-based discrimination. The single mother from the second group of interviewees, and the Roma father sex worker from the fourth group have both been told by social services employees that they are dressed too well to receive assistance. The homeless person, on the other hand, has been called too dirty and accused of trying to get everyone sick. Ageism is also present. Some of the interviewees explicitly stated that elder persons are not capable to work. Almost all of the interviewees indirectly express this belief through the claim that “young people are not hired, so how do you expect the elderly to be?”

In summary, our interviewees report general dissatisfaction with the system. The provision of services is considered as of very low quality and the capacities of institutions and persons responsible for providing of social protection are deemed as questionable. The system does not reach the persons in greatest need of protection, as demonstrated in the narratives of our interviewees.

64 Biljana Kotevska, *Analysis of the harmonization of national equality and non-discrimination legislation* (upcoming – 2016; OSCE and CPAD).



5. Intersectionality across levels and categories

In this section, we look at how different categories of inequalities intersect on the three levels of inquiry (individual, structural, and symbolic level), and how they materialize in the experiences of our interviewees. It should be noted that the study does not claim to have identified all possible intersecting categories of inequality for all thirty-three interviewees on all three levels of inquiry and at their intersections. The interconnectedness of the categories is articulated by using particular examples of the lived experiences of at least one representative of each group.

For the first group in our study, the oppressive effects of intermingled gender, ethnicity, geography (place of residence) and disability inequalities are best illustrated in the example of Drita, the rural Albanian woman with a disability. First and foremost, the “general health condition” requirement present in many laws remains undefined and impersonalized.⁶⁵ In addition, no distinction is made between key and essential functions of a working position and marginal and irrelevant functions.⁶⁶ As a result, persons with disabilities face barriers to accessing certain jobs, particularly in the public sector. This stands out as particularly important as the State is the biggest employer.

Aside from two rounds of adds for employment of persons with disabilities in the public sector,⁶⁷ and a failed practice of operation of shelter companies,⁶⁸ all encompassing exclusion of persons with disabilities in the field of employment and beyond, seems to be present. This is an insurmountable obstacle for remaining in control over their own lives, but also for taking an active role in social life, as it prevents them from using their full potential to contribute to society via financially gainful activities as well as otherwise. It results in the overall exclusion and discrimination of persons with disabilities in the country in all fields.⁶⁹

In addition, Drita’s opportunities to engage in the formal economy are largely pre-determined (and precluded) by her gender. Activity rates point to a sharp difference in labour force participation between women and men, with approximately half of the working age women being economically inactive.⁷⁰ Ethnic minority women are in a particularly precarious position in

65 Ibid.

66 Zhaneta Poposka, *Employment of persons with disability in the Republic of Macedonia – Legal Analysis* [Вработување на лицата со хендикеп во Република Македонија – Правна анализа] (Polio Plus 2013), 28-29.

67 Biljana Kotevska, *Country Report on Measures to Combat Discrimination* (Directives 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC) – Macedonia 2014, European Network of Legal Experts in the Field of Gender Equality and Non-discrimination (unpublished, on file with authors).

68 Ibid.

69 PolioPlus and the OSCE – Mission to Skopje publish extensively on this.

70 State Statistical Office, *Labour Force Survey 2014* (Skopje, 2015).

terms of employment. 67% of working age Roma women and 86% of ethnic Albanian women do not participate in the labour market.⁷¹ Part of the explanation for this might be the level of education; among our interviewees, there was a significant higher level of education among ethnic Macedonians, compared to ethnic Albanian and ethnic Roma.

Rural women are also largely excluded from participation in economic life.⁷² Employment opportunities for women with disabilities have been deemed as “unfavourable”.⁷³ The percentage of women employed in shelter companies and other professional rehabilitation associations, is almost 50% lower than that of men.⁷⁴ This means that men with disabilities are twice as likely to be employed in shelter companies in comparison to women with disabilities.⁷⁵

These findings suggest an intersection of gender with other categories of inequalities, such as disability and ethnicity, but also of class with disability. For Drita, all of these inequalities function simultaneously and create specific disadvantages demarking her position which in turn determine her basic needs and coping strategies. Drita resorted to providing cleaning services in the nearby city because she faced constraints to engage in the formal economy, due to threat of discontinuation of the social assistance, but was, at the same time, compelled to engage in financially gainful activities because the social assistance amount is insufficient and she needs to provide for herself and her elderly mother. Living in a rural area adds an additional burden, as transportation means are limited and transportation costs are substantial. In addition, both her singlehood and her disability are stigmatized and frowned upon in her village. As the other interviewee – an Albanian divorced mother with disabilities noted, when in need of help in public spaces men would ignore her because “women of other men are not to be touched”. This strong representation of possession and belonging stems from the underlying belief that Albanian women are considered as carriers of the Albanian lineage and the procreators of their nation, with their sexuality largely controlled by male members of the family.⁷⁶ Moreover, as a woman with a disability, she is deemed as both asexual and a passive member of society. As our findings and previous studies have shown, physical barriers and inaccessible institutions hamper her ability for full participation in society, even though it is considered as a form of discrimination under national law.⁷⁷ However, Drita actively refutes socially imposed expectations; norms that serve to constrain her agency, and overcomes physical inaccessibility by entering the public sphere (typically considered a male’s domain) both with her disability activism and her economic activities.

On the other hand, the Albanian divorced single mother with a disability, recipient of permanent financial assistance, with primary education living in a small town, resorted to the only coping strategy available to her – relying on her family for food and housing and on assistance from female family members for moving around the town and completing administrative issues.

71 Nikica Mojsoska-Blazevski, *Supporting strategies to recover from the crisis in South Eastern Europe : country assessment: the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, International Labour Organization, Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Central and Eastern Europe. (Budapest: ILO, 2011), 25.

72 Marija Risteska et al, *Perspectives of Women in Rural Areas* (Skopje: Center for Research and Policy Making, 2012).

73 As Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of women of the Republic of Macedonia (ESE) in cooperation with Akcija Zdruzenska, *Shadow Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women*, (Skopje, 2012), 11.

74 Reaktor, *Employed persons with disabilities in professional rehabilitation associations* [Вработени инвалиди во организации за професионална рехабилитација], Reaktor Website, <http://rodovreaktor.mk/subject/social_welfare/graphs/vraboteni-invalidi-vo-organizacii-za-profesionalna-rehabilitaci-column/#.VsCO_oQj0wA>. Last accessed: 25.11.2015.

75 State statistical office of the Republic of Macedonia, *Women and men in the Republic of Macedonia* (Skopje, 2015), 88.

76 Rozita Dimova, ““Modern” Masculinities: Ethnicity, Education, and Gender in Macedonia” *Nationalities Papers*, (2006): 308.

77 ESE Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of women of the Republic of Macedonia (ESE) in cooperation with Akcija Zdruzenska, *Shadow Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women*, (Skopje, 2012).

The experiences of the persons in the second group, the two single parents and the transgender sex worker, can be marked by an overall lack of support. The system seems to pose a lot of obstacles in general, meaning that even a person with the greatest enthusiasm and willingness to improve one's own condition cannot do much in this regard. The lived experiences of Stasha, the transgender sex worker, is an example of the intertwined effects of various inequality categories. She comes from a Roma ethnic background, one of the groups consistently referred to as most vulnerable. The very high unemployment rate, poverty, deplorable housing conditions, and low levels of education have been used to account for the disadvantages Roma persons face.⁷⁸ On top of the existing vulnerabilities, as a trans-gender person, Stasha faces trans-phobic and homophobic prejudices and discrimination.⁷⁹ As a sex worker she deals with the criminalization of her line of work and constant safety risks. She experiences violence on daily basis perpetrated by her family, institutions, clients, and random persons in her surroundings. Her sexual orientation and gender identity are not considered grounds for discrimination under the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination. Therefore, she faces societal and legal stigmatization and disadvantage due to her ethnicity, gender identity and line of work. As a result, she is exposed to significant marginalization and invisibility and faces legal obstacles to seeking protection.

Marina's narrative, on the other hand, demonstrates the hurdles of unemployed lone parents. As a highly educated yet unemployed artist, Marina has identified the State as a potential employer. However, guided by her principles that contravene those propagated by the current government, as well as considering the fact that she neither holds any party membership nor has "the right connections for the job", acquiring such employment is not an option. Marina's case is also a clear example of how even knowing your rights and where to claim these does not guarantee success, as the system is designed to place one obstacle after the other. Although Marina has identified and matched the institutions that should assist her meet her child's and her needs, her gender, class and body work against her. Her education level suggests she should be in a better position to realize her rights than the other interviewees. Her class standing is marked not only by her education, but also her body.

A clear example of how one person's privilege is another's disadvantage is Marina's experience in relation to her body. While in other life situations "good looks" have been shown to lead to better jobs, respect and overall progress in life,⁸⁰ for Marina it resulted in being rejected by social services because she looks "too good to receive social assistance".

Seeking other employment (for example one that would require working in shifts) is both not desirable and not possible due to the age of her child (two and half years of age at the time of interviewing) and lack of support from her parents in caring for the child. Considering the overall lack of childcare services in the country,⁸¹ her parents remain the only option she can turn to. Additionally, as it has been previously noted, part-time and jobs with flexible hours are largely unavailable in Macedonia.⁸² Adding to her frustration is her desire to work in the field in which she is educated in. However, facing no prospect for acquiring the desired employment in the near future, she turns to undertaking other small jobs to supplement the permanent financial assistance she is receiving. However, she is only entitled to receive this type

78 UNDP/WB/EC, *Regional Roma Survey* (2011).

79 Katerina Kolozova, Kalina Lecevska, Viktorija Borovska and Ana Blazeva, *Ethnically and gender inclusive grass-root LGBTI movements in Macedonia* (Skopje: Institute for Social Sciences and Humanities, 2013).

80 Robert C. Post, "Prejudicial Appearances: The Logic of American Antidiscrimination Law", in Robert C. Post et al, *Prejudicial Appearances: The Logic of American Antidiscrimination Law* (Duke University Press, 2001).

81 European Roma Rights Center, *Macedonia: Country Profile 2011-2012* (Budapest, 2012).

82 World Bank, *Labour Market Inequalities in FYR Macedonia: New Evidence on Gender and Ethnicity* (June 2015).

of assistance until the child is three years old.⁸³ If she remains unemployed, she will be transferred to receive social financial assistance and lose part of the amount she used to receive.

The third group of parents/caregivers of children with disabilities report living in what can be termed “families with disabilities”. Due to lack of services, understanding and sensibility of disability in general, including lack of appropriately educated staff, and inaccessibility due to geographical distribution, these parents are left on their own to care for their children, with no professional support on the part of the institutions. Previous studies point to the lack of appropriate services in the place of residence of persons with disabilities.⁸⁴ Even those that can and do take their children to day-care centres report lack of support and appropriate services. For the single rural single mothers of children with intellectual disabilities, the inaccessibility of daily centres due to transportation and inaccessibility reasons causes significant level of frustration. Women as primary caregivers are particularly affected because of the social expectation for them to care for children and the elderly and because their actual caring responsibilities constrain their ability to access the labour market. Lack of services, combined with almost non-existent part-time and flexible hours jobs, limit women’s ability to move out of poverty.

The amount of assistance or no assistance awarded as one of the structural problems cumulates with lack of recognition by the system of persons that should receive assistance for various reasons. All cases seem to reflect the system well in terms of who gets to be awarded social protection, and who will not. This includes not minding the size of families, real value of family assets, and so on. This is coupled with the amount of social assistance that a family receives which seems to overlap with what families say is both late and insufficient.

For those that do not receive any support at all, it results in an overwhelming presence in faith in god and turning to religion. This was clearly visible and without exception present, even as a coping strategy, in the group marked by their fight for bare survival.

In the abusive relationship cases, the reaction from the State can be noted in granting housing to the divorced survivor of domestic violence and her two teenage children. However, due to non-reporting (tied to shame and dominant traditional gender norms), this came only after she suffered physical violence which resulted in her being officially evaluated by the competent state bodies as being 90% incapacitated for work. Persons that live with persons that abuse alcohol also seem to escape the State institution’s radar. Non-reporting due to the same reasons as with the divorcee, leaves our interviewee who is married but feels like she is not married in a still-existing abusive relationship; where, aside from providing food by helping out at a soup kitchen, she also has to deal with debts created by the husband, and shame from his overall condition. She does not receive help from the State, but from her two daughters. Although, sometimes she is also very reluctant to tell them about her true reality, as they have been encouraging her to leave her father, which she does not want to do in order to avoid bringing shame upon her daughters.

The reliance on the family in the sixth group is a result of a complex mixture of a myriad conditions including seeing the State and system completely inept to assist them with their current situation. Two are persons with disabilities with whom the system does not engage

83 Amalija Jovanović, Vesna Jovanova, Neda Maleska – Sačmaroska, Slobodanka Markovska, *Gender-budget analysis of social protection and active employment policies in the Republic of Macedonia* (Skopje: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, 2010), 26.

84 Republic Center for the Support of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities-Poraka, *Rights of persons with intellectual disabilities in the Republic of Macedonia: Report on the implementation of the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities* (Skopje, 2013), 6.

in any way save for providing monetary social assistance, and one is a recently single mother who also does not receive any other support from the system save for monetary one. Some persons, having acquired a disability, and having been discarded by the system as incapable or unworthy, have fully relied on families and friends for managing their situations. This is also the case with the single parents that have not generated any social capital and/or do not have a pro-active approach towards managing their own lives, which in the end results in passiveness and full reliance on their families, as is the case with the divorcee and the single mother.

Class can be considered as a pre-determined category in focus of the research due to the choice of the research subjects. However, it is notable that class materializes very differently in the lives of the interviewees. Class came to the fore through the level of education, housing, (former) profession and (un)employment. These elements work to shape the basic needs and coping strategies of our interviewees, and act as markers of difference or categories of inequality.

The importance of education is stressed on both a symbolic and structural level. Namely, on a symbolic level, discussion about social assistance almost always revolves around a lack of skills and/or a need for training/education of the persons that receive social assistance, presuming that these are low. On structural level - the State is the largest employer in the country and, if one turns to the criteria for levels of education for gaining employment in the public sector, the lowest education level accepted is primary education; however most jobs require either secondary or higher education. Jobs with a requisite no higher than primary education usually involve manual labour – rendering the opportunity futile for most of our interviewees with a disability. Furthermore, all Roma interviewees (female, male and transgender) had incomplete elementary education – the highest level of education reported within this ethnic group. All Albanian women had only reached elementary education, whereas most of the Macedonian women had high school, university and higher degrees. Three Macedonian women do not fall within this rule. One has completed elementary education and is 73 years old. The other two women with no completed elementary education are the same two women who make up the group “Overcoming abusive relationships”. This highlights to the specific precarious position of less educated (rural) women, with limited access to the labour market and their vulnerability to violence.

Social networks also seem to play an important role, with persons with larger social networks being in a better position than others. Persons that usually report having such networks are those that both have either secondary or high education, and those that are either working or are retired. These networks are also seen as an answer for getting any job done through the institutions, or for acquiring employment.

Some of the individuals are in a preferred position due to secured housing. Most of the persons that have such a resolved issue are those that have either done this during Yugoslavia, or those that have inherited the property from their parents (also acquired within the previous system). The only two exception to this are the single mother of two, a survivor of domestic violence, who has been provided with social housing, and the transgender Roma sex worker who, having worked abroad, saved enough to buy her own place.

An additional obstacle is faced by persons with disabilities, due to the lack of infrastructure and reasonable accommodation and in the working place for persons with disabilities, which worsens matters as one moves from the urban to the rural areas. Geography seems to play an important role in enhancing disadvantage as one moves away from the capital – Skopje, towards the other parts of the country. This was also highlighted by our interviewees on many occasions, i.e. services for persons with disabilities that are available to people in Skopje, but not to them.

A similar obstacle exists for parents of children with disabilities or caretakers of persons with disabilities. It seems that this relation trumps all others and, due to the lack of social services or other support from the system, families are confined to the home and left to manage this situation in the best way that they can, whilst being overwhelmed with worry about the faith of their dependants. This shows that the body has a large role to play. The body works as a source of inequality on its own and by intersecting with class, gender and ethnicity. The body was present as a crucial part of the identity of persons with acquired disability but seems to largely shape the basic needs and everyday coping strategies of parents and caretakers, as explained above.

Similarly, it was also present for the transgender sex worker – a clear case of penalty due to gender expression, as she has faced mocking and rejection by those working in the system because of her appearance, every time she approached the institutions. Lookism is also present as a norm which says that a person should not look too good or be dressed too well to receive social assistance (as in the cases of the Roma father sex worker from group four and the single mother from group two) or dressing too bad and looking dirty (as in the case of the homeless person from group four).

In general, all the participants in our study rarely reflected on their gender and ethnic identity as sources of inequality. Gender and ethnicity as categories of difference are internalized to the point of invisibility in the accounts of our interviewees. Although ethnicity is rarely referred to on an individual level, finding on the symbolic level suggests that social practices are largely based on stereotypes and prejudice rather than on personal experience, as well to confirm that ethnic groups seem to be living alongside each other rather than with each other. It is through media images and widespread stereotypes and prejudice that persons form their opinions about themselves and others through an ethnic lens. This is largely a cause for surprise when someone from another ethnic group helps them with something, as well as the explanation for why they did not manage to complete a procedural step in a timely manner or without additional burdens.

Gender inequalities intersect with other characteristics and across levels, pointing to constrained possibilities of women to overcome the situation they are in, including satisfying basic needs. Thus they resort to coping strategies usually tied either to family assistance or very low paid engagements for the provision of services, such as cleaning houses. Stereotypes on the roles of women in the household still persist. Men are largely seen as breadwinners, and women as homemakers. Nevertheless, it has been noted both by our study participants and by previous studies⁸⁵ that men are perceived as more inclined to push the family into poverty, whereas “women take all steps necessary to provide for the family women are widely reported to be doing everything they can to pull their households out of poverty or to maintain their families in the middle class, while men voice deep frustration with their weak economic opportunities and the need for additional household members to contribute economically.”⁸⁶

The financially poorest from among our interviewees, those fighting for bare survival, expressed suffering overt stigmatization and prejudices. Sexism and racism were most predominant in their narratives, compared to the other groups of interviewees, as was reliance to religion.

85 Reactor - Research in action, *Finding the key to the glass door: demystifying the reasons the women's low participation in the labour market* (Skopje, 2012), 14.

86 Patti Petesch and Giorgia Demarchi, *Gender, Mobility and Middle Class in Europe and Central Asia: Insights from Qualitative Research*, (World Bank, November 2015), 12.

In summary, the intersectional analysis shows how characteristics and levels have worked to materialize into potential sources of inequalities. In most of the cases the characteristics and the power relations are at play the whole time, creating a direr situation in relation to inequality with every additional characteristic and with its occurrence on two or more levels. This confirms Patricia Hill Collins' theory of existing matrix of domination.⁸⁷ This means they are an interwoven net of oppressions which on their face seem like many single categories, however work in ways which are, as Hankivsky explains, interdependent, complex and which reflect the intersecting systems of power relations.⁸⁸

The following section moves beyond the scope of research placed thus far. It looks at how the social protection system, as it stands, addresses inequalities at the intersections.

87 Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought* (Routledge, 2000).

88 Olena Hankivsky, "GMSH Summit 2013: Intersectionality" (video upload: 27.08.2013), *Gay Men's Sexual Health Alliance (GMSH)* Vimeo Channel, <<https://vimeo.com/73232267>>, Last accessed: 24.11.2015



6. Addressing intersectional inequalities in social protection

Whether inequalities at the intersections are targeted in social protection, and how, was the main focus of our second research question⁸⁹ and is the subject of this subsection. The focus is on sections of the national legal and policy framework which have been highlighted by the findings from our empirical research as areas of importance for the users or ought to be users of the social protection system, identified according to their basic needs and coping strategies. As we could see in the section above, interviewees in our sample reveal a wide spectrum of needs and coping strategies, determined by their experiences on an individual, symbolic and structural level.

For the interviewees in the first group who strive for recognition of their full body capability, possibilities for employment, accessibility and provision of reasonable accommodation stood out as their primary needs and were singled out as greatest concerns. For the second group, employment and provision of services came to the fore; as carers for children/dependants with intellectual and psychological disabilities, the third group of interviewees was also mostly concerned with provision of services. Fighting to secure bare survival on a daily basis, the fourth group of persons is largely affected by the need for moving out of poverty and social inclusion. The two women in the fifth group endure long-lasting effects of gender-based violence. The sixth, and final, group is in need of removal of obstacles for them to fully enjoy their personal autonomy, including employment and other opportunities for full participation in the society.

In a country with extremely high unemployment rates, employment opportunities are scarce. Nevertheless, the majority of interviewees, across categories of inequalities, perceive employment as a desirable coping strategy, and an approach to secure so-called ‘upward mobility’ and moving out of poverty.

Therefore, we have focused our inquiry on addressing inequalities at the intersections on the following areas in the field of social protection: (un)employment, disability, equality and non-discrimination, and gender-based violence. Although, as noted above, each group prioritised certain policy areas, concerns and needs do surpass our established groups, and for this reason policy areas may crosscut across groups. In addition, other areas, such as (un)employment is one of the most problematized by almost all groups. We analysed the relevant laws and strategic documents, focusing primarily on content of the documents and less on their implementation as our research background and research questions invited such an

89 See section “Methodology and methods”.

approach. The validity of this approach was further confirmed by the empirical findings, as obstacles noted/raised by our interviewees were of such nature that focusing on the content of the law seemed as the necessary first step.

Drawing on Lombardo and Agustin's quality criteria for assessing intersectionality in EU gender policies⁹⁰, we first sought to identify whether categories of inequalities are addressed in a policy document. To assess this, we looked at inclusiveness of a comprehensive list of inequalities, explicit naming of categories and visibility. Inclusiveness, explicitness and visibility are considered quality criteria because "the mere naming of the problem... opens up possibilities for discussing the problem and finding solutions to it."⁹¹ Second, we looked at the relationship between categories in the documents and how articulated is the intersection between categories of inequalities. Articulation of intersectional relations is considered as a quality criterion because "providing accurate and elaborated accounts of the role of intersectional relations in the diagnosis and prognosis of a policy problem increases the chances that policies will address the concerns of subjects at the point of intersection between inequalities."⁹² To add to this, Lombardo and Verloo suggest looking at whether the policy applies a transformative approach to intersectionality, how "gendered" policies are, as well as whether the policy at stake avoids stigmatization of people and groups at different points of intersections.⁹³

Our analysis is driven by the need for a better understanding of the particular needs and experiences of differently situated users, or ought to be users, of the social protection system as essential for advancing policymaking. The findings suggest that a single-axis approach is dominant, meaning that categories of inequalities are almost exclusively treated separately. There is no explicit mentioning of intersectionality in any of the documents. Overall, policy documents are rarely intersectional in their approach. Albeit seldom, there are few instances where intersectional ideas have been put forward. What is clearly missing is an expression of relationships between categories of inequalities, or as Lombardo and Agustin label as "inarticulate intersectionality."⁹⁴ The subsequent parts present each policy area of social protection as a field separately, in order to illustrate the manner in which intersectional inequalities are addressed in each of them. The conclusion merges the findings on all of the areas, combined with the findings from our empirical research, together, thus putting forward an argument on intersectionality in social protection.

General Social Protection Issues

The social protection system was established to meet the evolving needs of its beneficiaries.⁹⁵ It includes measures, activities and policies designed to prevent and overcome basic social risks, to reduce poverty and social exclusion and to enhance the citizens' personal capacities to overcome social risk, poverty and social exclusion.⁹⁶

90 Emanuela Lombardo and Lise Rolandsen Agustin. "Framing Gender Intersections in the European Union: What Implications for the Quality of Intersectionality in Policies?" *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, (2011). 488-512.

91 Ibid, 489.

92 Ibid.

93 Emanuela Lombardo and Mieke Verloo, "Institutionalising Intersectionality in the European Union? Policy Developments and Contestations" *The International Feminist Journal of Politics* Vol. 11 No. 4 (2009).

94 Emanuela Lombardo and Lise Rolandsen Agustin. "Framing Gender Intersections in the European Union: What Implications for the Quality of Intersectionality in Policies?" *Social Politics*, (2011). 488-512.

95 Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *National Programme for Development of Social Protection (2011-2021)*, (2010).

96 Law on Social Protection, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia*, 79/09, 36/11, 51/11, 166/12, 15/13, 79/13, 164/13, 187/13, 44/14, 116/14, 180/14, 33/15, 72/15, 104/15, 150/2015, 173/2015, 192/2015; Constitutional Court decision: 07.04.2010.

There is a consensus that development of the social protection system has undergone three stages.⁹⁷ The first stage of development (1992-1996) is a continued extension of Yugoslavia's social protection system.⁹⁸ The second stage (1997-2002) was marked by Macedonia's adoption of the 1997 Social Protection Law and the membership of international financial institutions; which increasingly acted as social policy makers⁹⁹ The third stage resulted from the Ohrid Framework Agreement related reforms. The 1997 Law on Social Protection was amended in 2004 and introduced the decentralization of social protection. A new Law on Social Protection was adopted in 2009 and it is still in force. It reorganized the social protection system in terms of entitlements, funding and procedures for receiving the social assistance.¹⁰⁰

Currently, the social protection system offers various services and benefits from the tax-financed social welfare system. The services and benefits are organized in four clusters: social prevention, non-institutional protection, institutional protection and rights to financial assistance for social protection. Some examples of social prevention policies include education and counselling, development of self-assistance forms and volunteer work. Non-institutional protection includes rights to social service of social protection, home care and assistance to individuals and families, placement in a foster family, accommodation in a small group home and organised life support. Institutional protection includes the right to professional training and the right to accommodation in institutions for social care. Lastly, the group of rights to financial assistance for social protection includes various monetary assistance such as the right to social financial assistance, permanent financial assistance, assistance to a mother that gave birth to a fourth child, financial compensation for assistance and care.

Who are the users or ought to be users of the social protection system? According to the official state policies, these are persons in danger of falling into poverty or in poverty, and persons at risk of social exclusion. The following are identified as the primary groups at risk of social exclusion: persons that abuse drugs and their families, homeless children and their parents and survivors of domestic violence.¹⁰¹

Uzunov categorizes the following types of households as falling within the highest risk of poverty: "(i) households with numerous members of the family; (ii) households with no employed members; (iii) households where the head of the family has either no education or has a low level of education and skills; and (iv) households with elderly people without pensions or with pensioners with very low pensions."¹⁰² The composition of adult social protection recipients is provided in Table 2.2 below.

97 Maja Gerovska Mitev, *Material Deprivation, Poverty and Social Exclusion in Macedonia* (Skopje: Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2012).

98 Ibid.

99 Ibid.

100 Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *National Programme for Development of Social Protection (2011-2021)*, (Skopje, 2010).

101 Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *National Strategy for Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion (revised 2010-2013)* (Skopje, March 2013), 3.

102 Vanco Uzunov, "Socio-economic transformation and the welfare system of the Republic of Macedonia in the period of transition", in *Welfare states in transition: 20 years after the Yugoslav welfare model*, eds. Marija Stambolieva & Stefan Dehnert (Sofia: Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2011): 131.

Table 2.2: Adult recipients of social welfare by registration status and sex in 2014

| Category | Male | Female | Total |
|--|------|--------|-------|
| Socially excluded | 1355 | 989 | 2344 |
| Persons with visual impairment | 1397 | 977 | 2374 |
| Persons with hearing impairment | 1117 | 838 | 1955 |
| Persons with physical disabilities | 6695 | 4986 | 11681 |
| Persons with intellectual disabilities | 2101 | 1653 | 3754 |
| Persons with combined disabilities | 1588 | 1065 | 2653 |
| Financially unprotected | 1651 | 1772 | 3423 |
| Older beneficiaries | 937 | 923 | 1860 |
| Other beneficiaries | 3673 | 3366 | 7039 |

Source: "Social and Health Protection", State Statistical Office Website. <<http://www.stat.gov.mk/OblastOpsto.aspx?id=3>>. Last accessed: 25.11.2015

In our research, we focused on single categories of inequalities and on deficiencies in consideration towards mutually constitutive inequalities. Article 35 of the Constitution defines the role of the State in providing social protection and social security in accordance with the principle of social justice. This right is tied to the principle of equality established in Article 9, according to which citizens (sic.) enjoy equality in relation to the constitutionally prescribed freedoms and rights “regardless of sex, race, colour of skin, national and social origin, political and religious beliefs, property and social status”. The right to assistance of citizens “infirm or unfit for work” is further affirmed.¹⁰³

Adding to this is the comprehensive equality and non-discrimination legislation - the Law on the Prevention of and Protection against Discrimination. This Law includes social protection as one of the fields of its application (Art.4) and it is applicable in both the public and private sector.¹⁰⁴

The Law on Social Protection regulates the system and the organization of social protection, as well as the rights arising from social protection, their financing and realisation.¹⁰⁵ With the exception of several ‘hints’ of grasping intersectional inequalities which can be identified in the text of the law (such as the intersections of, for example, gender-class - in the recognition of specific vulnerabilities of women caring for multiple children families, or class-disability – in right to financial benefit of single parents caring for child with disabilities), measures and activities prescribed with this law are centred around single categories of inequalities (i.e individual protected grounds). The Law contains non-discrimination provisions (articles 20-

103 Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia and its XXXII amendments, *Official Website of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia*. <<http://www.sobranie.mk/the-constitution-of-the-republic-of-macedonia.nspx>>. Last accessed: 25.11.2015.

104 Law on Prevention of and Protection against Discrimination, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia*, 50/10, 44/14, 150/15; Constitutional Court decision: 15.09.2010.

105 Law on Social Protection, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia*, 79/09, 36/11, 51/11, 166/12, 15/13, 79/13, 164/13, 187/13, 44/14, 116/14, 180/14, 33/15, 72/15, 104/15, 150/15, 173/15, 192/15; Constitutional Court decision: 07.04.2010. Art.1.

22), including an open-ended list of protected grounds.¹⁰⁶ However, as Kotevska asserts in her recent study on the internal harmonization of the national equality and non-discrimination legislation, these provisions highlight the very problem with this law. Namely, the content of the provisions clearly shows that the law aims solely at non-discrimination, but not at equality, which should be key for this field because, without it, designing and implementing any of the social protection measures can work towards impeding the principle of equality.¹⁰⁷ In addition, Kotevska notes the need for alignment of this law with the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination (ADL), especially in terms of the list of protected grounds and the prohibited forms of discrimination (which includes “multiple discrimination”).¹⁰⁸ The last point is especially relevant as it also underscores the lack of outlawing of multiple discrimination in the Law on Social Protection, let alone of intersectional discrimination.

There is no discussion of inequalities at the intersections in the National Programme for Development of Social Protection (2011-2021). The Programme solely targets single inequality categories (for example, parents of children at risk, caregivers of elderly people, single parents, foster families, people with social problems and so forth).¹⁰⁹

Another relevant policy in the field of social protection is the National Strategy for Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion (revised 2010-2020). The Strategy aims to improve quality of life, working conditions, human capital, and social conditions for all citizens, as well as “development of the mechanisms for social inclusion of the vulnerable categories of people in a local context”.¹¹⁰ It focuses on the following areas: employment and strengthening of entrepreneurship; adapting the education to the labour market; social and child protection and building a new social model; promotion of health protection and long term care; transport, communications and housing; activation and strengthening the local authorities and support of vulnerable groups.

This is a social protection policy document which, in the national context, can be seen as one of the most advanced in capturing intersectional inequalities. Although it largely deals with single inequality categories, it also makes an attempt to address needs of “specific vulnerable groups”, under which it includes: Roma, minorities, unemployed people, persons with disabilities, elderly, children at risk, women, persons that use drugs and psychotropic substances, homeless persons, young persons, single parents, chronically ill people and people with malignant conditions and victims of human trafficking and prostitution.¹¹¹ Gender mainstreaming is introduced in order to alleviate poverty and social exclusion of women: women social assistance recipients, domestic violence and trafficking victims, long-term unemployed women, and single mothers. Furthermore, the Strategy addresses various intersection axes: class-age; class-gender, class-disability through measures to increase labour market access for youth, elderly, women, and persons with disability. Women from ethnic minority groups (Albanian and Turkish) are identified as being in need of higher participation in the economy, thus focusing on the intersection of class-ethnicity-gender. However, the Strategy perpetuates

106 Ibid. Arts.20-22.

107 Biljana Kotevska, *Analysis of the harmonization of national equality and non-discrimination legislation* (upcoming – 2016; OSCE and CPAD).

108 This recommendation means alignment with the ADL as amended with the suggestions provided in this study, which include revision of the list of protected grounds (including sexual orientation and gender identity) and breaking the provision on “multiple discrimination” into a more detailed provision, defining, inter alia, intersectional discrimination. Source: Ibid.

109 Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *National Programme for Development of Social Protection (2011-2021)*, (Skopje, 2010).

110 Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *National Strategy for Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion (revised 2010-2013)* (Skopje, March 2013), 3.

111 Ibid.

the stigmatization of a non-majority group, and particularly Albanian women, by proposing the emancipation through “handcrafts and manufacturing of traditional product that could be sold on the market”¹¹² disregarding the heterogeneity of this group of women and rendering them as incapable of undertaking non-female-appropriate jobs.

Equality and non-discrimination

Out of the five areas under investigation, the equality and non-discrimination area is the most advanced in capturing inequalities at the intersections. Gender comes to the fore together with its intersections of ethnicity, age, body and class.

As mentioned above, article 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia states that citizens have equal freedoms and rights “regardless of sex, race, colour of skin, national and social origin, political and religious beliefs, property and social status”. Article 54 provides that these rights can be restricted only in cases determined by the Constitution and “restrictions cannot discriminate on grounds of sex, race, colour of skin, language, religion, national or social origin, property or social status”.¹¹³ Both articles list protected grounds, however both lists are closed and fail to include, inter alia, gender, age, sexual orientation, and disability. Following the Ohrid Framework Agreement, on grounds of ethnicity, several constitutional amendments were introduced to protect political, civil and social rights of minorities. However, this was done in a way which failed to explicitly integrate gender aspects.¹¹⁴

ADL contains an open-ended provision of protected grounds, while explicitly listing the following ones: “[s]ex, race, colour, gender, belonging to a marginalized group, ethnic origin, language, nationality, social background, religion or religious beliefs, other types of beliefs, education, political affiliation, personal or social status, mental and physical impediment, age, family or marital status, property status, health condition or any other basis anticipated by a law or ratified international agreement”.¹¹⁵ Its Article 4, as noted above, provides for application of this law in the field of social protection. In addition, the law prescribes that it is applicable to both natural and legal persons, and in both the private and the public sector.

Among the outlawed forms of discrimination the law prescribes multiple discrimination and rightfully classifies it as a grave form of discrimination. It is defined as “discrimination inflicted on a certain person on multiple discriminatory grounds”.¹¹⁶ This attempt can be interpreted as an intersectional consideration towards specific vulnerabilities of persons situated on different axes of intersections of inequalities. However, the intersectional dimensions and their dynamics are not clearly articulated. Moreover, as argued by Kotevska, the provision is void of much content. Being overly simplistic, it does not allow for it to be broken down to its sub-forms - additive, intersectional and multiple discrimination.¹¹⁷

112 Ibid, 87.

113 Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia and its XXXII amendments, *Official Website of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia*. <<http://www.sobranie.mk/the-constitution-of-the-republic-of-macedonia.nspx>>. Last accessed: 25.11.2015.

114 Dominika Stojanovska, *Gender Equality and Human Development in Macedonia during Transition (1991-2006)* (PhD thesis, University of Bologna, 2008), 52.

115 Law on Prevention of and Protection against Discrimination, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia*, 50/10, 44/14, 150/15; Constitutional Court decision: 15.09.2010, Art.3.

116 Ibid.

117 Biljana Kotevska, *Analysis of the harmonization of national equality and non-discrimination legislation* (upcoming – 2016; OSCE and CPAD). On the sub-forms of multiple discrimination, see: Timo Makkonen, *Multiple, Compound and Intersectional Discrimination: Bringing the Experiences of the Most Marginalized to the Fore* (Institute For Human Rights, Åbo Akademi University 2002).

An equality body was established for the implementation of this law - the Commission for Protection against Discrimination (CPAD) which started to operate in January 2011. The CPAD received 106 cases in 2014 (an increase compared to 2013, when it received 83 cases, as well as in comparison to the previous two years). Out of these, 18 cases were in the area of social security, which includes social protection.¹¹⁸ In terms of the protected grounds, in its annual reports, the CPAD provides statistics on single grounds only, and, although it does give an overall number of cases where several grounds were raised by the applicants, it does not report which were these grounds.¹¹⁹ The body does not produce statistics on how many of these cases were processed and/or were closed in 2014.¹²⁰ While the Ombudsperson (the other institution tasked with protection against discrimination in the public sector) has not acted upon a multiple discrimination case, 6% of the cases received by CPAD have been classified as potential cases of discrimination on multiple grounds. To date, the CPAD has either dismissed these cases on procedural grounds or has not establish discrimination.¹²¹ Therefore, it remains to be seen how the CPAD will treat multiple discrimination grounds, what kind of sanctions will be attach to these, etc.¹²²

The legal provisions themselves do not offer much space for hope. Namely, although declaratively the ADL does label multiple discrimination as a grave form of discrimination, this is not mirrored nor accommodated in the provisions on the procedures for protection and sanctions. So, although with an open-ended list of protected grounds, and with a provision on multiple discrimination, the prospects of legal protection against intersectional discrimination remain, at best, questionable.

The National Strategy on Equal Opportunities and Non-Discrimination on Grounds of Ethnicity, Age, Mental and Physical Disability for 2012-2015 focuses on four categories of inequalities: ethnicity, age, disability and gender¹²³ As a result of gender mainstreaming, gender is considered to be a horizontal issue and is treated in a hierarchical manner. 'Multiple discrimination' is specifically addressed with gender as one of the categories of inequalities in the following dyads: gender-ethnicity, gender-age, and gender-disability. There are instances where the intersectional approach is adopted in terms of defining specific measures, for example for women with a disability, rural women, Roma women, or ethnic minorities users of social protection. For instance, the need for establishing special programs to improve the status of social protection users belonging to non-majority groups, or integrating gender per-

118 Commission for Protection Against Discrimination (Комисија за заштита од дискриминација) 2014 *Annual Report of the Commission for Protection Against Discrimination (2015)* www.sobranie.mk/materialdetails.nsp?materialId=d9311d8-975d-471e-be2c-e07a2df372f3.

119 These are the complete statistics in terms of applicants by protected grounds and by fields of protection. Per discrimination grounds: 26 on ethnicity, 13 on health status, 4 on belonging to a marginalised group, 15 on personal or social status, 13 on mental or physical disability, 8 on education, 7 on social origin, 10 on sex, 7 on religion or religious belief, 7 on political affiliation, 8 on age, 5 on family or marital status, 4 on gender, 3 on other beliefs, 6 on property status, and 14 under 'any other ground'. Per field: 42 in employment and labour relations, 22 in access to goods and services, 18 in social security, 11 in judiciary and administration, 7 in public information and media, 5 in education, science and sports, 5 in housing, 2 in culture, 2 in membership of trade unions or political associations, 6 in which no field was claimed by the applicant, and 4 in other fields as provided for under the law. Source: Commission for Protection Against Discrimination (Комисија за заштита од дискриминација) 2014 *Annual Report of the Commission for Protection Against Discrimination (2015)*, *Website of the Assembly*, www.sobranie.mk/materialdetails.nsp?materialId=d9311d8-975d-471e-be2c-e07a2df372f3, Last accessed: 27.11.2015.

120 Biljana Kotevska, *Country Report – Summary 2013 - European Network of Legal Experts in Gender Equality and Non-discrimination*. <<http://www.equalitylaw.eu/component/edocman/2013-mk-summary-country-report-ln-final/Download>>. Accessed on: 25.11.2015

121 Commission for Protection Against Discrimination (Комисија за заштита од дискриминација) 2014 *Annual Report of the Commission for Protection Against Discrimination (2015)*, *Website of the Assembly*, www.sobranie.mk/materialdetails.nsp?materialId=d9311d8-975d-471e-be2c-e07a2df372f3, Last accessed: 27.11.2015.

122 Biljana Kotevska, *Country Report on Measures to Combat Discrimination (Directives 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC) – Macedonia 2014*, European Network of Legal Experts in the Field of Gender Equality and Non-discrimination (unpublished, on file with authors).

123 Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *National Strategy on Equal Opportunities and Non-Discrimination on Grounds of Ethnicity, Age, Mental and Physical Disability for 2012-2015* (Skopje, 2012).

spectives to overcome barriers in inclusion on the labour market of women with non-majority ethnic background. The Strategy is the most advanced document in terms of number of references to categories of inequalities, and to inequalities at the intersections. Nevertheless, two major draw backs to this include exclusion of sexual orientation from the strategy and lack of articulation of the relationships between categories of inequalities. In additionally flawed when seen through intersectional lenses because it has been both drafted and adopted in a process marked by violation of the participation principle. Namely, the drafting and adoption process of this strategy happened away from the eyes of the public. In spite of the calls from many prominent NGOs, the drafting process remained closed for the public.¹²⁴

The Law on Equal Opportunities between women and men adopted in 2006 and amended in 2012, provides grounds for gender mainstreaming and aims to correct the disadvantaged position of women, which is “a result of systematic discrimination or structural gender inequality resulting from historical and socio-cultural conditions”.¹²⁵ Its subject is focused on prescribing equal treatment between women and men, related general and special measures, as well as special rights and obligations for specific subjects, but also the role and competences of the Legal Representative on equal opportunities of women and men (Art.1.1). Its special affirmative, encouraging and program measures are directed towards achieving gender equality. The Law contains provisions against gender-based discrimination and enumerates other discrimination grounds treated as separated inequalities, attaching hierarchical primacy of gender as the most important category. The supervision of the implementation of this law remains questionable because, as Poposka et al note, the law does not prescribe a mechanism for monitoring of the implementation of positive action measures.¹²⁶

In addition, Article 4 of this law prescribes prohibited forms of discrimination. However, it does not include multiple discrimination, as opposed to the ADL. It also does not include traditions and traditional practices resulting in discrimination which seems to stand out as especially important when discussing protection against intersectional discrimination.¹²⁷ There are other deficiencies of this law, however their addressing would surpass the focus of the present analysis.

The Gender Equality Strategy 2013-2020, like the national equality strategy (discussed above), has a dominant single-axis approach on gender as a category of inequality, although it defines women belonging to ethnic minorities, rural women and women with disability as particularly vulnerable, along with women in risk of social exclusion.¹²⁸

Employment

The Law on Labour Relations (Labour Law) aims to involve “employees in the working process, as well as to ensure an uninterrupted flow of that process, at the same time respecting the employees’ right to freedom of labour, dignity, and protection of the interests of employees

124 Biljana Kotevska, “Commencement of a process of consultations on Draft- National Strategy on Equality and Non- discrimination”, *Equality Law Website*, <http://www.equalitylaw.eu/index.php?option=com_edocman&task=document.viewdoc&id=2169&Itemid=295>. Last accessed: 27.11.2015.

125 Law on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, *Official Gazette*, 6/2012.

126 Zhaneta Poposka et al., *Analysis of discriminatory practices in the field of employment and working relations* [Анализа на дискриминационските практики во областа на вработувањето и работните односи] (OSCE and MLSP, 2013), 47.

127 Biljana Kotevska, *Analysis of the harmonization of national equality and non-discrimination legislation* (upcoming – 2016; OSCE and CPAD).

128 Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *Gender Equality Strategy 2013-2020*, (Skopje, 2013), 24.

in the labour relations.”¹²⁹ This Law contains a non-discrimination clause and lists protected grounds, as well as forms of discrimination. The forms do not include multiple discrimination.

The Labour Law also prescribes special protective measures for pregnant workers, elderly workers, workers younger than 18, and workers with a disability. This opens more space for considering possible intersections of class-gender, class-age and class-disability opens space.

The National Employment Strategy for 2015 mentions women’s lower participation rates in the labour market. Women’s “lower levels of education, the traditional role of the woman in the family, and the lack of kindergartens”¹³⁰, are described as the factors contributing to lower participation rates. It further states that the reasons mentioned above are more emphasized for ethnic minorities and in rural areas.¹³¹

The Operational Plan for Labour Market Services and Employment Measures 2015 includes set of measure aiming to improve unemployed persons’ employability and their active participation on the labour market.¹³² Although this document primarily tackles class inequalities, it also envisions activities that capture inequalities at the intersections. The predominant intersection axis discussed is class-age. The measures mostly focus specifically on youth unemployment (persons up to 29 years-old), such as motivation trainings for young persons, preparation for employment and work, professional orientation and career advice, self-employment program, etc. There are measures targeting persons at risk of social exclusion, specifically naming unemployed Roma persons, as well as, social protection users, young persons in social risk, domestic violence survivors and persons with disabilities.¹³³

Overall, in relation to the area of employment, it seems that there are initial steps towards introducing intersectionality in policy-making processes, as categories of inequalities are listed in co-relations. However, few intersections are explicitly named, and the relationships between inequalities are barely mentioned.

Disability

In relation to disability, the two key documents include Law on Employment of Persons with Disabilities and the National Strategy On Achieving Equal Rights for the Persons with Disabilities. Disability policy documents primarily treat disability as a separate category. However, there is an attempt to address inequalities at the intersections in the National Strategy. This strategy puts disability forward in a hierarchical primacy compared to other categories of inequalities, however failing to elaborate further on the relationships between these categories. Such addressing of intersectionality can be seen as a recognition of the heterogeneity among persons with disabilities. Namely, it talks about people with disabilities from “different ethnic background as most vulnerable” to the effects of transition.¹³⁴ Moreover, it acknowledges that persons with disability face

129 Law on Labour Relations, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia*, No. 62/05, 106/08, 161/08, 114/09, 130/09, 50/10, 52/10, 124/10, 47/11, 11/12, 39/12, 13/13, 25/13, 170/13, 187/13, 113/14, 20/15, 33/15, 72/15, 129/15 Constitutional Court decisions: 21.12.2005; 22.12.2005; 29.03.2006; 10.05.2006; 24.01.2007; 04.04.2007; 06.06.2007; 13.05.2009; 13.01.2010; 14.04.2010; 22.09.2010; 28.05.2014.

130 Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *National Employment Strategy for 2015* (Skopje, 2015).

131 Ibid.

132 Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *Operational Plan for Labour Market Services and Employment Measures 2015* (Skopje, 2010), 4.

133 Ibid.

134 Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *National Strategy On Achieving Equal Rights for the Persons with Disabilities (2010-2018)*, (Skopje, 2010), 2.

specific obstacles and “double discrimination”, including women and girls with disability, elderly persons with disability and persons with disability from ethnic minority background because they face a greater risk of exclusion and have lower participation rates in society when compared with other persons with disabilities.¹³⁵ Children and women with disability are singled out as most vulnerable to abuse and harassment.¹³⁶ Nevertheless, the intersecting categories of inequalities are captured solely as part of a broader, more general contextual statement, without referring to details and relations between categories. Furthermore, the proposed measures do not reflect the identified specific needs of persons at the point of intersection of inequalities.

In relation to the wider legal framework, it is worth noting that Article 8 of the ADL prescribes the discrimination of persons with disabilities as a form of discrimination. It does the same in relation to lack of reasonable accommodation.¹³⁷

The Law on Employment of Persons with Disabilities envisions measures for improving employment and working conditions of persons with disabilities.¹³⁸ No provisions in the Law treat or refer to intersectional categories of inequalities in an explicit manner.¹³⁹

Gender-based violence

The Macedonian legal and policy framework regulates gender-based violence (GBV) primarily through the prism and context of domestic violence.¹⁴⁰ Other forms of GBV are either disregarded or addressed under the Criminal Code, while failing to take into account the gendered aspect of violence.

The Law on Prevention and Protection against Domestic Violence focuses solely on gender as a category of inequality. It explicitly refers to women in two instances. First, gender-based violence is defined as violence against women because they are women, or because they are disproportionately affected.¹⁴¹ However, the very next paragraph states that terminology used in the Law applies to both men and women,¹⁴² announcing gender-neutral articulation in the text. Secondly, women are explicitly mentioned in the preventive measures directed towards promoting norms and values based on equality of women and men, and introducing gender equality and non-violent conflict resolution curricula on all educational levels. As part of its protective measures, the Law also foresees active labour market measures for domestic violence survivors¹⁴³, as part of its

135 Ibid, 11-12.

136 Ibid, 26.

137 Law on Prevention of and Protection against Discrimination, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia*, 50/10, 44/14, 150/15; Constitutional Court decision: 15.09.2010.

138 Law on Employment of Persons with Disabilities, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia*, 44/00, 16/04, 62/05, 113/05, 29/2007, 88/08, 161/08, 99/09, 136/11, 129/15, 147/15.

139 A new law was in preparation at the of drafting if this study, and adoption of that law seems highly plausible, does no further discussion is included on this law, save for a reference to existing literature. See, for example: Zhaneta Poposka et al., *Analysis of discriminatory practices in the field of employment and working relations* [Анализа на дискриминациските практики во областа на вработувањето и работкјјте односи] (OSCE and MLSP, 2013); Zhaneta Poposka et al., *Analysis of discriminatory practices in the field of employment and working relations* [Анализа на дискриминациските практики во областа на вработувањето и работните односи] (OSCE and MLSP, 2013); Biljana Kotevska, *Analysis of the harmonization of national equality and non-discrimination legislation* (upcoming – 2016; OSCE and CPAD).

140 The Law defines domestic violence as “maltreatment, insult, endangering security, bodily harm, sexual or other psychological, physical or economic violence that inflicts feelings of insecurity, or fear, including threats for such actions towards spouse, parents or children, or other persons in marital or extramarital relationship, or persons that have a child or have close personal relations, regardless if the perpetrator lives or has lived with the victim”.

141 Law on Prevention and Protection against Domestic Violence, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia*, 138/2014.

142 Ibid.

143 The term “victims” is used in the Law Prevention and Protection against Domestic Violence. While acknowledging the victim/survivor dichotomy in terminology (see Dunn, 2005), we avoid using the term “victim” as it signifies helplessness, powerlessness and passivity. Instead, we opt out for term survivor as it implies agency (see: Liz Kelly, *Surviving Sexual Violence* (Polity Press, 1988)).

protective measures. Although the Law makes an attempt to acknowledge the gendered nature of violence, it largely employs gender-neutral terminology while failing to account for other categories of inequalities, and their axis of intersection.

The National Strategy on Prevention and Protection against Domestic Violence identifies causes of domestic violence in unequal power relations and deeply engrained patriarchal values in Macedonian society, which puts women in a subordinate position. Women, children and elderly are singled out as the most vulnerable groups. Gender and age inequalities are treated as separate categories, although gender stands out as most important.

Drawing on three national surveys on the prevalence of domestic violence,¹⁴⁴ violence against elderly persons,¹⁴⁵ and sexual exploitation of children,¹⁴⁶ the Strategy states that it includes strategic activities to address “specific problems of particularly vulnerable groups, including children, elderly persons, rural women and persons with disability”.¹⁴⁷ In this instance, although age and disability are treated as separate categories, an attempt towards the intersectional approach is made through the naming of rural women as a vulnerable group. Moreover, based on the national survey on the prevalence of domestic violence, women with 80% of women not participating in the labour market have been exposed to violence. Similarly, the lower the educational status, the bigger the risk of violence, as 80 % of women with elementary or no education reported abuse. Rural women are more likely to suffer violence, as well as women caring for multiple children. Roma women’s situation is described as “particularly worrying”, because 72,2% of Roma women in the Survey reported abuse by a partner or family member. In this manner, the Strategy includes several intersectional inequalities: gender-class, gender-ethnicity, gender-place of residence.

The Strategy aims at setting out a new framework to address domestic violence with emphasis on vulnerable categories, and especially “multiple vulnerabilities stemming from age (children and elderly), sex, disability and any other characteristics that generates multiple vulnerabilities in the Macedonian context”.¹⁴⁸ However, the relationship between these vulnerabilities is not articulated.

In the GBV policy documents, as in the other areas considered above, intersectional inequalities rarely occur. The focus is primarily on gender and intersection with other categories, but the relationship is never expressed.

144 Ljubinka Popovska, Vlado Rikalovski and Dr. Elizabeth Villagomez, *Report from the Study of the National Poll on Domestic violence*, UN, (Skopje, 2011).

145 Marijana Markovik et al, *Community survey of elder maltreatment: A report from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*. Institute of Social, Political and Juridical Research, at University Ss. Kiril and Metodij – Skopje with the support of WHO Office-Skopje, (Skopje, 2011).

146 Violeta Caceva and Stojanka Mirceva, *Forlorn and Scarred: A Situation Analysis of Child Sexual Abuse*, Institute of Social, Political and Juridical Research, at University Ss. Kiril and Metodij – Skopje with the support of UNICEF Office-Skopje (Skopje, 2009).

147 Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *National Strategy on Prevention and Protection against Domestic Violence*, (Skopje, 2012), 5.

148 Ibid.



Conclusion

Our study is an intersectional analysis in the field of social protection in Macedonia, aiming to bring to the fore a users' perspective on the social protection system, and to further illuminate the basic needs and coping strategies of persons that are or ought to be users of the social protection system. We sought to answer how social protection policies in Macedonia address multiple inequalities of persons that are or ought to be users of the social protection system, with a particular focus on the intersectional inequalities, what impact this has on the livelihood of these persons, and how this can be improved.

In order to answer these questions we employed a combination of qualitative methods: qualitative in-depth interviews, focus groups, media analysis, legal and policy analysis, review of existing literature. For identification of the inequalities at the intersections identified via the basic needs and coping strategies of the users or ought to be users of the social protection system, we applied Winker and Degele's multi-level intersectional analysis model. This model offers a possibility for looking into the individual, symbolic and structural level, as well as at the intersections of these three levels.

On the individual level, through the narratives of persons that are or ought to be users of the social protection, we identified categories of inequalities that shape their basic needs and coping strategies. Thirty-three interviewees from eight different cities shared their narratives of everyday struggles, impoverishment and deprivation, but also of resilience and determination. On the symbolic level, we sought to uncover dominant representations of users, specific symbolic issues raised by our interviewees, especially in terms of underlying norms and values that shape their standpoints. For this purpose, we analysed media articles and we conducted one focus group with the general population. On the structural level, we evaluated the experiences and relationship of our interviewees with existing institutions, laws and policies by employing legal and policy analysis.

We engaged with existing data and literature, especially in order to see whether the social protection systems in place captures and, further, addresses the categories of inequalities identified in the lived experiences of the persons that are, or ought to be, users of the social protection system. Through this we evaluated the potential of the system to address inequalities, followed by possible recommendations for improving this.

Our findings suggest that intersecting categories of inequalities produce a diverse set of self-reported needs and coping strategies. They also reveal an overwhelming dissatisfaction with the social protection system for its inadequacy to fulfil its aims and meet the needs of persons in social need and social risk.

Further inquiry in the social protection system suggests that current social protection policies are unable to address inequalities at the intersections. This is confirmed by our interviewees who reveal that in practice the system is unable to fulfil its primary function and reduce poverty and social risk.

Inequalities at the intersections remain largely not reflected in the legal and policy frameworks, thus remaining unaddressed by the system. There is a notable absence of an intersectional approach in the laws and policies of relevance for the field of social protection. Although few attempts which we could label as intersectional were noted, some of them were more additive rather than intersectional. In addition, articulation on the relationship between categories of inequalities is absent. The legal and policy framework seems to still operate a single-axis approach, meaning it largely focuses on single categories of inequalities.

Main Concerns and Recommendations

Instead of formulating the recommendations ourselves, we are presenting here the main concerns stemming from the lived experiences of our interviewees, phrased as recommendations issued by our interviewees themselves. Based on their actual needs, the interviewees in this study identified the following priorities for improving the social protection system:

- Increase the amount of social assistance benefits to allow for better quality of live for its recipients;
- Tie monthly social assistance amount to monthly consumer basket;
- Easier and cheaper procedures to obtain social protection status coupled with less restrictive requirements to maintain it;
- Improve physical and sensory accessibility for persons with disabilities and secure provision of reasonable accommodation;
- Allow conditions for formal economic activation of users of the social protection system and lift ban on engaging in any financially gainful activity for persons receiving permanent financial assistance;
- Improve employment measures for persons with disabilities;
- Take measures to identify persons in need of social protection and better target the policies and with it the assistance and the measures;
- Improve accessibility of transport in rural areas, provide free public transport for caretakers of persons with disabilities;
- Provide education incentives (scholarships for children from underprivileged families, encouraging life-long learning and vocational training for persons in social risk and social need);
- Encourage greater social acceptance of persons with disabilities, single mothers, domestic violence survivors, transgender persons, sex workers, homeless persons (reduce stigmatisation);
- Strengthen the capacities of social service employees to work with various groups of underprivileged persons through of sensitivity training;
- Provide additional services for single parents and caretakers of persons with disabilities; such as home care services, daily care centres on local level, extended day care services; and
- Provision of basic housing conditions, shelters for homeless persons, particularly in the winter season.

A detailed overview of recommendations is provided in the accompanying Policy Brief.¹⁴⁹ We are putting forward here just one recommendation from the research team itself: An open, participatory and transparent process of discussions about what kind of social protection Macedonia needs and how this can be best achieved must be opened on a national level. A political consensus must be reached for opening such a process, and the process itself must remain void of political abuse. In this process, the voices of the users or ought to be users of the social protection system must be heard and their lived experiences must be taken into account. In addition, we recommend conducting a study on possibilities for introducing intersectionality to policy making which would include lessons learned from other national process with well assessed potential for policy transplants' success or failure.

Bibliography

“Consumers Basket: 160 Euros Missing in the Family Budget.” Faktor. <http://faktor.mk/2015/03/10/potrosuvachka-koshnitsa-vo-semejnot-budhet-dupka-od-160-evra/>, Last accessed: 25.11.2015.

“State Statistical Office, Indicators,” *State Statistical Office Website*, http://www.stat.gov.mk/KlucniIndikator_i_en.aspx, Last accessed: 26.11.2015.

“Social and Health Protection,” *State Statistical Office Website*. <<http://www.stat.gov.mk/OblastOpsto.aspx?id=3>>. Last accessed: 25.11.2015

Amalija Jovanović, Vesna Jovanova, Neda Maleska – Sačmaroska, Slobodanka Markovska, *Gender-budget analysis of social protection and active employment policies in the Republic of Macedonia* (Skopje: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, 2010).

Amy J. Schulz and Leith Mullings, “Intersectionality and Health: An Introduction” in *Gender, Race, Class & Health: Intersectional Approaches*, Amy J. Schulz and Leith Mullings (eds) (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005).

Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of women of the Republic of Macedonia (ESE) in cooperation with Akcija Združenska, *Shadow Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women*, (Skopje, 2012).

Bekim Kadriu and Bujar Ahmedi, “Age Discrimination in the Republic of Macedonia and the Approach of the Constitutional Court,” *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, (2015).

Biljana Kotevska, “Commencement of a process of consultations on Draft- National Strategy on Equality and Non- discrimination,” *Equality Law Website*, <http://www.equalitylaw.eu/index.php?option=com_edocman&task=document.viewdoc&id=2169&Itemid=295>. Last accessed: 27.11.2015.

Biljana Kotevska, *Analysis of the harmonization of national equality and non-discrimination legislation* (upcoming – 2016; OSCE and CPAD).

Biljana Kotevska, *Country Report – Summary 2013 - European Network of Legal Experts in Gender Equality and Non-discrimination*. <<http://www.equalitylaw.eu/component/edocman/2013-mk-summary-country-report-ln-final/Download>>. Accessed on: 25.11.2015

Biljana Kotevska, *Country Report on Measures to Combat Discrimination (Directives 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC) – Macedonia 2014*, European Network of Legal Experts in the Field of Gender Equality and Non-discrimination (unpublished, on file with authors)

Christian Brüggemann, Roma education in comparative perspective. Analysis of the UNDP/World Bank/EC Regional Roma Survey, (Bratislava: UNDP, 2012).

Commission for Protection Against Discrimination (Комисија за заштита од дискриминација) 2014 Annual Report of the Commission for Protection Against Discrimination (2015), Website of the Assembly, www.sobranie.mk/material-details.nsp?materialId=d93111d8-975d-471e-be2c-e07a2df372f3, Last accessed: 27.11.2015

Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia and its XXXII amendments, *Official Website of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia*. <<http://www.sobranie.mk/the-constitution-of-the-republic-of-macedonia.nsp>>. Last accessed: 25.11.2015

Dimitar Nikoloski, “Labour Market Segmentation in the Republic of Macedonia.” *Economics and Business*, no. No. 154 March (2011).

Dominika Stojanovska, *Gender Equality and Human Development in Macedonia during Transition (1991-2006)* (PhD thesis, University of Bologna, 2008).

Emanuela Lombardo and Lise Rolandsen Agustin. “Framing Gender Intersections in the European Union: What Implications for the Quality of Intersectionality in Policies?” *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, (2011). 488-512.

Emanuela Lombardo and Mieke Verloo, “Institutionalising Intersectionality in the European Union? Policy Developments and Contestations” *The International Feminist Journal of Politics Vol. 11 No. 4* (2009).

European Commission, Macedonia 2015 Report (10.11.2015) <http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2015/20151110_report_the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia.pdf>. Last accessed: 28.11.2015

European Disability Forum, *2nd Manifesto on the Rights of Women and Girls with Disabilities in the European Union: A Toolkit for Activists and Policymakers* (Budapest: General Assembly of the European Disability Forum, 2011).

European Roma Rights Center, *Macedonia: Country Profile 2011-2012* (Budapest, 2012).

Finance Think, EdPlako application: <http://www.edplako.mk/истражувања/>

Gabriele Winker and Nina Degele, “Intersectionality as multi-level analysis: Dealing with social inequality”, *European Journal of Women’s Studies Vol.18 No.1* (2011): 54.

Ilká Thiessen, *Waiting for Macedonia: Identity in a Changing World* (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2007).

Iyiola Solanke, “Putting Race and Gender Together: A New Approach To Intersectionality” *Modern Law Review Vol.72 No.5* (2009), 723-749.

Jasmina Mihailoska and Misha Popovic, *Equal Opportunities Barometer* (Skopje: Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, 2013).

Kanal5, “The Prilep Center for Social Assistance Currently Distributes Assistance to the Socially most-at-risk families [Во прилепскиот Центар за социјални работи во тек е распределба на помош за социјално најзагрозените семејства]”, *Kanal5 Website*, <http://kanal5.com.mk/vesti_detail.asp?ID=28204>, **Last accessed: 11.09.2015.**

Kantola, Johanna Kantola and Kevät Nousiainen. “Institutionalizing Intersectionality in Europe.” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 11, no. 4 (2009): 459-77.

Katerina Kolozova, Kalina Lecevska, Viktorija Borovska and Ana Blazeva, *Ethnically and gender inclusive grass-root LGBTI movements in Macedonia* (Skopje: Institute for Social Sciences and Humanities, 2013).

Katherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996).

Kire Sharlamanov and Aleksandar Jovanoski, “The Ethnic Relations in the Macedonian Society Measured Through the Concept of Affective Social Distance.” *American International Journal of Social Science* Vol.2, No. 3 (2013).

Kristefer Stojanovski, et al, ““It Is One, Big Loneliness for Me”: The Influences of Politics and Society on Men Who Have Sex with Men and Transwomen in Macedonia” *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, (2015).

Law on Employment of Persons with Disabilities, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia*, 44/00, 16/04, 62/05, 113/05, 29/2007, 88/08, 161/08, 99/09, 136/11, 129/15, 147/15.

Law on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia*, 6/2012.

Law on Labour Relations, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia*, No. 62/05, 106/08, 161/08, 114/09, 130/09, 50/10, 52/10, 124/10, 47/11, 11/12, 39/12, 13/13, 25/13, 170/13, 187/13, 113/14, 20/15, 33/15, 72/15, 129/15 Constitutional Court decisions: 21.12.2005; 22.12.2005; 29.03.2006; 10.05.2006; 24.01.2007; 04.04.2007; 06.06.2007; 13.05.2009; 13.01.2010; 14.04.2010; 22.09.2010; 28.05.2014.

Law on Prevention and Protection against Domestic Violence, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia*, 138/2014.

Law on Prevention of and Protection against Discrimination, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia*, 50/10, 44/14, 150/15; Constitutional Court decision: 15.09.2010.

Law on Social Protection, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia*, 79/09, 36/11, 51/11, 166/12, 15/13, 79/13, 164/13, 187/13, 44/14, 116/14, 180/14, 33/15, 72/15, 104/15, 150/15, 173/15, 192/15; Constitutional Court decision: 07.04.2010.

Leslie McCall, “The Complexity of Intersectionality”, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* Vol.30 No.3. (2005).

Liz Kelly, *Surviving Sexual Violence* (Polity Press, 1988).

Ljubinka Popovska, Vlado Rikalovski and Dr. Elizabeth Villagomez, *Report from the Study of the National Poll on Domestic violence*, UN, (Skopje, 2011).

Macedonian Young Lawyers Association, *USAID Human Rights Protection Project Bulletin No.3 and 4* [Билтен бр.3 и 4 на Проектот за заштита на Човековите права на УСАИД], (January 2016), <http://www.myla.org.mk/images/pdf/bilten_br_3_4.pdf>.

Maja Gerovska Mitev, *Material Deprivation, Poverty and Social Exclusion in Macedonia* (Skopje: Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2012).

Marija Risteska et al, *Perspectives of Women in Rural Areas* (Skopje: Center for Research and Policy Making, 2012).

Marijana Markovik et al, *Community survey of elder maltreatment: A report from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*. Institute of Social, Political and Juridical Research, at University Ss. Kiril and Metodij – Skopje with the support of WHO Office-Skopje, (Skopje, 2011).

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, “Right to Permanent Financial Allowance”, *Ministry of Labour and Social Policy Website*, http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/uslugi-ns_article-pravo-na-postojana-paricna-pomosh.nsp, Last accessed: 27.11.2015

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *Gender Equality Strategy 2013-2020*, (Skopje, 2013).

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *National Employment Strategy for 2015* (Skopje, 2015).

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *National Programme for Development of Social Protection (2011-2021)*, (Skopje, 2010).

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *National Strategy for Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion (revised 2010-2013)* (Skopje, March 2013).

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *National Strategy On Achieving Equal Rights for the Persons with Disabilities (2010-2018)*, (Skopje, 2010).

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *National Strategy on Equal Opportunities and Non-Discrimination on Grounds of Ethnicity, Age, Mental and Physical Disability for 2012-2015*, (Skopje, 2012).

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *National Strategy on Prevention and Protection against Domestic Violence*, (Skopje, 2012).

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *On the Road to EU, Contribution of the Civil Society to the Policy Creating of the Social Inclusion in the Republic of Macedonia* (Skopje, 2008).

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *Operational Plan for Labour Market Services and Employment Measures 2015* (Skopje, 2010).

Neda Milevska Kostova and Biljana Kotevska, “Equity vs Efficiency” in Predrag Bejaković and Meinardus (eds) *Possibilities to Lessen the Trade-Off in Social, Employment and Education Policy in South-East Europe* (Sofia: Friedrich Ebert Foun-

dation Bulgaria, 2011).

Nikica Mojsoska-Blazevski, *Supporting strategies to recover from the crisis in South Eastern Europe : country assessment: the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, International Labour Organization, Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Central and Eastern Europe. (Budapest: ILO, 2011).

Olena Hankivsky, “GMSH Summit 2013: Intersectionality” (video upload: 27.08.2013), *Gay Men’s Sexual Health Alliance (GMSH) Vimeo Channel*, <<https://vimeo.com/73232267>>, Last accessed: 24.11.2015.

Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought* (Routledge, 2000).

Patti Petesch and Giorgia Demarchi, *Gender, Mobility and Middle Class in Europe and Central Asia: Insights from Qualitative Research*, (World Bank, November 2015).

PolioPlus – Movement Against Hendikep: < www.polioplus.org.mk>. Last accessed: 25.11.2015.

Reactor - Research in action, *Finding the key to the glass door: demystifying the reasons the women’s low participation in the labour market* (Skopje, 2012).

Reaktor, *Employed persons with disabilities in professional rehabilitation associations* [Вработени инвалиди во организации за професионална рехабилитација], Reaktor Website, <http://rodovreactor.mk/subject/social_welfare/graphs/vraboteni-invalidi-vo-organizacii-za-profesionalna-rehabilitaci-column/#.VsCO_oQ-j0wA>. Last accessed: 25.11.2015.

Republic Center for the Support of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities-Poraka, *Rights of persons with intellectual disabilities in the Republic of Macedonia: Report on the implementation of the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities* (Skopje, 2013).

Robert C. Post, “Prejudicial Appearances: The Logic of American Antidiscrimination Law”, in Robert C. Post et al, *Prejudicial Appearances: The Logic of American Antidiscrimination Law* (Duke Univeristy Press, 2001).

Rozita Dimova, ““Modern” Masculinities: Ethnicity, Education, and Gender in Macedonia” *Nationalities Papers*, (2006).

Rozita Dimova, *Ethno-baroque: Materiality, Aesthetics, and Conflict in Modern-day Macedonia* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013).

Ružica Boškić et al, “Everyday Life of Disabled Persons in Slovenia”, *Revija za sociologiju* Vol.39, No.4 (2008), 251–265.

State statistical office of the Republic of Macedonia, *Women and men in the Republic of Macedonia* (Skopje, 2015).

State Statistical Office, *Labour Force Survey 2014* (Skopje, 2015).

Susan Wendell “*Toward a Feminist Theory of Disability*” in Lennard J. Davis (ed) *The Disability Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

Thomas Bahle, Michaela Pfeifer and Claus Wendt, “Social Assistance” in Francis G. Castel et al (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of the Welfare State* (OUP 2010).

Timo Makkonen, *Multiple, Compound and Intersectional Discrimination: Bringing the Experiences of the Most Marginalized to the Fore* (Institute For Human Rights, Åbo Akademi University 2002)

Tomas James Rees, “Is Personal Insecurity a Cause of Cross-National Differences in the Intensity of Religious Belief?” *Journal of Religion and Society* 11 (2009): 1-24. UNDP/WB/EC, Regional Roma Survey (2011).

United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, *Combating Poverty and Inequality: Structural Change, Social Policy and Politics* (Geneva: UNRISD, 2010).

Valentina Ivanoska, The Impact of Alcohol on Fat Metabolism among Alcoholics [Влијанието на алкохолот врз метаболизмот на масти кај алкохоличарите], *Website of the University “Goce Delcev”*, <http://eprints.ugd.edu.mk/10285/1/_ugd.edu.mk_private_UserFiles_katerina.hadzivasile_Desktop_magisterska.....pdf>. Last accessed: 25.11.2015

Vanco Uzunov, “Socio-economic transformation and the welfare system of the Republic of Macedonia in the period of transition”, in *Welfare states in transition: 20 years after the Yugoslav welfare model*, eds. Marija Stambolieva & Stefan Dehnert (Sofia: Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2011).

Violeta Caceva and Stojanka Mirceva, *Forlorn and Scarred: A Situation Analysis of Child Sexual Abuse*, Institute of Social, Political and Juridical Research, at University Ss. Kiril and Metodij – Skopje with the support of UNICEF Office-Skopje (Skopje, 2009).

Vivan M. May, *Pursuing Intersectionality, Unsettling Dominant Imaginaries* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

World Bank, “Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of population)” <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.NAHC/countries/MK?display=graph>, Last accessed: 25.11.2015

World Bank, *Labour Market Inequalities in FYR Macedonia: New Evidence on Gender and Ethnicity* (June 2015).

Zhaneta Poposka et al., *Analysis of discriminatory practices in the field of employment and working relations* [Анализа на дискриминациските практики во областа на вработувањето и работните односи] (OSCE and MLSP, 2013).

Zhaneta Poposka, *Employment of persons with disability in the Republic of Macedonia – Legal Analysis* [Вработување на лицата со хендикеп во Република Македонија – Правна анализа] (Polio Plus 2013).

