

PUBLIC OPINION TOWARD GLOBALIZATION: THE MACEDONIAN EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

Globalization is a phenomenon which, in a great measure, affects every modern society and culture. In the last few decades, in the social sciences, great interest has been taken in this topic, especially in sociology. Sociologists observe this phenomenon as a dynamic process that is built on the base of the mutual connection and dependence between countries and through them explains the changes that happen in the separate sociocultural realities. The theory of globalization refers to the world condensation and intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole

(Robertson, 1992, p. 8). Consciousness has been increasing and the chance for the world to be reproduced as a unique, is growing. That awareness is built on the basis of experience that is a result of the intensification of the world as a whole, and also a consequence of the globalization.

In this article our intention is to give analyzes in relation with public opinion for globalization itself in the world, and particularly in Macedonia. Here we will give an observation about the public opinion in relation with this question. On a theoretical level, it analyzes the most significant theories of globalization in sociology, and on an empirical level, through the public opinion, i.e. by measuring the opinions of the public on this phenomenon in Macedonian society. We have researched the opinions of the public through: 1. Respondents' awareness about globalization; 2. Respondents' perceptions about the importance of globalization 3. Respondents' personal opinions on globalization and 4. The presence of globalization worldwide. The research has been conducted on a target sample and has a total of 127 respondents, Macedonian citizens.

Keywords: globalization, awareness, public opinion, changes, Macedonia

1. Introduction

Social sciences are confronted with the complex issues of globalization, not only from the standpoint of its consideration as a concept, but also as an inevitable and complex social phenomenon. It is the focus of social thinkers from many social disciplines (sociology, cultural anthropology, economics, politics, geography), seeking to investigate globalization, its nature, characteristics and ambivalent effects in different social contexts. The relevance of this interest is also attributed to the intense pervasion of globalization into all segments of society. This is evident in the economy, market, capital, politics,

culture, communications, tourism, and even in the most intimate parts of modern man's life. Globalization allows us to perceive the world as a whole, to strengthen our awareness of and belonging to that world, without being isolated from the developments taking place somewhere else. Hence, the resulting associations of globalization as a "secular society process" (Ulrich Beck), "global village" (McLuhan) and a phenomenon which cannot be ignored. Sociologist Anthony Giddens emphasizes that globalization is "intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa. This is a dialectical process because such local happenings may move in an obverse direction from the very distanced relations that shape them" (Giddens, 1998, p. 69).

George Ritzer suggests the strengthen of globalization, particularly emphasizes the existence of this conscience of the world, which occurs as a result of diffusion and dissemination practices, expansion of relations across the continents, organization of the social life on a global level (Ritzer, 2007, p.4). These notions of planetary consciousness clearly point to globalization as the integration process. Today, these processes are being further developed by the transition which have led to a deep crisis and there might be repercussions on all aspects of the socio-cultural life of individuals in a given society. These processes, as noted by David Held and Kate Nash, are the reason for the decline of the role of nation state. David Held points to the limited ability of the nation state and its independent appearance in articulating and achieving the objectives of internal and foreign policy, given the fact that it is less possible to control trade, goods, services, technology, media products, and information beyond its borders.

In addition to this debate, sociologist Jan Nederveen Pieterse situates the question of globalization within one wider context. He talks about sociologists, even in the view of some unimportant characteristics of globalization. He emphasizes the reconfiguration of the states, indicating that this reconfiguration is always connected with regionalization and that it goes together with regionals had is uneven (Pieterse, 2009, pp. 7-8).

For indicative purposes, a short list of collected definitions from a series of online dictionaries and encyclopedias is offered in Table 1. These definitions tend to reflect the use of the word globalization in the fields of business and marketing. Although these definitions help capture the meaning of global as a word, they are far less helpful in clarifying globalization as a concept. This fuzziness prevails often not only in academic discussions but also in popular use.

Source	Definition
https://www.macmillandictionary.com/	The idea that the world is developing a single economy and culture as a result of improved technology and communications and the influence of very large multinational companies
https://www.merriam-webster.com/	The act or process of globalizing :the state of being globalized; <i>especially</i> :the development of an increasingly integrated global economy marked especially by free trade, free flow of capital, and the tapping of cheaper foreign labor markets.
https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/	The process by which businesses or other organizations develop international influence or start operating on an international scale.
https://dictionary.cambridge.org/	

<p>https://www.collinsdictionary.com/</p>	<p>A situation in which available goods and services, or social and cultural influences, gradually become similar in all parts of the world.</p> <p>The process of globalizing something; specif., the expansion of many businesses into markets throughout the world, marked by an increase in international investment, the proliferation of large multinational corporations, worldwide economic integration.</p>
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Table 1. **Definitions of globalization**

Note: All sources accessed on October 30, 2017

2. Methods

The object of the research is analyzed on a theoretical and empirical level. On a theoretical level, the subject is researched through theoretical approaches related to globalization and public opinion, and on an empirical level, data has been collected for assessment of attitudes towards globalization in Macedonia by means of a questionnaire.

2.1 Sample design. The survey has been conducted on a target sample with predetermined quotas defined by sex and age, total 127 respondents. A sampling unit are citizens aged 18+ (Beška, 2009, Bryman, 2008). In accordance with the type of variables and objectives of the empirical study, the experience sample is subjected to a univariate or bivariate analysis. Each variable (question) has been separately analyzed by means of univariate analysis using a descriptive statistical technique: number and percentage. Bivariate analysis has also been employed with a contingency table where the dependent and the independent variables crosstab. For statistical hypothesis testing

chi-square test of association between variables was used. The contingency coefficient (CC) expresses the degree of correlation.

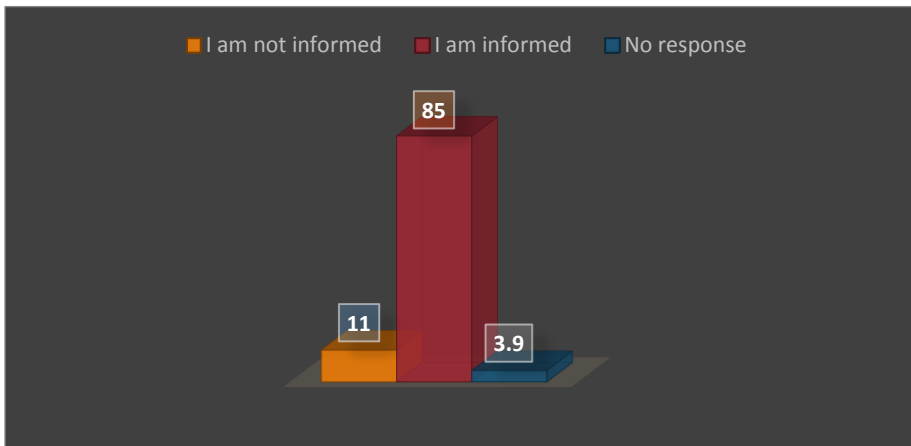
3. Results

In this part of the study we will present the results from the research about the public opinion for the globalization in Macedonia. We have put these opinions in following aspects: 1. Respondents' awareness about globalization; 2. Respondents' perceptions about the importance of globalization 3. Respondents' personal opinions on globalization and 4. The presence of globalization worldwide.

3.1 Respondents' awareness about globalization

Regarding the respondents' awareness of globalization, the data (Figure 1) show that most of the respondents (85%) chose modality "I am informed". Eleven percent said they were not informed. A very small number of respondents did not answer this question.

Figure 1. **Percentage distribution of responses for the degree of awareness about globalization, RM, 2015**

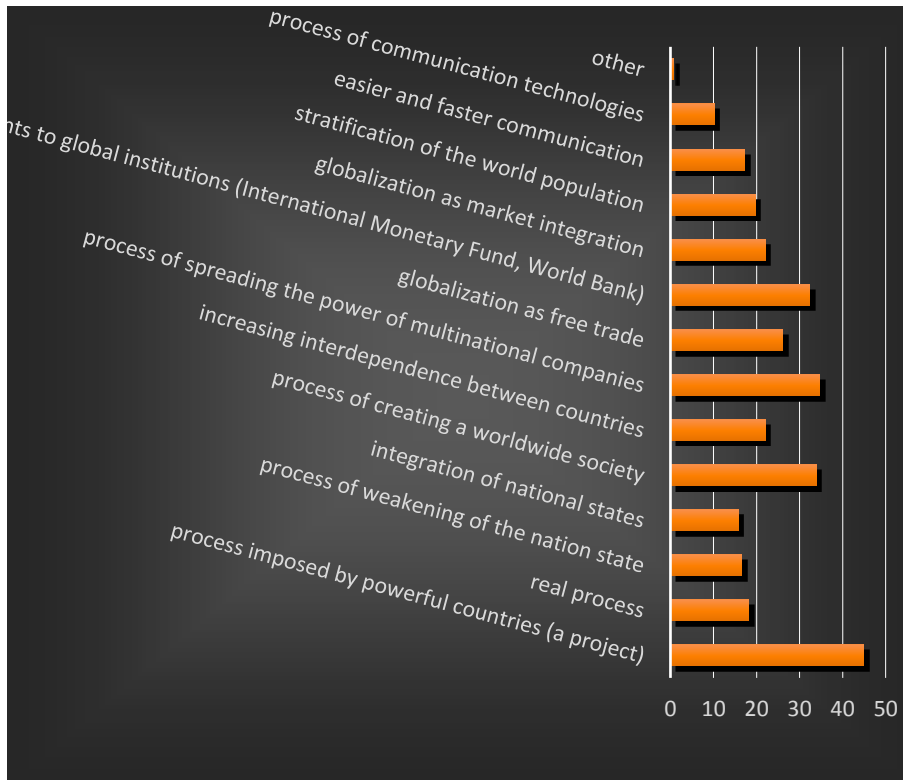


Source: Research 2017

3.2 Respondents' perceptions about the importance of globalization

The pervasiveness of globalization, its multidimensionality and, of course, the individual experience of each person with globalization allows for the globalization phenomenon to be differently defined and perceived. We shall highlight that the dilemmas regarding what globalization actually is; whether it is a process or a project; whether globalization strengthens multinational companies, and reduces the power of local government; whether globalization leads to inequality among regions, or countries; whether globalization is identified with Westernization and Americanization the dilemmas which are still relevant and which have been subjects of debate among the relevant authors who explore globalization, such as Immanuel Wallerstein, Ronald Robertson, Anthony Giddens, Jan Art Scholte George Ritzer. There are still discussions on what globalization actually is. In this sense, the following question was also directed at getting an answer on the way respondents perceive globalization or what globalization is for them. The respondents were offered a total of 14 modalities and could choose a maximum of four options. According to the answers, the respondents' most common choice (44.9 percent) was that globalization is a process imposed by powerful countries (a project). The second choice was that globalization is a process of spreading the power of multinational companies (34.6 percent of respondents), and the third choice was that it is a process of creating a worldwide society, with 33.9 percent. The choices which followed are: 32.3 percent see it as a transfer of power from national governments to global institutions (International Monetary Fund, World Bank). These are the main four claims that largely represent globalization, according to the respondents. Besides, the identification of globalization as a process as free trade (26%), globalization as market integration (22%) and increasing interdependence between states (22%) should not be neglected.

Figure 2. Percentage distribution of answers on the meaning of globalization RM, 2017

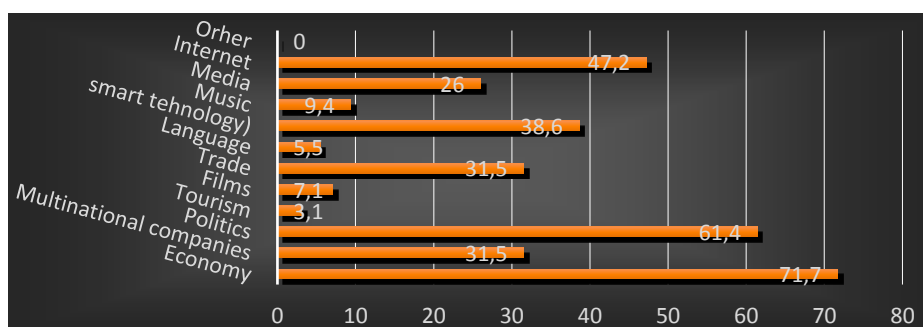


Source: Research 2017

To identify the opinion of the respondents as to the areas of the world where globalization is most present, the following question was asked. In what areas is the presence of globalization most evident in the world? As part of this question, 12 modalities were offered, of which the respondents could choose four at the most. From the results (Figure 3), we can see that most of the respondents, 71.7 percent, observe globalization worldwide in the area of economy, 61.4 percent have noted that it exists in politics, and 47.2 percent in the Internet, while 38.6 percent observe it in smart technology. With equal percentage of 31.5, respondents selected both modalities – multinational companies and trade. It is evident that respondents do not recognize multinational

companies as the driving force of globalization worldwide, whereas this is a significant response in the Republic of Macedonia.

Figure 3. **Percentage distribution of responses on the presence of globalization worldwide RM, 2017**



Source: Research 2017

According to the established model for measuring globalization, the dependent variable (globalization) is operationalized through two questions. The first relates to personal opinion, and the second, to estimates of the impact of globalization in the Republic of Macedonia

3.3 Respondents' personal opinions on globalization

Respondents' personal opinions on globalization were measured through the direct question: Would you classify your personal attitude to globalization as positive, negative or neutral. From the answers, we can observe that most of the respondents, or 62.2 percent, said that their attitude towards globalization is neutral. Furthermore, 21.3 percent have a positive response, while 16.5 percent of respondents have a negative attitude. The crosstabs of the received responses with the block of independent variables from the group of socio-demographic and political factors, indicate that the aforementioned variables have no influence on the responses. Table 2 presents the answers in regard to the personal attitudes towards globalization and their differences by gender, age, educational level and employment status, as well as by political orientation.

Markings	Responses			Total
	Positive	Negative	Neutral	
Total	21.3 (27)	16.5 (21)	62.2 (79)	100.0 (127)
Sex				
Male	14.8 (8)	22.2 (12)	63.0 (34)	100.0 (54)
Female	26.0 (19)	9.6 (7)	64.4 (47)	100.0 (73)
Age				
18-23	23.1 (6)	11.5 (3)	65.4 (17)	100.0 (26)
24-33	16.7 (7)	9.5 (4)	73.8 (31)	100.0 (42)
34-43	10.0 (2)	30.0 (6)	60.0 (12)	100.0 (20)
44-53	34.8 (8)	17.4 (4)	47.8 (11)	100.0 (23)
54+	25.0 (4)	12.5 (2)	62.5 (10)	100.0 (16)
Level of education				
Primary and secondary school	22.0 (11)	12.0 (6)	66.0 (33)	100.0 (50)
College and university education	13.8 (9)	16.9 (11)	69.2 (45)	100.0 (65)

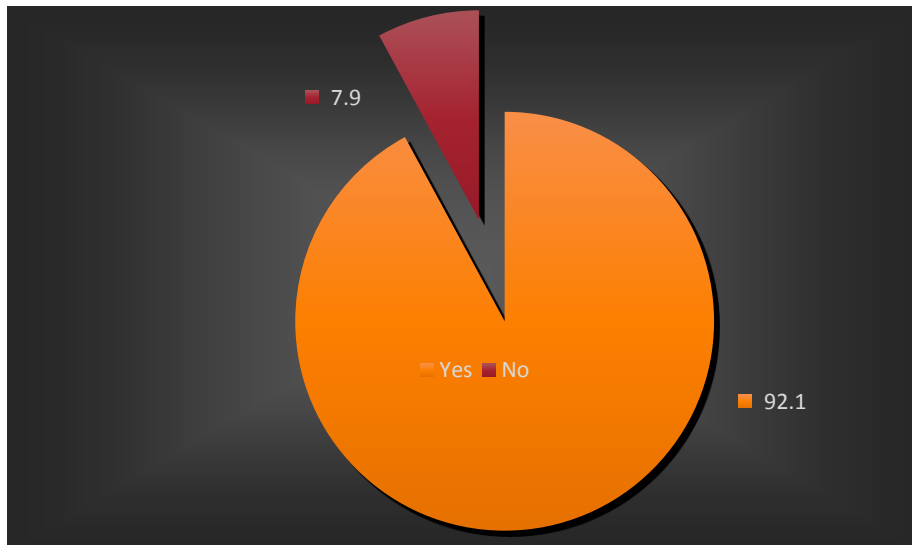
Master's and PhD	58.3 (7)	16.7 (2)	25.0 (3)	100.0 (12)
Employment status				
Employed	18.5 (15)	21.0 (17)	60.5 (49)	100.0 (81)
Other	26.1 (12)	8.7 (4)	65.2 (30)	100.0 (46)
Political orientation				
Left	25.0 (6)	12.5 (3)	62.5 (15)	100.0 (24)
Right	24.1 (19)	13.9 (11)	62.0 (49)	100.0 (79)
Center	12.5 (2)	31.2 (5)	56.2 (9)	100.0 (16)

Table 2. **Percentage distribution and crosstab responses related to “personal opinions on globalization”, according to socio-demographic and political factors of influence, RM, 2017**

Source: Research 2017

There is an evident difference in the respondents' regarding the gender variable. It is noted that female respondents show a more positive attitude compared to male respondents. In terms of age, especially respondents in the age group 44-53 have a positive attitude compared to other age groups. The statistical testing of individual hypotheses indicates rejection of the null hypothesis. Consequently, the degree of association among the groups of socio-demographic and political influencing factors and the personal attitude towards globalization is low and statistically insignificant. The answers to the question regarding the impact of globalization in the Republic of Macedonia are presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4. **Percentage distribution of responses regarding the impact of globalization in the Republic of Macedonia, 2017**



Source: Research 2017

Almost all of them (92.1 percent), have noted the impact of globalization in the Republic of Macedonia. For one-tenth of respondents, globalization has no impact or they have not provided an answer to this question. Given the predominance of affirmative answers on the impact of globalization in the Republic of Macedonia, the expectations, as well as the crosstabs with the independent variables, are predefined; they have shown that no independent variable has an impact on this response (gender, age, education and employment status) nor do the independent variables linking the symbolic side of globalization (attitude towards modern lifestyle, the feeling that consumption and commercialization pose a threat to Macedonian culture, whether traditional lifestyle is being lost or people feel better in a free market economy). Through four assertions in the questionnaire: support of free market economy, attitude towards modern lifestyle, mass consumption and commercialization posing a threat to Macedonian culture and the feeling of losing the traditional lifestyles, we have operationalized the so-called symbolic side of globalization.

The symbolic side contains the questions which refer to "whether modern lifestyle is desirable, whether consumption and commercialization pose a threat to local culture, whether tradition is being lost, i.e. the traditional lifestyle, or whether people feel better when free market economy is operating" (Edwards, 2006, p. 594). The explanations of the symbolism are that include whether society generally leads a modern lifestyle as opposed to traditional. In fact, these four elements are inter-conditional, and one can argue that the free market economy is the initiator of globalization. Table 3 shows the data of the symbolic variables of globalization. Regarding the claim: Free market economy should be supported, even though, it results in some people getting wealthy, while others remaining poor, respondents indicate a equal support and denial of this position (48.0 percent have answered affirmatively, and 48.8 percent negatively). The symbolic values of globalization in the field of culture was measured with the question: I prefer modern lifestyle and we gradually lose our traditional lifestyle. According to the responses, almost three-quarters of Macedonian prefer modern lifestyle, (88.2 percent). One can see by this that tradition in Macedonian society is being gradually lost. Regarding the assertion Mass consumption and commercialization pose a threat to Macedonian culture, 52.8 percent of respondents agree with this view.

Table 3. Distribution of responses in regard to market economy, modern lifestyle, mass consumerism and commercialization, traditional lifestyle

Assertions	Responses			Total
	Yes	No	No response	
Free market economy should be supported, even though, it results in some people getting wealthy, while others remaining poor	48.0 (61)	48.8 (62)	3.1 (4)	100.0 (127)

I prefer modern lifestyle	71.7 (91)	28.3 (36)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (127)
Mass consumption and commercialization pose a threat to Macedonian culture	52.8 (67)	45.7 (58)	1.6 (2)	100.0 (127)
We gradually lose our traditional lifestyle	88.2 (112)	11.8 (15)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (127)

Source: Research 2017

Markings (independent variables)	Personal opinion			Influence of globalization		Total
	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Yes	No	
Support of free market economy						
Yes	31.1 (19)	18.0 (11)	50.8 (31)	95.1 (58)	4.9 (3)	100.0 (61)
No	9.7 (6)	12.9 (8)	77.4 (48)	91.9 (57)	8.1 (5)	100.0 (62)
Modern lifestyle						
I prefer modern lifestyle	27.4 (23)	10.7 (9)	61.9 (52)	91.2 (83)	8.8 (8)	100.0 (91)
I do not prefer modern lifestyle	11.4 (4)	28.6 (10)	60.0 (21)	94.4 (34)	5.6 (2)	100.0 (36)
Mass consumption and commercialization						
Mass consumption and commercialization	13.4 (9)	19.4 (13)	67.2 (45)	91.0 (61)	9.0 (6)	100.0 (67)

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zation pose a threat to Macedonian culture						
Mass consumption and commercialization do not pose a threat to Macedonian culture	31.0 (18)	13.8 (8)	55.2 (32)	93.1 (54)	6.9 (4)	100.0 (58)
Traditional lifestyle						
We gradually lose the traditional lifestyle	20.0 (21)	17.1 (18)	62.9 (66)	92.0 (103)	8.0 (9)	100.0 (112)
Traditional and traditional lifestyle are being reinforced	42.9 (6)	7.1 (1)	50.0 (7)	93.3 (14)	6.7 (1)	100.0 (15)

Table 4 presents the crosstabs related to personal attitudes towards globalization and personal assessments of its impact in the Republic of Macedonia, with the so-called symbolic variables. The results of the analysis indicate that the symbolic variables do not affect these two questions. However, we shall mention certain characteristics which differ from the general frequencies.

Table 4. Crosstab of personal opinions and the influence of globalization with the “symbolic variables” of globalization, RM, 2017

Source: Research 2017

According to the survey, respondents who support the free market economy have a positive attitude towards globalization, and respondents who do not support the free market economy, the majority

at 77.4 percent, have a neutral attitude towards globalization. As expected, respondents who prefer modern lifestyle show a more positive attitude compared to those who do not prefer modern lifestyle. The respondents who do not perceive the threat to Macedonian culture by mass consumption and commercialization show a positive personal attitude towards globalization. It is interesting that those who believe that traditional lifestyle is being enhanced share a similar view.

Crosstabs of personal attitudes towards globalization and the impact of globalization in the Republic of Macedonia with the questions relating to the assessment of changes in the economy and the availability of food show no statistically significant association. What we have seen is that the respondents whose opinion is that the economy will not improve in the next 12 months, more than the other respondents (87.5 percent) express the view that globalization has an impact in the country. There is a similar trend of thinking among respondents who have not had enough money to buy food in the last 12 months. They are less positive than the rest of the respondents (87.5 percent) in terms of the impact of globalization in the country.

Markings (independent variables)	Personal opinion			Influence of globalization		Total
	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Yes	No	
Changes in the economy						
Will improve	15.0 (3)	20.0 (4)	65.0 (13)	95.0 (19)	5.0 (1)	100.0 (20)
Will remain	32.6 (14)	9.3 (4)	58.1 (25)	97.7 (42)	2.3 (1)	100.0 (43)

n the same						
Will not improve	15.6 (10)	20.3 (13)	64.1 (41)	87.5 (56)	12.5 (8)	100.0 (64)
Sufficient amount of food						
Yes	25.0 (8)	12.5 (4)	62.5 (20)	87.5 (28)	12.5 (4)	100.0 (32)
No	20.0 (19)	17.9 (17)	62.1 (59)	93.7 (89)	6.3 (6)	100.0 (95)

Table 5. Crosstabs of personal opinions and the influence of globalization, based on the changes in the economy and sufficient amount of food, RM, 2017

Source: Research 2017

Based on these answers, we can conclude that the general attitudes towards globalization are almost homogeneous. From the explanatory research variables (independent variables), grouped into five categories: socio-demographic, political, symbolic, changes in the economy and the availability of food, the ones which have statistical significance are age and level of education.

Globalization has been researched in the science of sociology in the last decade. Precisely because of its complex and multidimensional nature, there are several approaches to its investigation and they are mainly related to American sociology. The analysis of the respondents' attitudes towards globalization from global public opinion on globalization according to World Economic Forum (World Economic Forum, 2012), have shown that the public has a generally positive attitude towards globalization. Greater optimism towards globalization is shown in underdeveloped parts of the world, while the developed areas show a more critically oriented attitude, which is especially expressed in terms of the quality of the environment, poverty and job vacancies.

The knowledge obtained from this research leads to the conclusion that the respondents are informed of globalization, in particular, there is a sense that globalization is widely present. The data our research show that a significant proportion (85%) of respondents said that they are informed about globalization. In terms of the respondents' opinion about what globalization means to them, of the 14 modalities offered, most of them have answered that it is a process imposed by the powerful countries (a project). Then, (34.6%) of respondents believe that globalization is a process of spreading the power of multinational companies; that it is a process of creating a worldwide society (33.9%), and identify globalization as the transfer of power from national governments to global institutions (IMF, World Bank), (32.3%). These data largely correspond with the opinion of respondents on the presence of globalization worldwide. Many of them (71.7%) identify globalization in the economic sphere, 61.4% of respondents identify globalization in politics, and 47.2% in the field of electronic computer-mediated communication - the Internet. Somewhat fewer respondents (38.6%) perceive globalization in smart technology. These data go in favor of the hypotheses arguing that globalization is, in fact, most prominently manifested in these particular spheres. The data regarding respondents' personal opinions on globalization show that more than a half of them have a neutral opinion, which is most pronounced among respondents aged from 24 to 33 years of age. It is important to point out that 92% of respondents have identified that globalization affects the Macedonian context and they follow up on the answers of respondents which are related to the symbolic side of globalization. In that regard, 88.2% of respondents favor the claim that tradition in Macedonian society is gradually being lost, which is in line with the respondents' responses that they prefer modern lifestyle. In this context, it is interesting to note that half of the respondents have agreed that mass consumption and commercialization pose a threat to Macedonian culture. The differences in the views of our respondents are due to their socio-demographic characteristics, such as the uncertain social product

4. Conclusion

Knowledges from the investigation experience in the Macedonian society in relation with public opinion for globalization direct to the conclusion that it is in the great measure identical with meanings for globalization in relation with question for globalization itself. Namely, it is identified existence of a positive meaning about globalization, especially are affirmed the countries from North America and Europe (World Economic Forum, 2012). It is noted also the feeling of security of globalization in the countries that have lower social product, especially in the relation of the bigger approach to the world's markets, lower prices of products, better cultural life, better quality of living, better human rights, making stronger national economy, higher individual awards.

In the investigation for Global opinion on globalization certain ambivalent meanings are noted to the globalization itself. They are present in the countries of 'center', as well as in the countries of 'half-surrounding' and 'surrounding' of the world's system. But, Charles Andrew, notes that from the discussion for globalization we can define a few groups of different meanings.

First, positive meanings for globalization are intensive and wide spread.

Second, meanings that have reform approach to the globalization and don't touch every point of the world with the same power.

Third, negative meanings to the globalization which don't exclude, in fact, they support forms of conflict, of exploitation and of confrontation among different societies and groups (Andrews, 2011).

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