

## **THE IMPACT OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY ON THE CREATION OF PUBLIC POLICIES IN THE COUNTRIES - EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

The interweaving and interference of the public, private and non-governmental sectors, or civil society, is an immanent characteristic of all democratic states. Through such a synergistic action and complementary activity of the three sectors, a democratic political environment and functionality of the institutions has been established.

The subject of this paper is the determination of causality between non-profit organizations and public policies, i.e. whether and to what extent they can and actually influence their creation and drafting, within the framework of democratic political systems. According to the nature of the work, the most widely used research methods will be the comparative method, the descriptive method and the method of content analysis.

**Key words:** public; civil; policies; society; democracy

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<sup>1</sup> professional paper

## INTRODUCTION

Within this paper will be examined, the relation, i.e. the relationship between the non-profit sector as a product of democracy and their influence on the policy makers, the interaction between these actors, the dangers and risks of removal of the non-profit sector and its behavior as a business organization or political party.

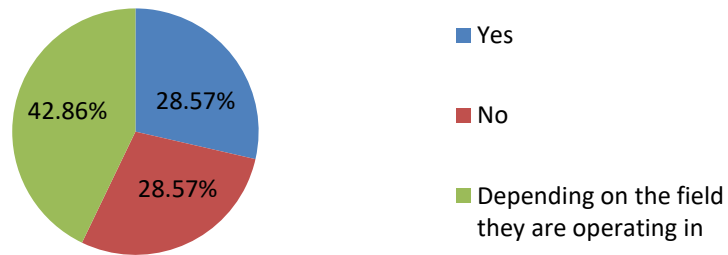
This empirical research is based on a completed survey. The survey was conducted on a sample of 21 respondents. 18 respondents are from the Republic of Macedonia, while 3 from the USA. Among these respondents 8 are law graduates, 5 graduated economists, 6 graduated public administrators and 2 graduate political scientists. Given the research, it can be noted that the most relevant and most replicative are the responses of respondents with education and knowledge of public policy, non-profit sector, and legal regulations.

## THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR AND DEMOCRACY

To the question: Does the non-profit sector act as a corrector of democracy?, the following answers were received in the framework of the research:

Chart 1:

## Does the non-profit sector act like a corrector of democracy



First of all, the fact is that all non-profit organizations, that is, the sector itself as such should act in favor of broader, general goals and ideas that cover a larger group of people, but in the context of democracy, not all non-profit organizations have an impact on democracy. For example, a non-profit organization that advocates the development of sport, although it covers a wider mass of people, a wider and common interest (health, proper development of young people, healthy generations), etc., does not have a strong impact or a return effect of democracy because it is an area which, although part of the public policies of a state, lobbies for the creation of policies within its goals and ideas without any serious impact on the democratic processes (civil rights, human rights, active and passive legitimization, etc.)

Another is the case for nonprofit organizations whose mission and goal is the electoral process or human rights, it is in direct influence and acts as a corrector of democracy because their goal and field of interest are areas that are the heart of democracy, and these NGOs, following their vision and mission and working for broader interests make efforts and obstacles to the authorities to "break" the democratic path.

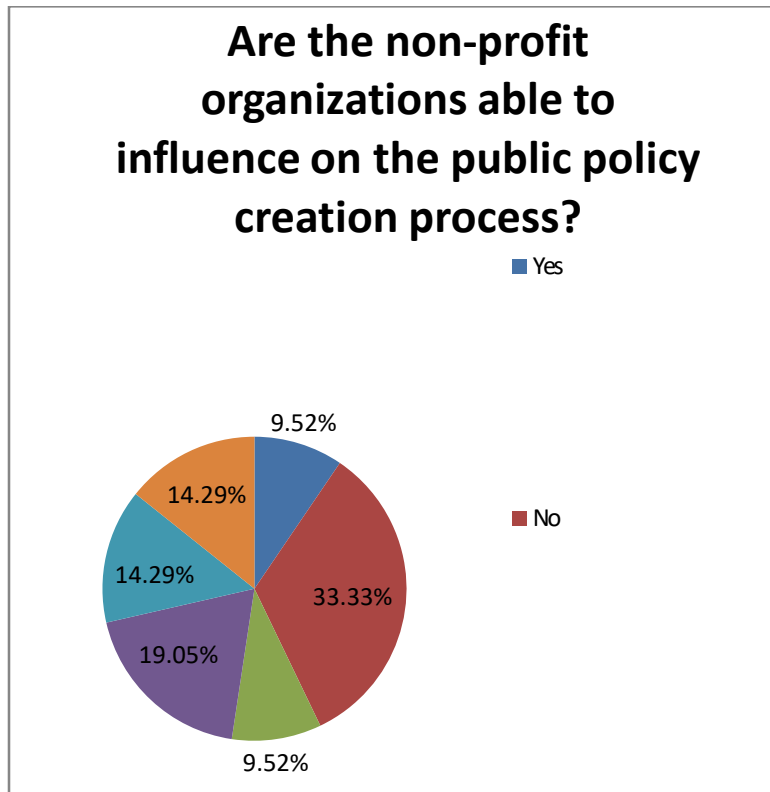
All non-profit organizations act as correctors of public policies, however, only those whose field of interest and activity is some of the areas that are at the heart of democracy act as correctors of democracy and democratic processes.

Undoubtedly, all non-profit organizations act as corners of public policies, but as direct correctors of democracy and democratic processes, only those

whose field of interest and activity is one of the inner areas of the democratic processes, directly affect them.

### THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR AND PUBLIC POLICIES

To the question: Are non-profit organizations able to influence the process of creating public policies?, the following answers have been received:  
Graph 2:



The process of creating public policies is very complex and almost always involves "players" on the side, that is, outside of legitimately elected governments. A few factors are key to whether a non-profit organization will

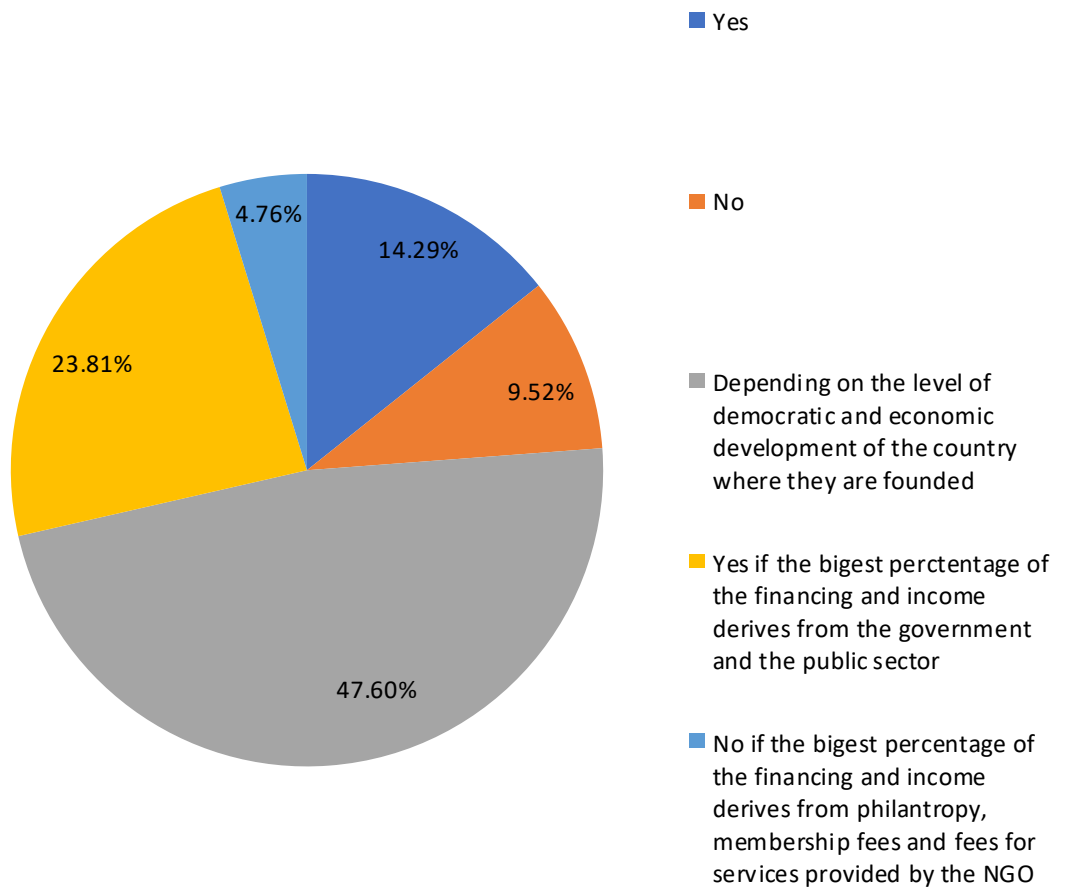
influence the creation of public policies in a single country. It is not at all at stake the very opportunity of non-profit organizations to influence the processes of creating public policies. For a non-profit organization to be a factor that will influence public policy-making processes it is necessary to meet the following conditions: First, it needs to have great membership because public policies are policies that affect broader masses and interests, so the greater the membership is, the stronger its "voice" will be heard, and the lobby of that group will be stronger. It also requires a non-profit organization to be economically powerful in terms of being able to finance campaigns of politicians or parties, marketing through mass media, engaging certain agencies, and so on. Combined with great membership it is the key to the success of a non-profit organization in terms of lobbying.

#### THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR AND POLITICAL PARTIES

To the question: Do you consider non-profit organizations are exposed to pressure from political parties and politicians?, the following answers were received:

Chart 3:

## Do you think that the non-profit organizations are exposed to pressure by the political parties and politicians



The level of economic development, in principle, goes hand in hand with democracy. Corruption, the pressures on the non-governmental sector by the authorities are far more likely in the economically weaker, that is, the developing and transition countries, than in the developed countries where economic independence is more emphasized. The level of democratic and economic development of a country in which non-profit organizations are founded and act are the most important factors in determining whether the actors of this sector will succumb to the pressures of the governing structures.

Governments' financing of non-profit organizations is set as a major factor affecting the non-profit organization's reliance on the pressure of governing structures. While the financier always seeks a return, in today's developed democratic world, where democratic awareness, political culture is at a high level, governments, although funding this sector, do not use it to influence and exert pressure on non-profit organizations. Although it brings with it the possibility and risk for governments to put pressure on non-profit organizations, the level of democratic and economic development is the most important factor that determines eventual involvement and potential influence.

4.76%, i.e., one respondent chose the answer D, according to which non-profit organizations would not fall under political pressure if they make most of their income through membership fees, service fees and philanthropy. Certainly funding from such sources contributed significantly to the autonomy and independence of the non-profit sector, but again this in some way correlates with the development of the state.

To finance this type of sources, a non-profit organization needs to act in an economically developed society where people have the economic power and capacity to pay membership fees and donations, as well as in a democratically developed environment where people are aware of the benefits of the non-profit sector, a large number of members, pay membership fees and donate.

Also, in order to provide the opportunity for the non-profit organization to provide services and receive compensation, it is necessary for it to act in a market-based and economically developed country where everyone has equal opportunities to participate in the market.

## CONCLUSION

At the beginning of the functioning of non-profit organizations as a product of democracy, there was no need nor a danger of financial audits and legal regulations that would be strict in that regard, because the non-profit organizations themselves had a completely different goal from profit-making, which is the protection of interests to a wider group of persons who are its members.

Over time, it has become clear that non-profit organizations need to be more powerful and gain publicity, and that requires funding for campaigns, mass media etc. Similarly, increased publicity led to increased membership, increased membership fees, increased donations and philanthropy, which increased the power of non-profit organizations.

However, the regulations regarding these organizations remain in the majority of the countries in the world the same, flexible and "soft", so many non-profit organizations around the world are used as money laundering screens. Increased power and finance generates on the leaders of non-profit organizations a desire for more power and finance, so in a longer run gradually, instead of financial power to be used in the interests of the goals of the non-profit organization, that is, its members, their promotion and protection, used to gain even greater power and financial gains, which makes these organizations no different from political parties and business organizations.

As a solution to this problem, a more stringent regulation must be imposed, as much as the nature of non-profit organizations allows, without hindering their work, followed by planned, systematic supervision over sources of funding and other income bases for non-profit sector organizations, and as an option there should be rigorous penalties for the managerial, that is, any involved persons in activities using non-profit organizations and their position for achieving the financial benefit of individuals or narrower groups.

These measures alone will indirectly affect the abovementioned persons who intend to abuse the benefits and the position of the non-profit organization for the purposes stated above in the text, through the threat of sanction, which would mean *apriori*, preventive, precipitated prevention as a filter and repression or punishment as a second and final step.

However, not all organizations are prone to such disadvantages, i.e., it can not be generalized, especially, as previously noted, in countries with long democratic traditions, yet as a parallel to them in the newly formed countries,



with young economies and democracies, if it can be said that this preventive-repressive system of legislation related to the financing of non-profit organizations is necessary in order to insert it into the awareness of the citizens over time in the knowledge that the members and managers of these organizations are a product of democracy, and in no way should they use the position of non-profit organizations to achieve personal financial gains.

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