Tampere University

Angel Dimitrievski

MEDIA EDUCATION IN THE THIRD SPACE
Case Study of the University Occupation and High School Protest Camp in North Macedonia

ABSTRACT

Media education in North Macedonia is still marginal topic in the institutions of the formal system. Young people migrate their usage, interaction and learning about media in places that are out of school and out of home named as third spaces. This master thesis examines the potentials of the North Macedonian student protest environments as places for media education.

The overall objective of the research is to examine the media potentials of the protest environments in North Macedonia as a step towards their replication in the formal educational system (primary schools and high schools). Moreover, the research aims of the thesis are to investigate: "How have protest camp and Faculty occupations (autonomous zones) in North Macedonia in 2015 enabled students to learn the fundaments of media literacy?, "What third space learning characteristics the protest camp and Faculty occupations in North Macedonia have shown?", and "Is it possible to replicate any of the practices from the protest camps and autonomous zones into formal education and how?"

As a qualitative research the data is drawn from 14 respondents who participated in semi-structured interviews, semi-structured interviews with combined photo elicitation methodology and one focus group interview. Qualitative content analysis was used to review, analyze and synthetize the results and to contextualize it with the relevant theories and previous research.

The findings revealed that the students exercised the creation of media content inside the protest environments such as writing press releases, media denials or giving interviews. They demonstrated interest for evaluating media professionalism, understanding and reconstructing media narratives and reclaiming media space. Furthermore, they have acquired valuable skills such as critical thinking, debating and soft skills. Their learning was based on peer education, non-formal education and multimedia education which as such identify as different from the formal learning and are specific for a third space.

This research illustrates how students understand, produce and evaluate media inside the third space. The study also suggests how can these practices be further introduced or replicated into formal education, however it sets the path for future research to be conducted in how the schools as formal environments can accept and introduce these changes.

Keywords: media, education, third space, North Macedonia

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Contents

1 INTRODUCTION

The position of media as marginal field in developing countries has been manifested through students' transitions in alternative places for media engagement. These transitions also include the media interactions seen at subversive spaces. Environments of resistance unite aspirations, ambitions, skills and competencies in one place. Media education inside those spaces is un-structured, unplanned and unintentional, it starts from practical implictation of media usage, evaluation and production, but that does not mean it is not a meaningful way of learning.

This research focuses on the students' involvement in third space learning environments, both outside of school and home and how their engagement media practices in those spaces can influence the future of formal media educational curricula in the Republic of North Macedonia.. The research will provide insights of the interactions and students' engagement with media at two protest spaces, one protest camp, and a university occupation, not only from the perspective of students who had the role of activists inside the camps, but also youth workers who entered the space, professors and journalists.

The overall objective of the research is to examine the media potentials of the protest environments in North Macedonia as a step towards their replication in the formal educational system (primary schools and high schools). Moreover, the three research questions for this master thesis are: "How have protest camps and Faculty occupations (autonomous zones) in Macedonia in 2015 enabled students to learn the fundaments of media literacy?", "What third space learning characteristics the protest camps and Faculty occupations in Macedonia have shown?" and "Is it possible to replicate any of the practices from the protest camps and autonomous zones into formal education and how?"

Both protest environments have presented a collection of interests and skills for quality production, rethinking and evaluating of media. National and regional researchers have been looking into the potentials of those protest environments

in the past 4 years not only from communication side but from multiple perspectives.

Andonov, Georgievski and Trajkovska (2016) have implemented the research "Rallying for Change: Restoring Government Accountability Through Citizen Protests; Communication Practices During the Protests in Macedonia" as part of collective regional research with cases from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia. They highlight the communication practices in numerous civic movements in North Macedonia including those in the student movements which are being highlighted in this master thesis. Similar research on identifying digital communication practices in different civic initiatives including the student ones is illustrated in the research "Connecting Citizens: Digital Communication in the Civic Sector in North Macedonia" (Aksantievska and Saban, 2017). Dimitrova (2017) in her research "I Want to Live Home: The Effects of Student Assembly towards Personal and Political Development of the Youth who Participated in the Student Plenum" examines the effects that the students awakening had on motivating young people to continue living in North Macedonia and actively work on changing public policies instead of leaving the country. Nikolovska (2017) in her master thesis "Challenging Space through Activism: The Art of Resilience in the Case of Skopje" focuses on examining the processes of spatiality into shaping the contention in Skopje, focusing on interdisciplinary and comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of the activist wave in Skopje and possible transformative power with including the student protest as concrete examples of forming a culture of plenumisation.

However, little attention is given to how these protest environments and their creation can have a future impact on pedagogies and innovative media education methodologies with their replication in formal education. It would seem, therefore, that further investigations are needed in order to incorporate the media possibilities and practices that these environments opened as spaces created and maintained by the student's visions. It is important to note that both of the protest spaces had their primary purpose of transferring a political message towards the government officials concerning educational platforms in a concrete place and time. This research will focus on the secondary aspects of their existence connected to media communication and deconstruction as well as

organizing the space inside the camp and the university occupation with a range of educational, social and creative activities.

The theoretical contextualization of this master thesis lays on the theories of third space or learning in out of school and out of home-spaces, and more specifically in the third spaces for citizenship. Michael de Certeau's theories on strategy and tactics are also contextualized within the analyse of power-driven educational systems and the need for the students to occupy spaces and re-establish new places with new social orders. Finally, the theory of affinity spaces describes the struggles, aspirations and educational ideas as concepts that collide and intertwine in these newly constructed environments.

2 STUDENT MOVEMENTS IN NORTH MACEDONIA AS THIRD SPACES

The literature review in the master thesis is divided into two parts. In the first part there is a social, cultural and political background that gives the reader more clarity for further reading as it refers to the context in which media literacy was marginalized in North Macedonia and also it describes the political processing of student protests in North Macedonia in the last 20 years, as the case study of the thesis is focused on student protesting environments. This background contextualization is made in line with what national and regional research which is provided as a perspective for the relevant information presented.

In the second part, the literature review provides insights of the main theories that the thesis is based on. The focus will be made to third spaces, but also subversive third spaces and how other researchers have seen protest camps as third spaces. The literature review ends with positioning media education into the third space.

2.1 Background of the research

2.1.1 Marginalisation of media literacy inside the educational institutions of the system in Republic of North Macedonia

The importance of media education and the core objective to create media literate citizens is the key to developing democratic societies. At 1982 UNESCO's International Symposium on Media Education at Grunwald, Federal Republic of Germany the 19 national representatives have agreed the Grunwald Declaration on Media Education. This document proves to be a framework directing the development of media education even today. The declaration states that political

and educational systems must recognize their role in introducing their citizens with the understanding of the concept of communication and to accept the growing impact of media in the world as an existing fact. Moreover, the declaration recognizes educational systems frequently have wide gap between educational experience and the real world experiences. (Grunwald Declaration of Media Education, Grunwald, 1982)

In North Macedonia at an institutional level, the coverage of media literacy and the implementations of media education have been insuficient throughout the years. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Information Society and Administration in their strategic documents cover the concepts of Information and Communications Technologies and their usage in education, but they have not included media literacy nor media education in their strategies. Another institution that is responsible for education is the Bureau of Development of Education and the institution only operates with the term media culture, however not with media literacy. (Sopar, Kupeva and Temenguva, 2016)

After the 2017 institutional change in representatives who are leading these institutions that can affect media literacy increase in education, there seemed to be little or even no progress on introducing such topics into formal education. With the creation of the new Education Strategy 2018-2025 the crucial need for debating media and learning the fundaments of media literacy concepts has again been neglected. The NorthMacedonian School of Journalism had organized the conference "Media Literacy in North Macedonia: Inside or Outside Education" where it was commented that the new Education Strategy 2018-2025 has not considered media literacy as contemporary concept for integration of media content and enhancing critical thinking among students.

What seems to be considered as critical age for forming critical attitudes towards media, and the society in general are high school youth. Even though the curriculum for high schools covers topics related to media communication, the role of the media in democratic societies, techniques of creating media content and the effects of technologies on human development, the main remarks from the Bureau of Education are that these programs have unsatisfactory level and frequency of the mentioned topics and it is impossible to gain thorough knowledge. The representatives claim that in the programs where media literacy is problematized there are no updates or changes since 2005 which is a problem

itself as from that period the school system produced new generations with outdated knowledge. (Sopar, Kupeva and Temenugova, 2016)

Potter and McDougall (2017) comment the similar situation in the UK with insufficient level of media education in the formal system at a primary and lower secondary school lever. They argue that media's location in the formal system has been marginalized not just for students from 5 to 14 years, but also for older students. Similarly and perhaps to a larger extent, the marginalization of media topics in North Macedonia in the formal educational system motivates students to migrate their habits of consumption, analysis and creation of media into other non-conventional, semi-formal or non-formal spaces. Their unacceptance by the institutions of the system have not made the students uninterested for learning about media or increased the reluctance for their observations of media, but have enabled them to find other environments where they can engage with media.

A strategic document on radio services created by the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services gives a short overview on the context of media literacy in Republic of North Macedonia. This strategy outlined that up until 2017 the most influential factor in developing media literacy were the civil society organisations who besides media literacy included topics such as safe usage of the internet and social media. (Bojarovski and Milenkovski, 2016) The civil society organisations in North Macedonia have proven to be always few steps ahead compared to the formal educational system. Besides incorporating media literacy, these organisations show a range of methodologies that are more innovative, engaging and critically oriented than those compared to schools or universities. They have represented an environment where the students can express and question their realities and debate real topics of interest.

Even though the civil society organisation have worked and engaged more in media education compared to schools, there is also a lack of media literacy representation even in their programs and strategies for work. The Regional Research "Youth and Media" with a specific national report focused on North Macedonia identified some of the barriers with media literacy practices in youth organisations. According to this research youth organisation rarely do separate funds to support young journalists or staff to advance in media skills. They do not tend to secure scholarships or fellowships, but some of them still do provide training for media content creation and in most cases directed towards

administrating media for the purpose of each organisation (Ignatova, Jashari, Dzambaska, Popovska, Bozinovska, Bozovik, Zabrcanec and Kosturanova, 2014)

The marginalization of media literacy in North Macedonia within the formal educational system starts with the lack of representation of this concept in the strategic documents of the relevant Ministries or Bureaus responsible for introducing them in education. As a reflection, the school curriculum lacks contemporary and modern concepts of educating students about media. Young people found their chance to educate themselves about topics of interest including those about media in environments where education is non-formal such as civil society organisation and NGOs. Youth organisations who work directly with students still have room for improvement as media education has not been a priority for them, however, they are much more advanced in what they offer as a program compared to schools.

2.1.2 Overview of the student protests in North Macedonia in the last two decades

This master thesis is based on two case studies where practices and influences of media will be examined, but also the participation of the students and the activists as direct contributors in arranging a set of educational, cultural and creative activities inside those protest zones. North Macedonia is country where transition provoked complex political and economic crisis and that resulted with range of diverse protests. This chapter gives an overview of the student protests in the last two decades since North Macedonia became independent and also introducing the context of the case studies in this thesis.

A series of major student and high school protests happened in 1997 as a reaction to introducing a law that allowed studies on Albanian education at Skopje's Faculty of Education. These protests were from ethnic origin and the students ended up with a hunger strike for 15 days, but the law was not revoked. (Georgievski, Andonov and Trajkovska, 2016) These protests can be easily identified as protests with nationalistic background as mostly the students rallied against the introduction of Albanian language at the Faculty of Pedagogy of Skopje. Even though these protests were high with number of activists, they did

represent a nationalistic idea which questions the idea behind the protests themselves.

In 2009 a group of students assembled in the association "Free Index" to express their dissatisfaction of the closure of the student radio at the university. The protest started for defending the principle of freedom of expression and continued to advocate for justice in the education system, more accessible education and better conditions in student dormitories in North Macedonia. (Nikolovska, 2017) These protests are the closest to be identified as rallying for changes for approaches important for media literacy in the country, especially media literacy related to youth as the closure of a student radio at a university provoked a group of students the question importnat concepts such as freedom of expression in the media.

The student protests organized by the movement "Student Plenum" composed by university students in 2014 were the largest protests since North Macedonia's independence. Groups of students in different Faculties at the University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" gathered against a government law to introduce mandatory externally supervised testing for bachelor and master's students. Through this type of examination the students would lose the right to keep their place at the university if they fail the external test, meaning that the failing will result with their dismisall from their Faculty. These proposed changes seemed to harm the autonomy of the university. (Georgievski and Trajkovska, 2018) As a follow-up later in 2015 the government suggested similar form of external testing to be introduced for high school students. They have also upraised in the movement called "High School Plenum" with different form of protesting and expressing their opinions of the newly introduced laws for high school education.

A series of similar movements created the wave of plenumisation in the Western Balkans that started with occupation of the Faculty in Croatia in 2009, continuing with a social uprising in Bosnia and Herzegovina and coming to North Macedonia. The plenumisation wave gathers people with diverse backgrounds from artists, intellectuals and citizens. This plenum wave affected not only students, but the whole society to start developing different future, open a new way to express opinions and to articulate the anger that the citizens accumulated on a different way. (Nikolovska, 2017) The plenumisation wave in North

Macedonia was represented through forming new social groups that identified themselves as plenums, for instance "Teachers' Plenum", "Professors' Plenum" and "Parents' Plenum" that all functioned as support groups to the "Student Plenum" and "High School Plenum" who first introduced this idea.

The initiatives of the plenums happened in times of polarization in North Macedonia, especially during complex media polarization. A high proportion of pro-government media portrayed the activists of the plenums as they were working for the biggest opposition party or they were financially paid by the Soros Foundation. (Saban and Aksentievska, 2017) As a result, the media introduced the term sorosoids to mark people who do not identify with the politics of the government as those who are working for foreign institutions in order to destroy the national interest. Media and human rights experts highlighted that the usage of the term sorosoids is hate speech and open discrimination towards certain groups of people and that may lead to serious after effects if the media continue to use the term in future.

The plenum movements in North Macedonia had many similarities for the causes they were advocating and challenges they faced with. Moreover, the tactics and methodologies of protesting they used were similar. In their culmination, both of them used occupation as a protest mechanism. First, the "Student Plenum" started with the occupation of Faculties at the University and announced that they will be autonomous zones where regular activities inside the Faculties were suspended and alternative program was offered by the movement representatives. The "High School Plenum" occupied an open park across the Ministry of Education and used the same methods as their fellow activists from the university occupation. These two protest environments are the case studies that the thesis will be based on.

2.2 Migrating into the third space (defined through Michael de Carteau's theory of "strategy" and "tactics")

The opening of both protest environments that are examined in this thesis has been a culmination of a range of activities that the movements "Student Plenum" and "High School Plenum" organised within their articulation of insatisfaction

against the law changes that suggested external testing in both cases. The occupying of Faculties and public spaces seemed to be the final, most extreme and significant move that the activists made.

In both cases of the endangerment of the autonomy of educational institutions in North Macedonia, students were subject to external testing proposed to be completed by an external institution. The dominant power structure figure that proposed these two reforms in education was the Ministry of Education. Similar to this, Kupiainen explains that:

> Institutions like schools and universities have the tendency to share a common space, be controlled by a similar authority, perform the same activities and run with scheduled and spatially organisied activities. They are symbolically closed by walls and locked doors and defined by hierarchies (Kupiainen, 2013).

The enforcement of the proposed external regulations that the Ministry suggested would make the school and universities less autonomous and would increase their formality and make students feel less respected.

The transitions into the third space or the so called migrations will be explained through Michael De carteau theories of strategy and tactics. These theories will explain how the appropriate term of strategy refers to the strategic operations undertaken by the majority of institutions in North Macedonia related to introducing the new law for external testing, while also debating the opposing theory of tactics as a response back from the students for those new law changes. Strategy and tactics are two opposing theories, however they will not be explained isolated within the context of these protest environments. They are conditioned by one another and that means that for a tactic response to emerge in a form of protest or protest space that must be previously triggered by a strategic response by an institution or someone in power. Michael De Carteau (1994) deals with these relations when he refers to the theories of strategy and tactics.

Michael De Carteau (1984) refers to strategy as a calculation or manipulation of the relations of power, often times introduced by a certain institution, in order to mark a space as its own and where certain targets inside those spaces can be managed by the strategic instution. In the North Macedonian context, the external testing proposed for the university and high school students

was a strategic operation of the institutions of the system to exercise their influences inside schools and universities who should normally have freedom in teaching, testing and evaluating on their own.

Strategies are considered as produced materials that those in power use in order to control spaces. In other words, those who produce discourses, timetables, spreadsheets, the organization of space and things within it capitalize on the ability to maintain control in one place and to constantly reproduce power. (Gomez, Stone and Hobbel, 2004) By imposing testing that is not implemented by the universities or schools themselves, the institutions of power in North Macedonia have tried to insert a set of controls that caused the insatisfaction among students. Additionally, professors, teachers and school administration at schools and universities prior to the proposed law changes for external testing have been constantly part of inspections or regular questioning of their work. When the movements started this was especially evident among those teachers who opposed the proposed law changes and who supported the students who were protesting. The strategic response of the Ministry of Education was to make a spotlight on them as intellectuals who have less legitimacy than others and as people who work against the benefits for the youth.

As a contrary concept to strategy, De Certeau suggests tactics as a reactive response to the strategic operations by institutions. He argues that the space where tactics happen is the space of the other. Further, he describes tactics as:

> isolated action, operating blow by blow. It takes advantage of "opportunities"and depends on them. What it wins it cannot keep. This nowhere gives a tactic mobility, to be sure, but a mobility that must accept the chance offerings of the moment, and seize on the wing the possibilities that offer themselves at any given moment. It must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers. It poaches in them. It creates surprises in them. It can be where it is least expected. It is a guileful ruse. (De Certeau, 1984)

The occupancy itself also known as tactics is the other dimension of Michael de Certeau's theory. Tactics have an active or even activist role in which participants are constructing a space as they are not only reactive to the strategy but they "define the limits of strategy and inform its modes of operations in a fundamental sense." (Buchanan, 1993; as cited in Kupiainen, 2013)

University students decided to demonstrate their resistance with occupying different Faculties at the state university in Skopje and to protest for a law that regulates a space that should be autonomous. The high school students decided to open a protest camp inside a public park, just across the Ministiry of Education, the power structure who was the protest directed to. Bodnar (2015) argues that public space, as this park was, is inherently political not only with the possibilities of political expression on a certain venue but also because it brings more inclusive power when facing certain political issues. Judith Bodnar in this article mentions spaces like Tahrir Square, Taksim or the Maidan where the majority of citizens joined forces to demonstrate their powers. Similarly, the journalists park as it is named was the place where the high school students camped for more than 10 days. However, the name of the park and the selection of this location do not correlate with each other and the selection is not connected to any media issues, but the park was chosen by the students because it was opposite the entrance of the Ministry of Education.

Tactics make spaces smoother and more comfortable and students are not just consumers in the spaces they occupy, but also producers. (Kupiainen, 2013) The occupations, autonomous zones and protest camps in North Macedonia have not only been subversive places of resistance, but they have also illustrated how students feel learning is more suitable for them. They brought lecturers for topics decided in cooperation with them, they have changed the order of sitting when learning and debating an issue, they have introduced technology and media inside the environments and they have taken the responsibility of making most of their time engaging, educational and socially beneficial for them while they protest for an important cause.

The concept of tactics in some other contexts is emerging inside the educational institutions such as school on a regular basis, not just when new social orderings of spaces are constructed. Kupiainen (2013) explains that the banning of mobile phones and their incompetence with the schooling system motivates the students to create their own spaces where they can consume media and digital technology as their usage inside the classrooms means breaking of the traditional, normative social ordering. When describing the regularities in media usage and media analysis in North Macedonian schools, it is obvious that they have been marginal. Not only the allowance of phones in

clasrooms, but also more profound knowledge on how media affected these two movements and their existence was not discussed inside the schools nor universities.

North Macedonian students managed to liberate themselves from an orchestrated attack from the institutions of the system with their strategic operations and the media influences that those institutions had for working against the students. They have reacted to the oppressional politics and law inforcements with opening environments where new social ordering was established and where they have managed to stay constant, relevant and actual with their political messages and demands, but also to create and maintain environments where knowledge was produced and co-produced by them, for their benefit and for the benefit of the movements.

2.3   Faculty occupations and protest camp as third spaces

The decision to examine the protest environments as third spaces comes naturally as they opposed to proposed reforms in education that have not met the ideas of the students of what education should represent. Moreover, they have identified critical spaces where they demonstrated resistance and through set of activities for education, originally constructed for engaging activists, they have showed the ability to affect future directions of how learning will be organized. Some researchers refer to third places as heterotopias which are equivalent to one another in terms of how they operate and what they represent.

The third space theories contextualize the learning happening in out of school and out of home places. As a third space these environments can be physical, but they can be more complex as environments when they are not only physical. These theories of third space define the relations between students and teachers inside those environments through a non-conventional and non-normative approach. As such the theories also deal with the reasons why the students mostly migrate into the third space and question the representation of real-life experiences into the primary spaces of learning for the students and furthermore critiques their incapability to be relevant spaces of learning for young

people. More specifically, the protest camps as third spaces have also been scientifically observed as third space and the merge of media, politics and education into these so called third spaces for citizenship. Finally, these theories also contextualize the occurrences of media education inside them and the key approaches in which media education is developed in the third space.

For Bhabha (1994) the third space is rather metaphorical and representing a space that is not run by institutions and that stands out by certain communicative practices from what these institutions represent. On some level, the third space is created through language first and in the meaning making process and further it transfers to media, physical and education practices.

Researchers have identified the term heterotopia as a similar concept to a third space. Heterotopias identify with the same characteristics as a third space in terms of the social orderings inside the space, the relations between the social actors who organise and participate in the learning, but also in their educational perspectives. The word heterotopia even can be found as a synonym of marginal space, paradoxical space or third space. (Hetherington, 1997)

Michael Foucault (1967) refers to heterotopia, literally other places, as places where normal social orders are temporarily suspended and then reconstructed to constitute new places. The university occupation that shut down the services at the "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" University does not fit entirely into this definition by the construction of the concept, as the place that was occupied was no other, unfamiliar place, but was the university as a territory where the students reside every day. However, the strategic and methodological approach fit into the concept of heterotopia. All regular lectures, professors meetings and other activities at the university were suspended as the occupations progressed, with the students entering the premises and creating their mode of learning. Hence, this represents a metaphorical third space. The situation with the high school protest camp was not similar to this one and the activists occupied a public park that restricted minor social orders as a public space. Moreover, this park can be examined as a concrete physical third space, not just metaphorical one as it was not inside an educational institution. Contrary, it has been opened outdoors.

The term heterotopia also indicates a space where concepts of formal and informal learning meet and that previously have been on two different sides. They are alternative orderings of those spaces and as such, they offer alternative

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pedagogies. (Kupiainen, 2013) It was evident that during the occupations and the protest camp there was an educational program that in every aspect differed from the pedagogies that are seen inside school or universities. Moreover, the students have not left out important actors of knowledge construction and they have indeed included their professors and teachers within their newly constructed space for learning. Through these interferences of formal and informal organisation of the protest environments, the students have accomplished to spread a strong message that was supposed to break the negative media influences about them that portrayed them as a group of young people uninterested to go to school and protest for no reason.

Hetherington (1997), describes heterotopias as spaces with alternative social orderings and where orders differ from the normative ideas of social orders in the society. The environments that are examined in this master theses will be referred as third spaces as they represent a complex process of occupying spaces that restrict certain social orders and introduce their own way of ordering.

When exploring why these third spaces occur as environments for learning, some of the reasons are that schools do not reflect the real-life experiences that the learners live in, and they are institution-oriented and curriculum based. The critical point when the third space is formed is at the moment when the learners realise that the knowledge acquired inside school does not correlate with the skills necessary to adapt to the social and cultural experiences of the learners outside of school. (Potter and McDougall, 2017) Through their strategic approach to engage more activists inside the protest environments, the students constructed educational setting that responded to the dynamic events in the society. What was perceived as controversial to be discussed inside the school system was debated inside the protest camps or the autonomous zones. Even though the opening of these protest environments has had a crucial strategic formula of making the movements relevant inside a highly polarized society, the characteristics of all alternative lectures, workshops, debates or guerilla actions have differed from the normative learning inside schools and as such they have represented a third space on their own.

The differences inside the protest camp and the autonomous zones compared to schools or universities were visible in two aspects. First, the approach to learning was multidimensional with debates, simulations, product

making and commenting relevant, on-going political or scientific processes. Secondly, the environments have offered knowledge and information that have never been problematised within the formal institutions. Similarly, a third space refers to an environment where transformation happens in terms of extended learning process and construction of new knowledge (Gutierrez, 2008). The profound meaning of the third space is in what the learners learn, however in how they learn that.

Protest camps defined as third spaces integrate media, politics and education into one network. Inside protest camps media is used for increasing visibility and to empower diversity inside those camps. Protest camps fit into the third space rhetoric as they represent home, school, protest site, front and back stage. (Potter and McDougall,2017)

As third space illustrate the interference between formal and non-formal, they should incorporate social actors that are part of some formal institution. This comes with exchange of power relations inside a learning space and through enhancement of dialogue (Potter and McDougall, 2017). Practically, this would mean that in a third space constructed environment knowledge is constructed through inclusive process of those who have academic qualifications and the learners themselves. Potter and McDougall (2017) argue that as a next stage the teachers and professors who participated in a third space face with frustration in how to develop similar modes of learning as an everyday practice inside a classroom. The problem with this statement is that if teachers handle those transfers of learning themselves the frustration will inevitably appear as this is a process that should be carried out with institutional conversation and strategic approach alongside.

Third spaces open questions and debates for challenging normative educational practices and reflect the ambitions of the learners. Protest environments and their subversive potentials include suspension of certain social orderings in order for students to convey a political message while they carry out envisioned educational program. The diversity in third spaces also incorporate media and learning about media through direct hands-on experience.

2.4 Media education in the third space

While examining the effects of identity constriction of North Korean refugees youth resettled in South Korea through their participation in media club through the perspective of a third space, Jank and Kang, 2019 point out that media can have multiple effects on students with trauma such as opportunities for reflecting on their life, creating a safe space for students and reflecting positively through media. The researchers identified the media club as a third space and commented that in the media club context:

> while engaging in story writing, filming, acting, editing, and showing, participants had numerous disagreements and disputes. Nevertheless, what penetrated the students' comments was that it was an unforgettable memory that formed a sense of accomplishment and membership. (Jank and Kang, 2019, p.6)

Similarly, for the students in the high school and university plenum the media activities contributed towards stronger identification of themselves with the movement, but also towards more effective cohesion among themselves. Media activities performed in a third space as such can have many other social effects that can be beneficial for their own development, but in a more wide and protest movement context they can be also beneficial for the community at large.

According to Dredger, Woods, Beach, and Sagstetter (2010) the third space is a newly constructed space that combines the characteristics of the out of school environments (first space) and in-school environments (second space). As such media education in the third space can include different activities out of the classroom like recording, interviewing, taking pictures or citizens journalism and bringing the results from those activities inside the classroom. However, it is important to note that even when being back at the classroom or what is being considered as a second space, that classroom can no longer be the same as it is treated by a constituent environment of a third space.

Performing media activities inside media clubs or within a school or university course and while being treated as an activity that stands out from the normative curriculum is identified as a third space even though is not physical, but metaphorical. Choundhury and Share (2012) explain that the teacher should take the role of a facilitator in media education processes and to have a critical inquiry approach in the social construction of media messages. They require five

key concepts that students need to question in the social construction of messages:

> 1. Students need to understand that all media messages are created by people and to question their origin
>
> 2. Questioning the creation of messages help students learn about codes, languages, sound, visuals and multimedia
>
> 3. For a pluralistic society, students should understand that different people differently interpret media messages
>
> 4. Students should recognize that media messages are never completely objective and should question biases, values and points of views
>
> 5. Students should examine the motivation behind created media messages with knowing the relation to economic structures and profit-driven corporations in the creation process (Choundhury and Share, 2012; page 40)

Media education especially in developing countries is often brought into the third space as of various factors often related to democratic challenges and struggles. Whether is from a refugee perspective, ethnic point of view or protesting about educational changes it is evident that democratically challenged communities experience education about media in the third space. This is also because the formal system does not provide appropriate education for media which can be always the reason why these communities deal with democracy endangerment.

3 METHODS

This master thesis follows a qualitative approach for the purpose of answering the previously stated research questions. The thesis is based on the qualitative approach in the data collection process through combing methods of data collection such as the semi-structured interviews , interviews with combined photo-elicitation methodology and focus group interviews. In total, the master thesis contained 6 semi-structured interviews, 3 interviews with combined photo-elicitation methodology and 1 focus group interview.

Within the data analysis process the thesis is based on the qualitative content analysis corresponding to the chosen data collection methods. Masson (2002) stresses the importance of qualitative research and the necessity to be performed as a moral act and especially in relation to the on-going political process. This master thesis besides its educational perspective has a strong political perspective as the case studies that are being used for the qualitative research are connected to a political and social crises in North Macedonia.

3.1 Data collection methodology

3.1.1 Semi-structured interviews

The interview as specific method in this research is chosen as it depicts the diverse and individual experiences of the social actors that were participating in the elaborated case study. Through qualitative interviews the researcher constructs a set of questions according to the knowledge of the interviewee, their experiences and what they are willing to share, a process that is hard to be implemented in surveys, for instance. (Rubin and Rubin, 2005) Protest movements, especially student movements engaged variety of profiles that

identify as activists, however they are not only students, but also youth workers, teachers, journalists, political parties or civil society representatives. Even though they are all united under a same cause, they have diverse experiences of participation in those movements and their unique experiences and activist contributions can be accurately illustrated through using the interview method.

The data collection process of the master thesis included conducting 6 semi-structured interviews with 6 different activists from the protest environments during the student protests in Skopje. Additionally, 3 more interviews with combined photo-elicitation methodology were conducted in a semi-structured type. When choosing the semi-structured type of interview over the other forms of interviewing, I took in consideration several aspects that apply to the case studies of this master thesis and the respondents themselves. Within the semi-structured interview the researcher or the interviewer has an active role in the process of forming new knowledge and is not just reading a script of questions directed to the interviewee. Moreover, this gives the possibility of the researcher to direct the conversation toward the direction that is important for the research purpose (Freebody, 2003). The interviewing process of the 6 profiles of people with semi-structured interviews required from me a personal knowledge of their engagement at the specific protest environments and a deep understanding of the social, political and educational context in which they performed certain activities. What Freebody calls an active role, I would extend that is also a role of understanding the social context in which the respondents answer questions, which was possible for me as at the time when the student movements occurred in North Macedonia, I was a student myself.

Semi-structured interviews require certain level of adaptability from the researcher. Kvale (1996) explains that order of questions that the interviewer envisioned to address might change depending on the interaction with the interviewee and the level of participation in the conversation. The interaction with the respondents in my research varied and with one part of them the interview questions have not changed, but some of them highlighted experiences that I have not taken into account and proved to be beneficial for the research. This was the moment when I applied this concept of adaptability and tried to address those new topics through questions I have not previously worked on in the interview preparation phase.

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Finally, the reason why I have chosen interviews as a research method for this thesis is because I believe that the research process itself should have an impact for me personally as a researcher, but also as an activist who experienced and I am still experiencing the similar democratic struggles as those people interviewed. Warren (2001) talks about the inevitable personal and even emotional connection of the researcher with the stories of the interviewees. She explains about the process of interviewing a mother who was separated from her child and for her personally as a new mother and writer of Madwives (Warren 1987) was emotional and touching moment. Further, she explains that the viewpoints in interviews she conducted had intersections with her own story and her own perceiving of the world. Similarly, I went through an equally emotionally engaging and transformational process in the interviewing phase with my respondents as they have exposed their personal life stories of how their personal security, professional dignity and societal reputation was endangered while they were advocating for the causes of banning external testing inside universities and high schools.

3.1.2 Interviews with combined photo elicitation methodology

A set of 3 interviews were completed with using photo elicitation as a method for interviewing respondents. Only 3 interviews were chosen for the photo elicitation methodology as the respondents could relate to the pictures that were being presented to them, as in most cases they were appearing on the pictures or they have taken the pictures during the protests. To explain better what exactly photo elicitation as a method is, I will use a description from Douglas Harper in his paper on "Talking about pictures: A case on photo elicitation":

> Photo elicitation is based on the simple idea of inserting a photograph into a research interview. The difference between interviews using images and text, and interviews using words alone lies in the ways we respond to these two forms of symbolic representation. This has a physical basis: the parts of the brain that process visual information are evolutionarily older than the parts that process verbal information. Thus images evoke deeper elements of human consciousness that do words; exchanges based on words alone

utilize less of the brain's capacity than do exchanges in which the brain is processing images as well as words. (Harper, 2002; page 13)

For the purpose of completing interviews with combined photo-elicitation methodology, I used the photos that were related to the interviewees or to the activities that were organized inside the protest environments. All photos used during the photo-elicitation were publically shared photos on Macedonian media web-sites (NovaTv Web and A1ON), the Facebook fan pages of the movements "Studentski Plenum" and "Srednoskolski Plenum" and publically shared photo galleries from photographers Vanco Dzambaski and Zvonko Petrovski.

One of those three interviews was completed with the usage of graphic illustrations, a set of Dixit cards (Dixit cards; Edition 6: Memories) in order to enhance story telling for processes, ideas and activities that occurred at the high school protest camp. Dixit is a storytelling game where players choose cards from a deck of cards illustrated with dreamlike images. Besides the social usage of these cards, Dixit cards have been used also in educational purposes where participants in workshops are encouraged to connect the different topics with describing the images from the cards with the appropriate topics. Through these photo elicitation the interviewee was shown a pile of around 25 cards and was asked to select up to 4 cards that best represented the feelings and ideas connected to the illustrations that appeared on those cards. The selected illustrations from the interviewee are presented in Appendix 1.

The pictures and illustrations in all three cases were presented to the interviewees at the beginning of their interviews with asking them to comment the pictures, correlate their experience with the picture or to describe a specific situation with using a picture or an illustration. With inserting the photos and illustrations at the begging of the interviews, the respondents seemed to be more relaxed to continue with the interview. In that regards, photo elicitation can be used as an ice-breaker for the whole interviewing process. Another aspect of why photo elicitation was useful for the respondents is that through pictures they can recall situations that they had hard time remembering as almost 4 years have passed since the movements were active and the protest environments closed. After the elicitation part of the interview has ended, I continued the interviews with

semi-structured interview procedure as there was in all three cases additional information and view point to be considered.

3.1.3 Focus group interview

One focus group interview was organized with five activists from the movement "High School Plenum". They have been invited to a focus group interview as the most influential activists of this movement and as students who had leading roles in media relations during the protest camp and organizing the educational program inside the camp. Those five students were not same interviewees as the activists who participated in the semi-structured interviews or photo elicitation interviews.

The focus group interview was organized at the School of Journalism and Public Relations in Skopje as a form of open discussion among the five activists on three thematic structures for the conversation: media relations of the students during the protest camp, educational engagement of students inside the protest camp and general viewpoints of the North Macedonian educational system concerning media.

According to Morgan (1997) focus groups should be incorporated in the research schedule appropriately in order for them to reveal the future direction of the research, especially when choosing interviewees for individual interviews as a next stage of the research. This does not necessarily has to be the case in every research, but in my case I conducted a focus group at the beginning of my data collection and while this have not made any major changes to the list of profiles I wanted to interview, it did suggest two more people that will be compatible for an individual interview.

This focus group interview provided focus, centered discussion around the media and educational activities from one of the case studies, the protest camp and it debated the context in which it was opened, maintained and afterwards shut down. It has included former high school students who represented 4 different high schools in Skopje.

3.2 Profile of the respondents, anonymity and withdrawal from the study

The research will contain data from 14 respondents who all have been directly involved in the protest environments that serve as case studies in this thesis. Their roles have been different and they bring diverse perspectives and viewpoints related to the thesis questions.

All respondents who participated in this research have been offered the possibility to stay anonymous and their name not to be revealed in the final version of the thesis. The respondents have also been offered to withdraw from the research completely or with some of the answers that they have presented during the data collection process. From all 14 respondents there were both university and high school students who appeared as visible activists on the examined protest environments, teachers, youth workers and journalists.

3.3 Data analysis methodology

The qualitative content analysis will be used as a method for analyzing data for this master thesis. Qualitative content analysis is also known as a method to analyse documents which enable the researcher to test certain aspects of the theoretical approach of the study in order to understand the data that is being operated with in the research (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008). The primary approach to using this method is the filtering of words into categories that are similar to content (Cavanagh, 1997).

In qualitative content analysis words, phrases or units are brought together into one category and they are merged by their similarities. Those similarities can be found by words having similar meaning, such as synonyms, or by words sharing similar connotations. In content analysis, three main concepts are

important to have in consideration when using this method: stability, reproducibility and accuracy. Stability refers to the levels of the data being stable or does not change in different periods of time. Reproducibility is a term that defines how same text should have same results when coded by a different coder or researcher. Finally, accuracy refers to the correspondence to classifications in analysis to certain norms (Weber, 1990).

This master thesis uses inductive qualitative content analysis. In qualitative research, the term induction is being used to explain a process where research findings are being produced from the most frequent and dominant information in the collected data (Thomas, 2006). Moreover, the inductive qualitative analysis implies that:

> coding categories are derived directly and inductively from the raw data. Researchers avoid using preconceived categories, allowing the categories and names for categories to 'flow from the data' instead. They immerse themselves in the data to allow new insights to emerge. (Moretti, van Vliet, Bensing, Deledda, Mazzi, Rimondini and Fletcher, 2011)

Researchers have debated the issues of trustworthiness in qualitative content analysis. A common characteristics of various research who have been examining trustworthiness of qualitative content analysis is that they all support trustworthiness while reporting on the content analysis accurately (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen and Kyngäs, 2014, page 12). Moreover, the level of trustworthiness is increased with the detailed description of the content analysis phases in the research.

3.3.1 Data collection in qualitative content analysis

As researchers have identified, the key aspect of performing a so called "trustworthy" qualitative content analysis is the first step or choosing the most appropriate data collection method which usually are methods such as interviews, observations, diaries or a combination of diverse methods. (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen and Kyngäs, 2014)

The data collection process for this thesis was conducted in North Macedonia and was 15 weeks long. This time period included investigating possible respondents in the research from their media appearances or significant

contribution within the movements, contacting respondents, drafting and writing of questions and possible topics for interviews and focus groups, conducting the interviews or focus groups and transcription of the interviews and focus groups.

Each interview or focus groups was recorded and afterwards the recordings were used for transcription of the interviews and focus groups. The transcribed documents are kept with confidentiality as respondents were informed prior signing the participation form in this study. In total there are around 100 pages of transcribed documents.

3.3.2 Organising data in qualitative content analysis

The second step in content analysis is organising the collected data. Within the inductive content analysis, at the organising phase the researcher is performing open coding meaning that while reading the transcribed data from the data collection process, the researcher is making note or headings in the transcribed documents (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008).

Continuing with the organising phase of the research, the researcher should be able to define how concepts have been created through the qualitative content analysis method in order to give "trustworthiness"of the study. Issues of having too many different concepts indicate that the researcher has not been able to group the data appropriately. (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen and Kyngäs, 2014)

The coding in the thesis was conducted through re-reading and analyzing the transcribed data and trying to extract interesting and relevant aspects from the responses through assigning codes for each highlighted text from the answers. Moreover, the codes I have extracted are in relation to the thesis research questions. The purpose of this phase was to create a long list of codes that allowed sorting them into groups or merge them in order to form a theme. From technical perspective, I performed the coding process using combination of "old-fashioned" and technological approaches. First, I read all transcribed data and used different colours of markers or stickers to write codes. In the second stage, I re-read and inserted the codes with Word tracking option and re-analyzed

the content. With the codes being created, I afterwards proceed in forming themes that are presented in the findings section.

3.3.3 Data reporting in qualitative content analysis

The last, reporting phase in the qualitative content analysis is as important as the rest of the previous phases. Reporting should be completed in a systematic way with a special attention to how results and data are connected. In the reporting phase, there should be a clear sign that the results are derived from the participants opinions and that they do not represent subjective viewpoints of the researcher. Quotations are meant to be used for linking data with the proposed concepts, however the selection of quotations should be carefully made and they should be clearly connected with the concepts in the findings. (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen and Kyngäs, 2014)

Data reporting will be presented in the findings section of the thesis as well as through the discussion section in relation with the thesis main theories and previous research carried out in relation to this study. Reporting will be made through the findings section with quotations and where each quotation will be given introduction and analysis in relation to the topic where the quotations is being placed.

3.4 Data limitations

The limitations of the obtained data are mostly concerning the perceptions of validity of the case studied environments and their relation to media education. These limitations refer to the larger context of those environments and possible interferences with the data in this thesis.

Readers who are familiar with the origin and flow of what these movements lobbied for would probably question how the respective environments might have been so specific to media education. Furthermore, the limitations are not based on the actual validity of data, but on the existing perceptions and even ideologies

to what the movements stand for. That is why the thesis is based on examining the secondary purposes of those environments and not the primary political function.

One more limitation of the research is that this is a country specific research and future references and relations for other global research projects would need to take into account the social, political and cultural context of the research. However, this is a case with all country specific researches and critical approach in terms of social and cultural setting should be always made.

4 FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings from the research "Media Education in the Third Space: Case Study of the University Occupations and High School Protest Camp in North Macedonia". The findings section is divided in three parts: media content creation, media analysis and evaluation and third spaces characteristics.

The findings chapter consists of 4 subthemes which categorises the results from the research in 4 different areas:

1	Media content creation and media communication
2	Media analysis and evaluation
3	Modes of learning for and with media
4	Developing media related skills

4.1 Media content creation and media communication

The students have produced numerous media products that were beneficial for the movements they were part of. All produced content involved students with different backgrounds, illustrated high quality level of media production and analysis of the audiences which those media products targeted. This chapter highlights the most prominent media products created during the university occupation and the protest camp. Moreover, it presents the approaches the students demonstrated in their relations with different media outlets. Even though each chapter highlights individual media product or media approach, it should be stressed that they were combined and most times relating to one another to transfer media and political messages.

4.1.1 Press releases

A common answer among three of the interviewees in the study is the approach of writing a media press release with thoroughness and attention to details. In order to show professional attitude and advanced media creation skills, the students produced press releases with many hours spent on the creation procedures. One of the first factors that have been crucial for producing quality press releases was the aspect of inclusiveness. This meant that diverse representations should be taken into account when writing a press release by knowing that they are producing public content for a movement that represents diverse students even though united under one cause. The usage of digital technologies even the simplest ones, like Google Drive, can be an advantage. A student who was part of a local media team from one of the movements says:

> A press release was always written by few people, never one person. This was a long process that lasted for a couple of hours and if we were unable to be physically together and write, we used Google Drive so anyone can track and contribute in the writing process. (interview, student)

Another perspective of writing a media release that was common for the interviewees to mention was the time spent on the production. Contrary to traditional beliefs that press release should be produced in a short time especially when referring to dynamic events, these activists stressed that time and attention to details in the creation process is important. One of the students who participated in writing a press release says:

> Our best press release was written at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts, it included 15 people and we were writing the release for 8 hours. I still keep this press release in my phone and we wrote it completely on our own without any help. (interview, student)

Both of the movements with their social media channels at one point represented a media of their own where the produced materials including the press release were designed for the targeted audience by the activists. The writing process was a cooperation between few students and the content produced was in most cases collaborative product of work. Moreover, the

students have considered the next phases of issuing a press release, not just the writing process. This included separate teams for proofreading, bilingual translation of the release and visuals of the release, such as incorporation of pictures.

4.1.2 Media denials

The environment in which these movements operated involved many media narratives that accused the activists as being associated with the opposition political party or financed by the Soros foundation. These accusations were spread by pro-government media and they were generally describing the whole movement. However, there were individuals who were portrayed in pro-government media as they have received a certain amount of money to organise protests, some students were subject to hate speech based on sexual orientation or being associated with foreign Embassies within the country. One of the students explains the procedures for sending media denials:

> When the movement was attacked we did not send media denials as we understood that we did not own a trademark for the movement and thus sending a media denial to defend the movement would not be suitable. We have delivered media denials in case of personal media attacks of activists as there were personal media articles. (interview, student)

The previously presented viewpoints highlight that the students have debated inside their movement the justification of sending media denials in different situations. Moreover, they have shown understanding that even though they have credibility and public support to defend the movement, such action was not taken.

4.1.3 Press conferences and interviews

The majority of media relations with traditional media, more specifically TV, was challenging to maintain as the students were constantly under attack and misrepresented in the media as a result of media corruption and relations to the oppressive government that had been openly standing against the students. There was a leading intention to stay professional and fact related even when

communicating with these media representatives. Such media insinuations were most likely seen at press conferences or individual interviews with activists. The key approach that the students took was preparation. Preparations included several different techniques, but one of the most beneficial inside the occupied Faculties were the media simulations. A student who was interviewed explains the purpose of the media simulations:

> We organized inner simulations and simulated a situation or questions that a journalist or media can address to us, how to avoid misleading questions, how to give an answer and not allow the interviewer to extract information that is in their benefit. (interview, student)

Before entering and occupying the university and public spaces some of the activists contacted professionals who work in Public Relations departments in institutions or companies. Again, the purpose of those consultations were from preparation perspective. The students met and discussed with those experts in terms of how a press conference is organized and how to stay in focus of what is being presented on that press conference. Furthermore, they prepared themselves to transfer the key points and messages even after the media will cut the materials and select the ones that will air on TV. There are individual cases of students who had parents who work as journalists or Public Relations officers and they have brought knowledge from what they learned at home from them and shared the skills with the rest of the students inside the occupation zones.

Even journalists themselves have acknowledged the professional attitude the students had with media and journalists. A journalist who was interviewed for this thesis says:

> The students have not excluded any type of media at that moment. There were many insinuations and provocative questions and they were all answered with dignity and everyone had the opportunity to ask questions. I have attended many conferences, meetings, debates inside the government, political parties and NGOs at that same moment and what the students presented was the most professional work I have seen. (interview, journalist)

There is a commonality in few responses that the purpose of such professional attitude in press releases and interviews and other media appearances was to make the unprofessional media reporting unpopular, especially among young people. This inevitably shows the role of those student activists as leading

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awareness raising actors for the rest of the young population in terms of motivating them to be resistant to fake news and always question what is being presented on traditional media.

4.1.4   Media campaigns

As a specific case study, both of the environments that are being examined have been subjected to intensive political and media campaigns that tried to make those movements less relevant and to portray the activists as corrupted or that they were working against the collective interest of the country. One common media narrative for the student activists, but also their supporters was that they are part of the biggest opposition political party or that they have been financially supported by the Soros Foundation or foreign Embassies working in North Macedonia, most often the US Embassy. The creation of the media campaigns were response back to the previously mentioned media narratives. Furthermore, the respondents classify them as anti-campaigns. With that term they are describing the reactive side of their campaigns.

Even before occupying the university and the public space, the students implemented a media campaign that was response to how the media already portrayed them. One of the pro-government media started to extract photos from protests and placed red circles on student faces with false accusations that those students are affiliated with the opposition political party SDSM, or with adding false accusations with amounts of finances they have received from the Soros Foundation. One of the students who was interviewed says:

> On one of the protests we showed with handmade red circles and responded back that we are here, we have circled ourselves and asked the media will they finally hear our arguments. (interview, student)

This campaign than followed on social media where students and their supporters changed their profile pictures on their private social media profiles with red circles in support of the movement and the political requirements. Many of the following campaigns continued on social media. For instance, both of the movements used memes as a mechanism to respond to politicians and media on

fun and satiric way. One of the respondents who was interviewed with combined photo elicitation methodology commented a picture with meme on it:

> Myself together with other student created the memes. We realized that people have impressions for us that we are not adults, we are alone on an open space and they have used this to attack us. We did not want for people to pity us, so we responded back with jokes and satire. (interview with photo elicitation, student)

Another media campaign that was implemented used the young people who moved out from the country due to studies, work or family, but most of all as part of the brain drain in North Macedonia. The activists have asked those supporters to write their supporting statements and post them on social media with the hashtag of the movement #PozdravPlenumci. Related to the success of this media campaign, one interviewee explains:

> At the beginning we asked for around 20 people that we know and who are travelling or studying abroad to send us their photos and post them on social media, but after that people simply started to send us photos even though they did not know us personally. (interview with photo elicitation, student)

The responsiveness in each campaign that the students started was followed by popular interest among their peers and to a larger extent in the society. For them the increasing number of supporters through those campaigns was remarkable in support to their political requirements.

4.1.5 Social media (Facebook and Twitter)

The usage of social media as main platforms of informing and activism in times of omnipresent media propaganda have proven to be a necessity. Unlike traditional media, the internet and social media that students used were free from external control and could not be monitored by government officials. As most common form of social media used was the social network Facebook. This usage was due to the freedom of characters, multimedia and interaction options that this network gives. Twitter was also used during the occupations, but more frequently for external communication with the public, rather from the internal

communication perspectives as Twitter has 140 characters limitation to spread a message. A high school students who was part of the movement says:

> We used social media as a weapon against traditional media, especially against TV stations which did not support us in the way we wanted. The traditional media did not play their social role in the society in informing the citizens and that is why we have been more keen on using social media. (focus group interview, student)

Social media enabled freedom of expression of the students and prevented media censorship in the relations with the target groups. Not only did the students think that social media was free space for expression, but also their supporters who were witnessing their media announcements noticed the major difference between information placed on traditional media and social media. A professor that was interviewed commented on the role of social media in the movements:

> If things were left to the national media concept, especially TV, the students would not even exist. Their protest camp was completely boycotted from traditional media perspective. Fortunately, on social media no one could do editing or censorship, and the students had the leading role in forming their social groups. (interview, student)

While the students were occupying and protesting, they were faced with various pressures coming from different sides in the society. Whether it was a threat coming from the streets or direct pressures at the school the public would usually not be informed on such incidents as the traditional media did not report on such cases. During the high school protest camp, there were numerous school teachers and principals who locked their students inside the schools in order for them to stay inside and prevent them to go protesting at the camp. This was a huge violation on one of the fundamental human rights of freedom of association. With the help of social media the students were better informed in which schools there are students looked and kept under pressure. An interviewee explains:

> We had videos on social media that proved how a school principal locks down a school or professors shouting or threatening us. Social media was our tool and opportunity. (focus group interview, student)

The students in both protest environments have made thorough analysis of their primary target group and the usage of media for their engagement. Several activists have stressed that traditional media and TV are not popular among young people and that social media or Facebook in particular will be used for

targeting students who are not present on the protest environments and will be invited to visit. Facebook was used in both external and internal communication. For instance, an interviewee has described the usage of Facebook for informing the citizens about the educational activities inside the protest camp and has pointed out that this was strategic approach in using Facebook in order to demolish the dominant media narratives that the students inside the protest camp are not intellectual or do not want to learn:

> There was one case when we taught illiterate Roma woman on how to write the alphabet inside the camp. We posted that on social media. With that we wanted to spread the message that we are not protesting out of nowhere, but we are doing something for a common good. (focus group interview, student)

From internal communication perspective, the students used the social media networks the most for internal communication among the activists and from a logistical and coordinative point of view. Each occupied Faculty generally operated with closed Facebook groups and there were separate groups for the different teams inside one Faculty. However, internal channels of communication on Facebook were used for other important decision making processes.

> Besides coordination, Facebook was the main tool where we adopted decisions through voting. We were not able to arrange meetings for each decision that needed to be approved, so we voted on Facebook closed groups. (interview, student)

Administrating social media was also responsibility of the students. One of the pro arguments of using social media instead of other forms of media was the inexpensive accessibility for the usage of this media platforms.

> We mostly used social media and other alternative media platforms as we used their maximum without paying. Today you can easily pay a commercial anywhere. We used social media as opinion making platform among a vast target group. (interview, student)

Through the usage of social media the students gained perspective that alternative models of reporting and informing the citizens are possible and that even in the times of media propaganda, oppression and media boycott there are approaches in effective media usage. The overall conclusion for the social media impact on youth and the society in general is that moment of realization for the

power that social media has in vulnerable democratic countries such as North Macedonia.

4.1.6 Video production

Production of video materials in these protest environments was common practice as the social media channels of the movements published their own videos where each day from the occupations was summarized in 3 minute video. The idea behind the videos day recaps was to inform the others outside the Faculties what was happening inside. Moreover, this was a convenient tool and as the respondents said "Video cannot lie".

The recording and editing procedures for those videos were performed by students with prior experience. While the process of recording and editing for those students was not a learning experience itself, the whole contextual experience of creating archives from the social and political events in North Macedonia was beneficial. For instance, one of the students who was interviewed and was working on recording and editing materials from the university occupations said:

> The materials I collected were meant to be used for my graduation movie. That was originally envisioned together with my Faculty mentor. The idea behind including the student protests in my graduation movie was that at that time I started to work on documentary movies. Furthermore, this was a topic that I connected with personally. I even followed up on recording the other protests in North Macedonia and at some point it turned into a bigger project and I decided not to use it for a graduation movie, but to apply it as a project at the National Movie Agency or for foreign funding. (interview, student)

As part of the alternative lectures and workshops inside the protest spaces, the students at the occupied Faculty of Architecture attended workshops on shooting short videos which transferred political messages in support of the ongoing student protests at the time. These alternative workshops were organized by an experienced non-governmental organisation with a background in video shooting and editing. One of the youth workers who facilitated the workshop says:

> The students worked on making video concepts, structures, storyboard, even though we did not have much time for making a storyboard. We instructed

the participants to work on the idea they want to send via video with using the resources they have on disposal at the occupied Faculty. (interview, youth worker)

Even though this workshop had a contextual purpose to produce short videos that were supporting the political requirements the movements had, there was educational perspective that the youth workers commented on. To answer the question how these skills can be replicated further into the life of the students, the youth worker answered:

I think that they gained lifelong skills. Through planning, structuring and learning about promotion of videos, they learned how to replicate that on majority of visual products. The other perspective is that they learned how to implement video workshops on their own, as this experience gave them a format for how these workshops should be organized. (interview, student)

Attempting to investigate if and how the workshops had any effects from a 4 year perspective after the workshop ended, a student who participated on the workshop was interviewed. The student who is still enrolled in university studies said that he did not had the chance to repeat similar type of learning or working with these topics. Even though there were courses at the interviewee's faculty on video and multimedia, the respondent criticized the amateur equipment that the students were working with. Surprisingly, for him and many other students during the university occupations equipment for video shooting was important and exciting moment. One of his most significant answers that stranded out how he got involved to enter the occupations was:

At that time I had GoPro camera and I took it with me on the Autonomous zone. I started to record videos and take pictures and through that I was invited to be part of the media team for the occupied Faculty of Architecture. I was being named as "the guy with the GoPro camera" and everyone were excited to be in the videos. (interview, student)

The usage of video inside the protest sides helped the students to build a more recognized movement, to articulate their requirements to more people and even to inspire some students to consider the featuring of video inserts of these events into their professional documentary movies.

4.2 Media analysis and evaluation

The second part of the findings section highlights the diverse aspects of analysis and evaluation of media in the protest environments context. As main aspects of the analysis and evaluation are the standards related to media professionalism, understanding, demolishing and deconstructing media narratives and also reclaiming the restricted media space.

All presented examples bellow are complementary to the media products and relations in the previous chapter, meaning that the process of analysis and evaluating media was happening prior, during and post creating media content or communicating with media.

4.2.1 Evaluation of professionalism in media

Before starting with producing their own media content and designing a specific pattern of communication with media, the students collectively evaluated the overall media environment and level of media professionalism. As most frequent subjects of those evaluation and analysis processes were traditional media and representatives working there. The students treated their approaches of work as complete opposite of how their media agenda is going to be built in their activism. A university student says that:

> We evaluated the unprofessional and unjust models of media reporting. According to that, we prepared ourselves for our media actions. (interview, student)

Furthermore, not only media outlets were evaluated by the students, but also how diverse stakeholders interact with media. For instance, the common media appearances of politicians were evaluated in terms of how they appear and interact with media. Such evaluation was made not only regarding content, but also on visual level such as the necessity of people standing behind someone who is giving a media statement without them having any particular role in those media statements. This approach was evaluated to be typical for political parties who would usually invite activists in favor of that political party to just stand behind the dominant politicians who appeared in traditional media.

Recognizing and acting against media spinning was a common answer in most of the interviewees for this research. What one of the students who was working on producing short videos during the occupations explained is that the motivation in making those videos was to deconstruct the media spinning:

> Our videos were short and concise and proved that we are doing differently and not as the TV portrayed us. They just thought that we make noise for no reason, and not that we do something beneficial for the community. (interview, student)

Even though it was not hard to notice the unprofessional work of media in that current time in North Macedonia, the students have showed understanding of advanced concepts of media professionalism not excluding also relevant actors such as politicians and their communication with media.

4.2.2 Demolishing and deconstructing media narratives

For the students and the activists, but also for the public during these occupations and protest camps it was not hard to determine which the dominant media narratives are for the students and the movements they were representing. What the pro-government media seeded as dominant media narrative and further on was transferred to the public was that the students residing in the occupied and protest environments are supported by the political opposition party SDSM or financially supported by the Soros Foundation.

The first and most used approach in how to demolish these narratives was not to avoid them, but to accept them as visible and mock with them. Humor and satire were the most powerful tools for deconstructing what was being spread as a fake information. Through humor and mocking these media and politicians who adopted and orchestrated what the media narrated, the students had fun and most importantly they owned the process of making the public aware of the misinformation being spread. A student says that:

> I can say even before the occupation a big proportion of handling pro-government media was through humor, laughing and making pranks. We initiated to circle ourselves and humor their reporting that we are paid by Soros and that exploded in the public. We were adored because of this action. (interview, student)

Other method for demolishing the dominant media narrative was to not give an opportunity to pro-government media to continue spreading the narrative. The students were careful in their representation of people from the NGO sector as those people could easily be targeted by the media and can be subject to fake news that they are paid by foreign Embassies or Foundations. For that reason newcomers and people who never joined an NGO before were also featured in media. Related to this, a student explains:

> At first we avoided to expose in media people who were previously involved in the NGO sector as they could be easily labelled as Soros affiliates. Later on, we tended to make rotations of people who appeared in media, so same people cannot be targeted by the media who would go after their background. (interview, student)

An important aim of the students was not only to demolish the dominant media narrative, but to create and generate new ones. The major challenge for them was to illustrate that the students are indeed advocating for changes in education and that they are interested in educational activities. This could be only achieved through showing via social media that inside the protest environments concrete educational activates happen. With that being said, the focus on those educational activities, workshops and alternative lectures was not only on the education itself, but also in creating different media narrative that portrays those students as educated intellectuals. Regarding this, a high school student elaborates:

> I understand that the educational activities inside the protest camp were meant to show that inside the camp reside intellectuals who are engaged in lectures, arts and workshops. The real situation was that sometimes there was not enough interest for some educational activities and sometimes people were more interested in social activities, but we recruited more members to attend the educational activities only to show the public that we are engaged in education. (focus group interview, student)

Some other interviewees also confirm that the educational program inside the protest environments was strategic approach in creating effective media narratives in support of the movements. This answer proves that they understood that bringing down a dominant media narrative and replacing it with other narrative requires strategic and repetitive actions and relations with the media.

> We wanted to show that we are educated and that we do not come with any kind of idea. We strategically created educational program in order to bring down the narrative that we are 15 kids who gathered in protest camp because they do not want to study. (focus group interview, student)

4.2.3 Reclaiming media space

In the analytical perspective of media, the actions that the students from these protest environments demonstrated showed that they understand that the media space and therefore the public space should belong to the public and no one is entitled to show full ownership of the media space. This was especially important for the national TV provider (Macedonian Radio Television) that by North Macedonian legislative and law procedures is funded by government money and therefore that means the public is funding this TV provider. Similarly, the majority of other TV stations, newspapers and websites were involved in producing news that are fake, populistic and that generate hate speech.

The term "media kidnapping" was introduced by one of the interviewees as a phrase to describe how the students reclaimed media space. Under media kidnapping, the interviewee described a situation when a large group of students made a Skype call to a pro-government talk show in order to place their ideas and beliefs. The term kidnapping is used as primarily that group would not be authorized to share their movement requirements on that particular talk show. However, in order to achieve that one of the student activists started the Skype call and falsely introduced himself as a movement opponent and afterwards turned the lap top camera to the rest of the classroom with students shouting the movement slogan "Pozdrav Plenumci".

> I remember that I was inside when the students called Janko in his talk show. They used a pro-government media, where they called and told him that he is not propagating ethical beliefs. I liked that they kidnapped media and that they used the media of the others and not only their own media, and they did that on their own humoristic way. (interview, youth worker)

The reclaim of media space from inside the occupied faculties was impressive for journalists who resided inside the autonomous zone. Even journalists supported the creativity and innovative approach in how the students handled the reclaim of

media space and showing that they do exists. A journalist who recorded the Skype call between the students and the talk show host described this event:

> While I was inside the autonomous zone, the students decided to make this call on the talk show Jadi Burek. They decided to make this call as they did not have space in those media outlets to express their opinions and the presented information that were selective and opposite the real situation. This was the key moment when they reclaimed the media space which was restricted to them. The video I recorded from there was one of the most viewed videos. I was inside with them and yet I did not know they were going to make such intervention in this talk show. They were wise. (interview, journalist)

The reclaiming of media space was again possible through humor and satire. This was the most powerful tool in relations with pro-government media in many other cases. However, the students did not focus entirely only on traditional media as they have concluded that their peers and other relatable target groups are residing and forming viewpoints and belief systems inside social media. The reclaim of media space was important not just as a demonstrated media knowledge itself, but also because it had a strong political message. Through the analysed example of kidnapping the famous talk show, the students not only enabled themselves to be visible in that particular show, but more importantly to show to the public that those talk shows and the media where they operate are controlled by the government and they are not free. Furthermore, the reclaim was a critique of the endangered media freedom in North Macedonia.

4.3   Modes of learning for and with media

This part of the findings section will focus on the different types of learning, including modes and platforms for learning with and about media, but also the learning outcomes that derived from those modes and platforms. It should be stressed that what is being presented in this chapter is not examined isolated or specifically related to media education, but more broadly and in general how learning was organized inside the autonomous zone and the protest camp. Furthermore, this also includes learning about media and aspects of media analysis, usage and evaluation.

4.3.1 Peer learning

Learning from one another between students also known as peer learning was frequent during the autonomous zone and the protest camp. This was mainly because students remained the first and most reliable source of knowledge during those political events in the country. Their cooperation, working in teams, group work and mutual help were the main factors of how the peer learning was successful. One of the youth workers who worked on implementing workshops with the students at the autonomous zone commented that cooperation instead of competition as seen in formal education was the core reason why peer based learning was effective:

> That was an excellent moment to use the peer learning type. It was good to see that as our formal educational system does not empower peers and it creates competition, not cooperation. In that regard this was cooperation, someone knew something and someone knew something else which in many cases was the initiative of how workshops were organized and the idea behind to educate others. (interview, youth worker)

Related to media education, the students also found peer learning as an effective approach for media learning. Peer media learning appeared both between experienced students with media background and inexperienced students, but also between groups of inexperienced students who just figured out between themselves how to interact with media. A student who after the autonomous zone and the movement activities continued his Master studies with media and communication background was interviewed:

> Personally, I did not have prior major knowledge on media, but there were students who worked Public Relations in NGOs. As they were previously included in media appearances or writing press releases, I had the opportunity to learn a lot from them. I think we learnt fast from one another and not just from them two who had prior experience with media. (interview, student)

Peer based learning is approach marginalized within the formal education system. It proves to be only reserved for spaces that qualify as third spaces or

ones that are deformalized. Media education is field where peers can take the role of learning actors as inevitability they interact with media on a daily basis. In complex terms, such as the protesting spaces in this case study peer learning is demonstrated as cooperation or more as joined force to act against oppression. Even though the main idea of that cooperation was not media education as a separate objective, some students perceive that period as a milestone in their life when they decided to continue with their studies and professional career with media.

4.3.2 Multimedia learning

Incorporation of technology within the regular activities inside these protest environments was visible in alternative lectures, workshops, movie screenings or social games. Although technology usage is not something new for youth and students, there seemed to be sympathies and admiration in how the students organized their learning and free time inside the autonomous zone and the protest camp. A high school teacher who was interviewed commented the usage of technologies inside the high school protest camp:

> There were video presentations, exhibitions, social games aimed to show the social side of their rebellion. They used all learning methods that excelled the traditional formal methodologies in school. These students demonstrated to be more creative and with more knowledge in incorporating technology in learning. (interview, teacher)

Marginal aspects of learning in formal education such as technologies inclusion was frequent to see in these protest environments. Potter and McDougall (2017) elaborated that often times teachers deal with frustration in how they can transfer learning practices seen at third spaces. Similar technologies inclusion is necessity at Macedonian schools in attempt for them to modernize and be relevant to the dynamic and changing environments in which the youth interact, however the media education approach should be carried out with equal attention payed to other aspects of media education especially the analysis, evaluation and creation of media.

4.3.3 Non-formal learning

The first manifestation of learning being non-formal is the physical organisation of the learning process. A group of students who participated on a focus group for the thesis explained that sitting in circle was common on lectures, workshops and meetings organized at the high school protest camp. Another student who was active in the university occupations explains:

> Our Faculty professors are usually firm and we are used to that the professors should stand and we should sit and listen. During the occupations our professors refused to stand and lecture. They wanted to demonstrate a physical relation to us as students and to show that they are equal to us. (interview, students)

These physical implementations of learning are important in terms of how effective learning is organized. Media education is affected by how spaces and physical relations are manifested. For instance, suggestions, advices and relations with media experts that the students at these protest environments maintained were useful for their understanding and usage of media. Such interactions were mostly performed through non-formal physical approaches such as sitting on stairs, discussing in circles, professors vising the media rooms of the movements and other non-formal interactions with the students.

Besides the physical non-formal appearances, these environments featured characteristics as freedom of choosing topics to lecture and learn. Electivity was demonstrated at first in the topics that experienced lecturers such as professors or youth workers educated on. Related to the freedom to choose what is presented, one student commented that:

> Our professors lectured on topics that they would not have courage to talk in the formal education system. (interview, student)

Electivity was also important from student perspective. In North Macedonian context, formally there is such option to choose what you want to study in terms of courses, but most time that is not possible as of administrative challenges such as lack of staff, premises or inability to form groups. An interviewee commented the electivity from student perspective:

> I especially liked that students had the freedom to choose, the electivity part. If students were interested they attended and if they were not interested they did not attend. There was the aspect of electivity unlike the formal education system. If students have alternative and freedom, it would change a lot in what they will learn and how they will learn that. There were professors and external actors who had knowledge to offer. Students also educated other students and sometimes I felt like I am attending self-organised TED Talks event. (interview, youth worker)

The learning in protest environments had challenged the traditional roles of educators and enable students and teachers to change roles of educators. Usually the dominant knowledge creator and distributer in formal education in North Macedonia is the teacher. However, when talking about aspects of deformalizing education, the students have stated that the opportunities for students to also take the roles of those who educate and who actively participate in the knowledge construction process is an important feature of non-formal learning:

> There we had the freedom to feel few steps more free than attending an ordinary lecture. That was a moment when we broke the barriers on our Faculties in terms of how transmits knowledge and who should just listen and absorb it. If we ask some of the professors, they would say that they learnt a lot from us as students. Learning was two sided process. (interview, student)

Non-formal learning characteristics in the protest environments context are mostly demonstrated through the content of knowledge producing, the freedom to choose topics for education and the relations and roles of educators, including those when students take the role as educators. It is hard to spot any concrete methodologies that are typical for non-formal education as these events, lecture and workshops were not repetitive for a long time, but the learning inside the spaces differed from the formal system and thus should classify as non-formal or deformalized way of learning.

4.4 Developing media related skills

This part of the thesis will highlight the diverse skills acquired inside the protest environments. Debating skills, critical thinking skills and a wide range of soft skills. These skills are media related, but they can also extend further into other fields

of studies, work related skills or skills for participation as active contributors for democratic societies.

4.4.1 Debating skills

Skills for having argument based debate were the absolute must for these activists. Whenever activists or supporters of the movements had relations with media or organized inner consultations or meetings their argumentative debating was obligatory. For majority of the students, debating was not something new. It was not a secret that many of the prominent activists of the high school plenum were members of the debate club at the Youth Educational Forum, a North Macedonian NGO. Some of them say that:

> There were alternative topics that we wanted to introduce, such as feminism. We had members who were part of the debate club at Youth Educational Forum and through them we wanted to implement that. We debated about the high school assembly and if that was the right way of assembling ourselves. (focus group interview, student)

Apart from debating among the activists, the debate as a platform was promoted within the alternative lectures and workshops that were implemented inside the occupied spaces. Educators and youth workers empowered students to debate and confront opinions. One of the youth worker who was working with the students says that:

> It was important to let them know that studying only for standardized testing is not enough. They need to think on their own and that debating is important. (interview, youth worker)

Debating skills were demonstrated in the frequent media appearances when the movement was represented. The activists who were selected to represent the movement attended media debating platforms where they demonstrated the development of these skills through referencing statistics, laws, research findings and facts as supportive arguments in their political requirements.

4.4.2 Critical thinking skills

Developing of critical thinking skills was practiced in the context of the protest movements, not just in terms of media, but also wider to the political processes in the country. Moreover, critical thinking as specific skill and competency for young people showed to be important in terms of education. There was a common characteristic of many respondents that critiqued the formal education system in relation of its incompetence to prepare students for the everyday challenges and to empower them to critically observe the reality. One of the students who participate on a focus group for this research explains:

> We need alternative lectures for the reason that while we are at high school we are facing a narrative that we should not be in touch with politics and we are not aware how much politics affects us. (focus group interview, student)

As opposed to the sterile atmosphere inside the educational system related to development of critical thinking, the protest environments and the organisation of education inside them were described as a complete opposition of schools and classrooms. The students were empowered to think critically among themselves when producing media content as it was described above during their media content producing and media analysis. Furthermore, critical thinking was promoted during the alternative lectures that the students organized during the faculty occupations and the protest camp. One youth worker explains the importance of critical thinking among students in these subversive spaces:

> It was of high importance as the students understood that learning is not only for testing reasons, but they have to think on their own, they have to critically observe and debate- and this elements were present in those alternative lectures. (interview, youth worker)

Skills related to critical thinking are important for media education, but they can implicate their importance even further in other school subject and sciences. The ability to think critically when engaged in education is also crucial for developing democratic societies as students will not perceive each information they hear as an absolute truth and question the information circulated inside their textbooks, presentations or seminars in school.

4.4.3 Soft skills

The university occupations and the protest camp contributed to build stronger soft skills among the students. These skills were acquired during the on-going activities that the students needed to complete while these spaces were running actively. During one of the interviews with combined photo elicitation methodology, the interviewee was shown a graphic illustration with a person surrounded with many papers and the person having 4 hands and writing. The interviewee needed to describe how she can relate this illustration in relation to her experience from the protest camp. After observing the illustration, she explained:

> This picture for me illustrates the education inside the camp. Those educational aspects were mostly related to soft skills as they taught us as a direct experience how to communicate with people different than ourselves. (interview with photo elicitation, student)

Specifically related to media, the softs skills mostly corresponded with building their communication skills in how to communicate with official structures and communication with media. A students who participated in the research focus group elaborates:

> We learned how to send official requests, to communicate with the police, communicating with media, organizing events. There we learned more than any other seminar we might attended. (focus group interview, student)

Acquiring soft skills is important for students learning about media as they understand and most of all practice many new experiences that might help them to master and advance media usage, production and evaluation. The ineffectiveness of the formal system to develop soft skills did not stop the students themselves to go elsewhere and demonstrate their knowledge in activities such as relations with officials or media and thus the gaining of soft skills appeared naturally while these activities were being practiced. Developing soft skills helps students to be more effective in their future studies or careers.

5 DISCUSSION

After presenting the main findings from the conducted research, contextualizing them into the previously elaborated theoretical framework is the next proceeding step. This research had three main research questions:

- How have protest camps and Faculty occupations (autonomous zones) in North Macedonia in 2015 enabled students to learn the fundaments of media literacy?
- What third space learning characteristics the protest camp and Faculty occupations in Macedonia have shown?
- Is it possible to replicate any of the practices from the protest camps and autonomous zones into formal education and how?

To answer the first research question there were numerous research results in the findings section that illustrated how media literacies concepts, practices and platforms were incorporated into the case studies environments. The process of media production inside the autonomous zone and the protest camp related to press releases, media denials, interviews, but also producing more innovative content like memes, videos or complex media campaigns was practiced by the students and their supporters. Relating to the examined strategies of tactics students inside those spaces are not just consumers, but they are also active producers (Kupiainen, 2013). According to this definition, media production proved to be a tactic response by the students from the interrelated concept of strategic-tactic response by Michael De Carteau.

As explained by Choundhury and Share (2012), students need to be facilitated by their teachers in acquiring skills for critical evaluation of media messages. While analyzing the data of this research, it was of great surprise to see that in the examined protest environments students learned about critical evaluation of media messages among themselves through the concept of peer

learning. What Choundhury and Share (2012) stress as important is that students should recognize biases, values, points of view and economy driven media produced messages. The students at the protest environments have thoroughly evaluated the professionalism in media and they pointed out on the media corruption, their subjectivity, humiliation to minors, hateful media narratives and bias. They even stepped further with not just understanding that these affiliations in media are present, but they showed high level of agency in transforming them, demolishing them and showing a sense of ownership. The political side of these environments naturally provoked such agency which makes these media literacy fundaments not just understood, but also practiced.

Skills acquired at the protest environments such as: debating, critical thinking and soft skills are not only important for the media literacy development among students, but also wider in the context of education. These skills are especially important for countries which are dealing with challenges of endangered democracy and where learning and acquiring skills for enhancement of democratic values is important. Potter and McDougall (2017) argued that forming of third spaces is conditioned in situations when the learners experience barriers in correlating the knowledge they gain at school with the actual and real social and cultural experiences outside the school. The third spaces in the examined contexts of this thesis were not directly addressing the insufficient levels of media literacy inside the schools and as such they reflected them inside the protest environments. What is being considered as fundament of media education in this context was learnt on a level of unawareness, it was not purposely structured, however it demonstrated higher potential of developing media literacy among students compared to formal education.

To answer the second research question, a compare and contrast approach of the theoretical aspects of third space and the concrete results in the findings section should be taken into account. At first, before proceeding with the theories of third space, a similar contextualization of these spaces as heterotopias is relevant. According to Kupiainen (2013) heterotopias are spaces where concepts of informal and formal learning meet and were previously opposed to each other. Similarly, Potter and McDougall (2017) defined third spaces as an interference

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between the formal and non-formal. Non-formal learning though the physical manifestations such as sitting in circles or physical closeness, but also the freedom of topics lectured and electivity were one of the dominant characteristics that identified the autonomous zone and the protest camps as third spaces for learning.

Furthermore, Potter and McDougall (2017) explained the inclusive part of the third spaces as places where academics and learners interact between each other. What the findings have shown is that in these specific cases the interactions went beyond this definition and that not only professors and students interacted, but also they learned from each other. Learning was a two-sided process and students learned from their professors as much as they did from their students. This has challenged the normative position in education especially in terms of who produces and who absorbs knowledge.

Another aspect in terms of how these spaces qualified as third spaces according to the theoretical explanations is that according to researchers Potter and McDougall (2017), protest camps in particular integrate media, politics and education into one network. The high school protest camp, as well as the autonomous zone did integrate media, education and politics. These three aspects were not isolated and related to media education the purpose of working with media should always take in consideration the on-going political processes inside the country. The understanding of politics enabled the students to identify and demolish media narratives, to generate their own envisioned narratives for their representation in media, but also to question the relevance of dominant media inside the country, to evaluate their professionalism, suspect on corruption and to put those media elaborations into context for earning their place inside the media landscape. Moreover, according to this definition education is an important field that intertwines together with media and politics. It should be also considered that these protest groups many times rallied for improvements in education in North Macedonia, they have opposed to an unjust treatment in education and newly introduced educational laws. Despite that these revolts were not directed towards lobbying for media education itself, they did however critiqued the incompetency of institutions that work with education and thus opening new

opportunities for media education to be considered in future documents, strategies and official legislation, even though that was not the actual case.

Finally, the third research question will be answered with a set of recommendations of how the previously mentioned media practices, approaches and skills can be adapted into formal education. However, this research question is the existing framework for future research to continue directed toward incorporating the subversive potentials of media education into formal education. There were respondents who represent the formal education system within this research that do think that incorporation of similar modes of learning, working with media and debating and discussing of media inside formal education should go gradually, through the institutions of the system and they question that the institutions are ready to incorporate any of the given media models. Similarly to what Bhabha (1994) explains the third space is a rather metaphorical concept and that means that in order for the formal education to accept such changes it should go through major institutional deconstruction for the need to understand, accept and implement pedagogies related to media. These are some of the recommendations for incorporating media education within the formal education system derived from the theoretical analysis and the findings from this research:

1. Media education should always correspond to the on-going political, social and cultural processes in the country. As Jank and Gang (2019) point out media learning inside the third space can have multiple effects on positive representation of students with trauma through media and creating safe space among students. Such replication in the classrooms inside the formal education should always take the cultural, social and political contexts that the students deal with. Media should be used to empower students with fewer opportunities such as socially vulnerable students, students with disabilities and students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

   Following Jank and Gang's (2019) research, extra and inner curricular media activities should position those students in future

with them looking at the future positively without echoing their current struggles from their communities. This should mean that media will be the tool for students to challenge the politics, cultural norms and values through media.

2. Formal education should recognize the trending, modern and relevant media environments in which students reside. The definition for what is media content should be broadened and content such as: memes, guerilla videos or social media produced content should be treated with the same attention as the traditional media content.

   Researchers in North Macedonia critiqued the outdatedness of the media programs in the country and thus meaning that they do not represent the current and trending media content among young people (Sopar, Kupeva and Temenugova, 2016). It is of great importance to always be relevant in spaces where young people learn and this recommendation is based both on the findings of this research and previous research carried out in the country.

3. Inside and outside classroom media usage should be used for educational purposes and the means of digital technologies are advised to be used as a benefit and not as a treat to education. Kupiainen (2013) referred to a parallel third space being created when students are limited to using mobile phone in class and they go elsewhere to produce such content without breaking the normative social ordering inside the classroom. Mobile phones are still a delicate topic when it comes to Macedonian teachers and their incorporation into classrooms. Some platforms such as Kahoot provide teachers with the opportunity to let students use phones in the learning process.

   Following Kupiainen's observation, there would be inevitably a moment when students will go at their created third space as he refers and what is true is that teachers can not completely prevent

that, but they should show a level of understanding of the dynamic and changing types of learning that students prefer. A note of caution should be made when using digital technologies inside classroom though. Formal education should distinct the usage of ICT and media education and should go further than only using multimedia learning in classrooms. Contrary to the reluctance of most teachers to use technology with their students, there are teachers who perceive the usage of technologies as media education itself without paying attention to a holistic approach in the education process.

4. Developing media related skills such as debating, critical thinking or soft skills should be introduced in formal education as these skills would prove to be beneficial in the future levels of education or careers of the students

5. Media education should consider the real life examples of media that are corrupted, affiliated with government based agenda and should evaluate how their unprofessional work affects the development of democratic societies. What Choundhury and Share (2012) suggest is that students should be able to understand and question the origin of media messages with also focusing on economic structures and profit driven actors in the creation process. When they speak about the profit driven actors they do relate them with corporations, but what is true for North Macedonian context is that such questioning of the origin of media messages should be a link between the profit and the politics and in many cases how politicians are involved in funding media and orchestrating media messages, sometimes that meaning that corporations are included into that scheme.

6. Media education should promote the sense of media belonging among the students and to promote understanding that each student deserves equal attention of their problems and challenges in national media outlets.

7. The settings in which media is learned should be deformalized and the physical manifestation of learning should be changed (sitting in circles, studying in different places, closeness among teachers and students). Many answers by the respondents illustrated the physical aspects of their interactions inside the protest environments as important. They have also made comparisons that such organisation is learning is rare to see in the formal space.

Hetherington (1997) claims that the third spaces challenge the normative social orderings as such when organizing learning or he is talking about the normative ideas of how learning is organized. Ideas on physical organisation of learning should be equally taken into account from different actors that are influenced by the learning such as the teachers, students, parents and the school administration.

8. Media education should take in consideration alternative modes of learning such as peer learning in which students learn among themselves and discuss their media consumption practices. Those models can be a combination of what the students experienced in civil society organisations as current national research suggests that media literacy is most effective learned in this sector. Non-formal education as common framework of work for youth civil society organisations in Macedonia and wider in Europe can be taken as a model for incorporating media education or at least some methodologies which can be adapted to school environment.

9. The role of the teacher and the lecturers should be reinvented when media education is taken into account. Teachers and lecturers should mentor the students into the point of self-realization and self-awareness when media is being examined, instead of classical, formal and structured transfer of knowledge. Furthermore, teachers and lecturers should acknowledge the students as active contributors in the media knowledge creating process as Potter and McDougall (2017) described the knowledge construction inside the third space

as an exchange between those who have academic qualifications and the learners. It is certainly hard to change and reposition the role of the teacher and that would not only require intensive training for media education and developing methodologies for teaching media education, but also challenging the cultural norms in terms of what is the role of the teacher in the classroom and to what extent learners can be invited to contribute in the knowledge making process.

10. Institutions in charge of educational legislation should consider media education as an important concept of education into their strategies, national documents and programs. The creation of such documents should invite the experts, teachers, students and NGO representatives into the creation process and should consult foreign best practices in implementing media education within the formal institution of the system. According to a research by Bojarovski and Milenkovski (2016) civil society organisation proved to be the most influential factor for development of media literacy in the country. The creation of media education programs should take into account the civil society organisations who positioned themselves as successful in improving media literacy. Furthermore, the institutions should consider the opinion of students as an equally important contribution into the legislation mechanism as they do participate in both school schedules and NGO activities.

11. Media education should always promote democratic values, inclusion and improvement of human rights. Furthermore, media education should equip students with the necessary skills set in protecting democracies and should go alongside with the concept of active citizenship.

6 CONCLUSION

The demonstration of media education and the development of media literacy in places of resistance also qualified as third spaces is reality. Students transfer all their suppressed ideas, competencies and aspirations to work with media, produce media content and spark with their creativity and originality in challenging mainstream media and through creating their own media content. Perhaps the third space might seem strange or unconventional for replication of future media pedagogies into the system and here lays the key consideration that when something feels unconventional the formal system should lean into it and not avoid it.

This research was based on two specific case studies, the university occupation and setting up of a protest camp in North Macedonia in 2015. The aim of the research was to investigate: "How have protest camp and Faculty occupations (autonomous zones) in North Macedonia in 2015 enabled students to learn the fundaments of media literacy?", "What third space learning characteristics the protest camp and Faculty occupations in Macedonia have shown?" and "Is it possible to replicate any of the practices from the protest camp and autonomous zones into formal education and how?".

The findings from this research reveal that the media production while the protest environments were set up was on high and professional level. A production process for press releases, media denials, interviews and creating memes was always supported with appropriate analyse of the professionalism that the media work with. Moreover, advanced media concepts such as deconstructing of media narratives and reclaiming of media space were demonstrated through creative techniques such as humor or media kidnapping.

According to the main theories that this thesis is based on, the examined case studies did show characteristics of a third space. As researchers suggested, the third space should be a place where learning is transformed, the knowledge construction process is inclusive and the students feel as direct contributors and are actively involved in the knowledge construction process and into the decissions how learning is organized. The findings from the research show that at the protest spaces the students learned through non-convential learning modes, such as peer learning, non-formal learning and multimedia learning. Therefore, these learning methods and platforms show to be more efficient in acquiring not just the skills of tomorrow, but also the skills of today as young people in North Macedonia lack the acquiring of modern and trending skills through their formal education. The skills such as critical thinking, debating skills and soft skills are important for the young people to increase their media literacy as well as in other parts of their life.

The data and the interpretations from this master thesis have their own limitations as they refer to a specific setting and most of all specific political situation. What is being perceived as a main limitation is that the examined protest environments did have other primary focus for their functioning and that was not media education. This can be seen as a limitation when the media education practices and learning methodologies from this third space are considered to be replicated into the formal education system.

However, future implications into formal education are possible if the process is being carrying out thoroughly, institutionally and with involving multiple actors interested for the development of media education in North Macedonia. In the discussion part of the thesis, there are eleven recommendations that can be taken into account when considering the replication process. According to the theoretical contextualization of this thesis and the findings presented in the research, the recommendations suggest that the replication procedures should take in consideration many factors such as: cultural, social and political factors, the adaptability of the formal environments to accept practices from a third space, content and methodology related factors for media education and the importance of the replication process being carried out institutionally and with all important

actors being involved in the process. These factors open many new perspectives for future researchers to take into consideration when carrying out research about the replication of third space practices into formal education.

In conclusion, the third space can be a land of infinite possibilities, aspirations and learning practices in benefit of media education. My personal contribution in examining the third space as part of the collective contributions for development of media education in North Macedonia is important both from the position I have as researcher and also activist. When I personally took part in the student protests in 2015 I never imagined that 4 years after I will be scientifically treat those events as part of a master thesis. Even though the current political structures in North Macedonia are still not ready to implement all of the recommended steps for replicating the practices from the third space into the daily operations in the classrooms, I believe that through gradual and attention based approach their implementation in future are possible.

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8 APPENDIX 1

8.1 Selections of Dixit illustrations from interview with photo elicitation