

# Acceptance of European Values: Case Study Dr. Franjo Tuđman Croatian Defence Academy

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## Abstract

The paper analyses the acceptance of selected democratic values by the students at the first, second, and third levels of progressive and sequential officer education at Dr. Franjo Tuđman Croatian Defence Academy and the understanding of a democratic society. The degree of the students' acceptance of nineteen values derived from the values of the European democratic system is examined. It includes students' acceptance of multi-party democracy, legislature, economy, living standard, human and civil rights, autonomy, private, public, and state property, as well as co-existence. The data collected during the process of preparation of the doctoral dissertation titled "Intercultural curriculum of military schools" were used. The dissertation was defended in 2018 at the Faculty of humanities and social sciences, University of Zagreb. The survey found that the level of military education is related to the level of acceptance of European democratic values. Students at higher levels of officer education show a higher degree of acceptance of selected democratic values and have a more positive attitude toward them.

**Keywords:** democracy, democratic values, human rights, interculturalism, values

## 1. Introduction

Dr. Franjo Tuđman Croatian Defence Academy (CDA) is the only military institution of the Croatian Armed Forces and Ministry of Defence. Military education is an integral part of the military being a modern stakeholder of the democratic society. A modern military school and teaching put the students (soldiers, non-commissioned officers, officers) at the centre and train them to work in turbulent, fast, and ever-changing periods. In today's military environment, where new conflicts and the fifth generation of warfare<sup>1</sup> are already on the scene, the Croatian military must be able to respond quickly to all challenges in Croatia and abroad. Barić, Barišić, and Mareković (2003, 179) point out that military education has to be sensitive toward national, religious, and cultural differences. It must develop mediation and cooperation with local and international civilian structures. Croatian soldiers, non-commissioned officers, and officers should develop European values through civilian and military education. In that way, they will be able to perform all combat and non-combat tasks with excellence.

European humanistic, democratic, and civilian values determine the way our society develops. The paper examines the degree of students' acceptance of European democratic civilian values such as freedom and minority rights from the law enforcement and standard of living points of view among the people of different nationalities, preferences, religious and ideological beliefs, ethics, moral principles, and fundamental human rights. European humanistic, democratic, and civilian values determine the way our society develops. Akaliyski, Welzel, and Hien (2022, 573) state that "most of these values are commonly perceived as being rooted in Europe's Occidental civilizational heritage." Modern Europe was built on the conflicts and solutions brought by the two world wars. Following World War II, the rebuilding of newly formed states led to the formation of the new supranational community. The European Union was created in the 1950s and has since sought to promote peace, progress, and European values on the old continent. It stretches from the Atlantic to the Black Sea and is home to more than 500 million people (European Commission, 2015, 3). The EU is being built as a community of states that promote stability and peace, economic growth and development, as well as social cohesion based on human rights from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The economic and social development of Western

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<sup>1</sup> In short, the theory claims that the war developed through four generations: massive manpower (Napoleonic Wars), strong firepower (World War I), good maneuver (Blitzkrieg, "Deep Battle" - World War II), and the use of rebel forces in the area of operation (counter-terrorism) (Echevarria, 2005). Some military experts consider the fifth generation of war to be a combination of guerrilla warfare and barbarism in which criminal organizations, computer hackers, and terrorists play a significant role (Madsen, 2015).

Europe has brought new challenges such as large-scale migrations of the population seeking a better living standard. In addition to refugees fleeing the war, more and more people are coming to Europe from Asian and African economically underdeveloped countries. In 2001 and 2005, a wave of violence perpetrated by migrants erupted in the United Kingdom and France. Those migrants realized that the discrimination they were experiencing was impermanent and that democratic values had been betrayed. Therefore, there is a need to develop values that include peace, non-violence, democracy, freedom, tolerance, and respect for all forms of diversity among individuals and groups. Fundamental European values are not ambiguous and practically unenforceable, as stated by Mos (2020). The aim is to examine the degree of acceptance of European democratic values among officers and to determine the connection between the level of officer education and the degree of acceptance of those values. In line with this aim, the following task has been set: to determine whether the level of military education is linked to the acceptance of European democratic values such as minority rights and human freedoms.

Value as a philosophical concept appeared in the second half of the XIX. century as a substitute for the beautiful, the good, and the true (Gr. *kalokagathia*). The complexity of the term “value” stems from the diversity of numerous approaches. That is why there is no synonymous definition. Piršl i Vican (2004, 90) warn that observing the notion of value only from the aspect of philosophy, sociology, psychology, anthropology, and pedagogy would be very one-sided. The problem of value should be approached interdisciplinary. Although this term is widely used in everyday life, very few people understand its fundamental meaning. Chowdhury (2016) warns that value is not context-specific. For example, eastern people have different values from western values sets. Vukasović (1996, 60) points out that values give meaning to human life and are the drives of human action. Value is often defined as an implicit understanding, characteristic for a person or a group, of something desirable that further dictates the choice of modes, means, and goals of action (Kroeber i Kluckhohn, 1962, 21). On the other hand, Sen et al. (1985, 7) note that value consists of pleasure generators to the extent that pleasure reflects the power of value. Rokeach (1973, 5) recognizes value as the “enduring belief” that a specific mode of behaviour or existence is personally or socially more desirable than its counterpart. Values ensure human commitment as people behave according to their values. He also points out that they are inconsistent. Values that are important to adolescents are not as important to adults. Fromm (1969, 322) states that values as part of everyday life are most often expressed in terms such as freedom, justice, democracy, love, and productive action. According to some authors, value is related to one's judgment of which behaviours are desirable and which are not can in the context of accomplishing the goals (Likter, 1967, 47). Taking all of the above into account, we can agree with Kroeber i Kluckhohn's statement: “In short, values are primary” (1952, 103).

The term democracy comes from the Greek words *demos* (people) and *kratos* (rule). Accordingly, the simplest definition of democracy should be worded as follows: “Democracy is the form of government in which the people rule. Of course, this term has many meanings”. Matan (2014, 75) notes that the definitions of democracy are so different that it is sometimes questionable whether there is anything, other than the name itself, that connects them. Dahl warns that due to the universal acceptance of the notion of democracy without specific and limited meaning, incomprehensibility can occur because “(...) a term that can mean anything usually means nothing. And this is the problem of the notion of democracy. Today, it is not a term” (Dahl, 1989, 2). According to many authors, democracy contains the greatest values that a nation has, such as freedom, equality, human rights, welfare, and security (Dunn, 1979, 118; Hobson, 2008, 463). Democracy is basically a form of government through which citizens control elected government officials who act in their interest. Hendrix (2010, 3) points out that democracy is a political system in which citizens govern themselves or do so through others they have in some way chosen themselves. It is the opposite of autocracy and aristocracy, ruled by individuals or privileged groups. There are two basic types of democracy: liberal and participatory. In a liberal (representative) democracy, the people elect representatives in the elections through whom they exercise their democratic rights that belong to them. Dahl (2000, 89) notes that indirectly, MPs or officials gain control over political decisions. Held (1990, xiii) considers classical Athenian democracy in legislation and the judiciary to be direct (participatory) democracy, that is, one in which the entire male population over the age of 20 participated. Facchi and Riva (2021) point out that there have been attempts to confirm European values as a form of European cultural tradition. The way they are articulated provides a framework for a holistic Europe in which fundamental rights can be used for a good life.

## 2. Methodology of Empirical Research

### 2.1 Problem and Research Hypothesis

The main issue discussed in this paper is the acceptance of certain European values by students participating in officer education at Dr. Franjo Tuđman Croatian Defence Academy. An attempt was made to unambiguously define acceptance according to the nineteen values that represent European democracy, namely: multiparty democracy, legislative power, economy, the standard of living, human and civil rights, autonomy, private and public or state property, and coexistence. Acceptance was examined using the Righteous society survey questionnaire (adapted for the purposes of the survey using Hofstede's model of national culture analysis). The questionnaire was also used in the project named Genealogy

and transfer model of interculturalism, conducted at the Institute of Pedagogy, Faculty of humanities and social sciences, and the University of Zagreb from 1991 to 1995. The research starts from the hypothesis that the level of military education of military school students is related to the degree of acceptance of European democratic values.

## 2.2 Survey Respondents

The sample consisted of respondents who were regular progressive and sequential officer education students at the Croatian Defence Academy. For the implementation of the survey, a sample of students from military schools was included, namely those at levels I, II, and III of progressive and sequential officer education (basic officer education, advanced officer education, and inter-service command and staff education).

Table 1. Structure of respondents (level of military education)

| Level of officer education | Frequency  | Percentage   | Valid percentage | Cumulative percentage |
|----------------------------|------------|--------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Basic Officer Course       | 93         | 49,7         | 49,7             | 49,7                  |
| Advanced Officer Course    | 53         | 28,3         | 28,3             | 78,1                  |
| Command and Staff School   | 41         | 21,9         | 21,9             | 100,0                 |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>187</b> | <b>100,0</b> | <b>100,0</b>     |                       |

The survey included regular education students in the academic year 2013/2014. As can be seen in Table 1, the sample of officers at all three levels includes 187 respondents. Students in the inter-service Command and Staff School (41), Advanced Officer Course (53), and Basic Officer Course (93) were interviewed. No survey was conducted among the students at the fourth level of officer education, i.e. the attendees of the War College due to the small sample of respondents and students (14), some of whom were not the members of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia. Therefore, the authorization to carry out the surveys could not be obtained.

## 2.3 Measuring Instrument

For the survey, a part of the questionnaire called The Righteous Society from the Genealogy and transfer of the models of interculturalism project conducted at the Department of pedagogy of the Faculty of humanities and social sciences in Zagreb from 1991 to 1995, led by prof. dr. sc. Vlatko Previšić with researchers from the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb, was used. The questionnaire consists of several blocks of Likert-type statements with five degrees of intensity. In this way, the degree of acceptance of some values characteristic for European democracy among students of military schools was examined. To test the independent variables, questions were compiled that show socio-demographic variables such as gender, level of officer education, participation in peace support operations, encountering the notion of interculturalism, and attending military schools abroad. When measuring the degree of acceptance of European values, respondents were asked which, in their opinion, a good or right society is. The acceptance of nineteen values that represent European democracy was surveyed. The aim was to determine how the following variables are promoted in a democratic society.

- *Law enforcement and standard of living.* The statement: “A righteous society is one where citizens choose between at least two parties, where the principal authority is the law and not the will of the individual, where there is a market economy, where the most property is in private hands and where the standard of living is high.”

- *Values of European civil democracy.* The statement: “A righteous society is one in which there is the right of political leaders to compete for votes, where there are multiple sources of information, where elections are held and where there are organized interest groups.

- *Rights of minorities and human freedoms* among the people of different nationalities and with different preferences and religious, ideological and moral principles. The statement: “A righteous society is one in which people of different nationalities and with different religious, moral and ideological beliefs and preferences can live together”

- *Acceptance of fundamental human freedoms.* The statement: “A righteous society is one in which there are regional autonomies, freedom of establishment and association, freedom of expression, a right to vote and public services.

Variables determining democratic value of society were examined using a 5-point ordinal Likert scale with the following values: 1 – I completely agree; 2 – I mostly agree; 3 – I don't know, I haven't thought about it; 4 – I mostly disagree; 5 – I completely disagree.

## 2.4 Procedure

To conduct the survey, a three-step data collection procedure was carried out. Firstly, a trial run on the questionnaire was conducted on 15 attendees with five attendees from each level. The goal was to determine whether there were any ambiguities within the instrument, although it was used as a part of the Genealogy and transfer of the models of

interculturalism from 1991 till 1995. We decided to use this pilot testing because this instrument was used separately for the first time at the Croatian Defence Academy, the only educational institution of the Croatian Armed Forces. Secondly, the required authorizations were obtained from the commandant of the Croatian Defence Academy and the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia to survey three levels of officer education (Basic Officer Course, Advanced Officer Course, and inter-service Command and Staff School). The survey was carried out during the teaching hour after the classes. We complied with the requirements of the Code of ethics as the whole procedure was conducted voluntarily and anonymously. Upon reviewing all completed questionnaires, we went on to process the obtained data. Data processing was based on information obtained from the analysis of the completed questionnaires. After the variables were prepared and entered into the SPSS 22.0 statistical data processing package, descriptive statistics measures and a non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test were carried out.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Socio-demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents

The total number of respondents at all three education levels is 187. Of these, 93 attend the Basic Officer Course, 53 attend Advanced Officer Course, and 41 respondents attend the inter-service Command and Staff School. Most participants in all three levels of military education are students. The total number of female attendees of military schools at all three levels of military education is 33 (17.6%), of which 18 (9.6%) students undergo basic officer education, 12 (6.4%) receive the advanced officer education, and 3 (1, 6) participate in the integrated command and staff education. Also, given the level of officer education of the respondents (I, II, and III), we see that at a level I (basic officer education) there is 19.4% of female attendees; on level II (advanced officer education) there is 22, 6% of female attendees, and on level III (inter-service command and staff education) only 7.3% of the attendees are female (Table 2).

Table 2. Gender of students at levels of military education

| Level of officer education                   |       | Frequency | Percentage | Valid percentage | Cumulative percentage |
|--|-------|-----------|------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Level I<br>basic                             | Valid | female    | 18         | 19,4             | 19,4                  |
|  |       | male      | 75         | 80,6             | 100,0                 |
|  |       | Total     | 93         | 100,0            | 100,0                 |
| Level II<br>advanced                         | Valid | female    | 12         | 22,6             | 22,6                  |
|  |       | male      | 41         | 77,4             | 100,0                 |
|  |       | Total     | 53         | 100,0            | 100,0                 |
| Level III<br>Inter-service command and staff | Valid | female    | 3          | 7,3              | 7,3                   |
|  |       | male      | 38         | 92,7             | 100,0                 |
|  |       | Total     | 41         | 100,0            | 100,0                 |

It was also found that there are differences in the way the students at different officer education levels (I, II, and III) came into contact with the notion of interculturalism<sup>2</sup>. These findings were significant for the survey because the second part of the questionnaire examines the attendees' attitudes toward minority rights and human freedoms (Table 3).

The obtained results show that 29% of Basic Officer School students have never come into contact with the notion of interculturalism. Most attendees (52.7%) came into contact with this notion in secondary school or at university, and only 11% were presented with it during their officer education. Furthermore, 24.4% of advanced officer school students have never come into contact with the concept of interculturalism (45.3% of students came into contact with this concept in secondary school and at university, and only 12% during their officer education). A total of 24.4% of attendees of the inter-service Command and Staff School (Level III officer education) have never come into contact with the notion of interculturalism, while 48.8% of them have been presented with it in secondary school or at university, and 22% during their officer education. It can be concluded that the respondents first encountered the notion of interculturalism mainly in secondary school and at university. It was found that most students (36.6%) at the third level of officer education (inter-service Command and Staff School) participated in peace support operations, 26.4% of participants II. levels of officer education Advanced officer education and 17.2% of participants in Basic Officer Education.

<sup>2</sup> There are numerous definitions of interculturalism, and it is most often defined as action and process in which there is no simple giving and receiving. It denotes the philosophy of plural cultural coexistence, relationships and intertwining, understanding, tolerance, and respect for diverse cultures, religions, worldviews, traditions, and other characteristics that distinguish the minority from the majority (Previšić, 1996, 860; Mijatović, Previšić, and Žužul, 2000, 140).

Table 3. Attendees' first contact with the notion of interculturalism

| Level of military school                        |         | Frequency            | Percentage | Valid percentage | Cumulative percentage |       |
|---|---------|----------------------|------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------|
| Level I<br>basic                                | Valid   | no                   | 27         | 29,0             | 29,3                  | 29,3  |
|   |         | yes secondary school | 15         | 16,1             | 16,3                  | 45,7  |
|   |         | yes university       | 34         | 36,6             | 37,0                  | 82,6  |
|   |         | yes military school  | 11         | 11,8             | 12,0                  | 94,6  |
|   |         | other                | 5          | 5,4              | 5,4                   | 100,0 |
|   |         | Total                | 92         | 98,9             | 100,0                 |       |
|   | Missing | System               | 1          | 1,1              |                       |       |
| Total   |         | 93                   | 100,0      |                  |                       |       |
| Level II<br>advanced                            | Valid   | no                   | 13         | 24,5             | 24,5                  | 24,5  |
|   |         | yes secondary school | 10         | 18,9             | 18,9                  | 43,4  |
|   |         | yes university       | 14         | 26,4             | 26,4                  | 69,8  |
|   |         | yes military school  | 12         | 22,6             | 22,6                  | 92,5  |
|   |         | other                | 4          | 7,5              | 7,5                   | 100,0 |
|   |         | Total                | 53         | 100,0            | 100,0                 |       |
| Level III<br>Inter-service<br>command and staff | Valid   | no                   | 10         | 24,4             | 24,4                  | 24,4  |
|   |         | yes secondary school | 4          | 9,8              | 9,8                   | 34,1  |
|   |         | yes university       | 16         | 39,0             | 39,0                  | 73,2  |
|   |         | yes military school  | 9          | 22,0             | 22,0                  | 95,1  |
|   |         | other                | 2          | 4,9              | 4,9                   | 100,0 |
|   |         | Total                | 41         | 100,0            | 100,0                 |       |

As for the participation in peace support operations, most participants (36.6%) are students at the third level of officer education, while 26.4% of the students at the second level of officer education (Advanced officer school) and 17.2% of those in the Basic Officer School gave their contribution to peacekeeping operations around the world. Such results are expected because the third level of officer education is attended by officers with at least 15 years of work experience and the ranks of captain/lieutenant or major/lieutenant commander. Given their work experience, they had better opportunities and greater obligations to participate in peace support operations.

In our opinion, the increase in the number of participants who came into contact with the notion of interculturalism during the third level officer education (22%) happened because 36.6% of those personnel participated in peace support operations. They were presented with the notion of interculturalism during their preparation for the mission.

### 3.2 Interconnection Between the Level of Military Education and the Acceptance of Democratic Society Values

To determine whether there is a correlation between the level of officer education and the acceptance of democratic values, we used a scale for assessing democratic values that consists of 19 variables. The basic descriptive values of the scale are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive values of the scale assessing democratic society values

| Statement                                   | Min  | Max  | Arithmetic mean |                | Standard deviation | Variance | Asymmetric distribution |      | Distribution flatness |      |
|---|------|------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|----------|-------------------------|------|-----------------------|------|
|   | Stat | Stat | Stat            | Standard error | Stat               | Stat     | Stat                    | Stat | Stat                  | Stat |
| 19. there are organised interest groups     | 1    | 5    | <u>3,11</u>     | ,105           | 1,429              | 2,042    | -,101                   | ,178 | -1,362                | ,354 |
| 4. most of the property is in private hands | 1    | 5    | <u>2,88</u>     | ,081           | 1,106              | 1,223    | ,115                    | ,178 | -1,190                | ,354 |
| 11. there are regional autonomies           | 1    | 5    | 2,50            | ,087           | 1,178              | 1,388    | ,466                    | ,179 | -,789                 | ,356 |

|  |   |   |      |      |       |       |       |      |       |      |
|--|---|---|------|------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|------|
| 10. people with different moral principles can live together           | 1 | 5 | 2,41 | ,084 | 1,143 | 1,307 | ,506  | ,178 | -,807 | ,354 |
| 1. citizens choose between at least two parties                        | 1 | 5 | 2,24 | ,097 | 1,332 | 1,775 | ,956  | ,178 | -,270 | ,354 |
| 3. there is a market economy   | 1 | 5 | 1,95 | ,078 | 1,066 | 1,137 | 1,264 | ,178 | 1,147 | ,354 |
| 12. there is freedom of establishment and association in organizations | 1 | 5 | 1,85 | ,068 | ,924  | ,853  | 1,428 | ,178 | 2,389 | ,355 |
| 2. the principal authority is the law, not the will of the individual  | 1 | 5 | 1,78 | ,085 | 1,156 | 1,337 | 1,426 | ,178 | ,978  | ,355 |
| 5. the standard of living is high                                      | 1 | 5 | 1,77 | ,076 | 1,040 | 1,081 | 1,721 | ,178 | 2,565 | ,354 |
| 18. elections are held   | 1 | 5 | 1,74 | ,072 | ,988  | ,977  | 1,582 | ,178 | 2,340 | ,354 |
| 16. there is a right of political leaders to compete for the votes     | 1 | 5 | 1,71 | ,070 | ,958  | ,918  | 1,658 | ,178 | 2,670 | ,354 |
| 6. people of different nationalities can live together                 | 1 | 5 | 1,67 | ,069 | ,949  | ,900  | 1,777 | ,178 | 2,965 | ,354 |
| 9. people with different ideological beliefs can live together         | 1 | 5 | 1,66 | ,064 | ,873  | ,762  | 1,645 | ,178 | 3,025 | ,354 |
| 7. people with different religious beliefs can live together           | 1 | 5 | 1,62 | ,064 | ,874  | ,764  | 1,800 | ,178 | 3,520 | ,354 |
| 8. people with different preferences can live together                 | 1 | 5 | 1,55 | ,062 | ,850  | ,722  | 2,179 | ,178 | 5,514 | ,354 |
| 17. there are multiple sources of information                          | 1 | 5 | 1,51 | ,064 | ,870  | ,757  | 2,229 | ,178 | 5,311 | ,354 |
| 13. there is freedom of expression                                     | 1 | 5 | 1,50 | ,063 | ,857  | ,735  | 2,362 | ,178 | 6,069 | ,354 |
| 15. there is access to public services                                 | 1 | 5 | 1,40 | ,057 | ,779  | ,607  | 2,747 | ,178 | 8,968 | ,354 |
| 14. there is a right to vote   | 1 | 5 | 1,34 | ,058 | ,797  | ,635  | 3,043 | ,178 | 9,880 | ,354 |

As can be seen in Table 4, respondents (N =1 87) believe that the society which fully accepts democratic values of the European Union is one in which:

- there is a right to vote (AS = 1.34)
- there is an access to public services (AS =1,40) and
- there is freedom of expression (AS = 1.50).

The lowest rated was the existence of interest groups (AS = 3.11), privately owned property (AS = 2.88), and the existence of regional autonomies (AS = 2.50).

To test the differences between the subsamples (no military education N = 91; basic officer education N = 53; advanced officer education N = 41), the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was used because the precondition for the normality of distribution was not met. (Also, most items have pronounced leptokurtic distribution). The results of Kruskal-Wallis test are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Kruskal-Wallis test<sup>a,b</sup>

| <b>Righteous society is one in which:</b>                             | Chi-Square | df | Asymp. Sig.  |
|---|------------|----|--------------|
| 1. citizens choose between at least two parties                       | 5,327      | 2  | ,070         |
| 2. the principal authority is the law, not the will of the individual | 3,536      | 2  | ,171         |
| 3. there is a market economy  | 4,657      | 2  | ,097         |
| 4. most of the property is in private hands                           | 7,316      | 2  | <b>,026*</b> |
| 5. the standard of living is high                                     | 6,332      | 2  | <b>,042*</b> |
| 6. people of different nationalities can live together                | 1,239      | 2  | ,538         |
| 7. people with different religious beliefs can live together          | ,134       | 2  | ,935         |
| 8. people with different preferences can live together                | ,124       | 2  | ,940         |
| 9. people with different ideological beliefs can live together        | ,349       | 2  | ,840         |
| 10. people with different moral principles can live together          | ,161       | 2  | ,923         |
| 11. there are regional autonomies                                     | 1,187      | 2  | ,553         |

|  |       |   |      |
|--|-------|---|------|
| 12. there is freedom of establishment and association in organizations | 1,945 | 2 | ,378 |
| 13. there is freedom of expression                                     | 1,479 | 2 | ,477 |
| 14. there is a right to vote   | 2,943 | 2 | ,230 |
| 15. there is access to public services                                 | 4,327 | 2 | ,115 |
| 16. there is a right of political leaders to compete for the votes     | 4,018 | 2 | ,134 |
| 17. there are multiple sources of information                          | 3,297 | 2 | ,192 |
| 18. elections are held   | 2,350 | 2 | ,309 |
| 19. there are organised interest groups                                | ,488  | 2 | ,783 |
| a. Kruskal Wallis-Test   |       |   |      |
| b. Grouping Variable: completed military education                     |       |   |      |
| * p<0,05   |       |   |      |

As can be seen in Table 5, only on 2 of the 19 total variables (4 and 5) statistically significant differences on the respective subsamples were determined. The display of the average ranks on the mentioned variables is shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Display of average ranks

| The righteous society is one in which:      | Level of military education | N   | Mean Rank |
|---|-----------------------------|-----|-----------|
| 4. most of the property is in private hands | basic                       | 93  | 107,76    |
|   | advanced                    | 53  | 90,22     |
|   | command and staff           | 41  | 81,78     |
|   | Total                       | 187 |           |
| 5. the standard of living is high           | basic                       | 93  | 102,30    |
|   | advanced                    | 53  | 96,06     |
|   | command and staff           | 41  | 78,24     |
|   | Total                       | 187 |           |

From the average of the ranks it is evident (according to the direction of the scale) that those who attend the third level of military education (inter-service command and staff education) better understand the variables. A subsample chart for the statement that a righteous democratic society is one in which most of the property is in private hands.

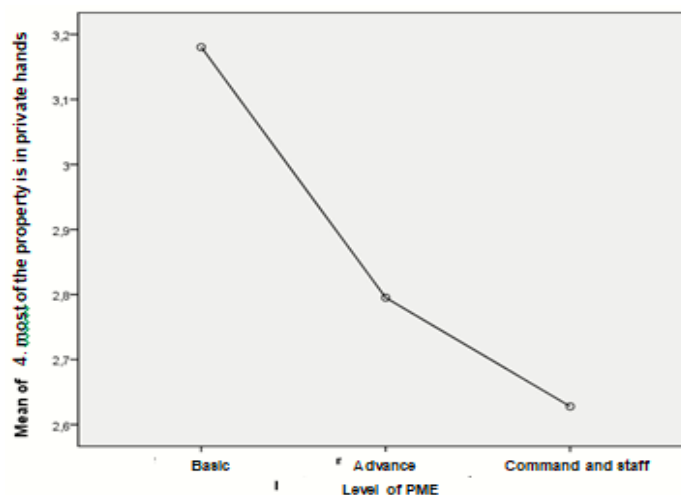


Figure 1. A subsample chart for the statement that a righteous democratic society is one in which most of the property is in private hands

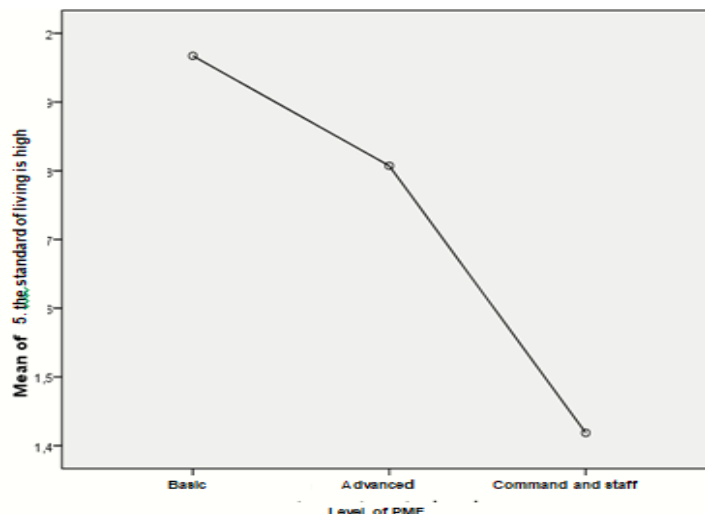


Figure 2. Subsample chart for the statement that a righteous democratic society is the one where the standard of living is high. As shown in Figures 1 and 2, respondents attending the integrated Command and Staff School assessed a higher degree of acceptance of European democratic values for the above statements. We must note that military education is conducted through four levels of progressive and sequential officer education. Prior to attending inter-service Command and Staff School, students had to complete Advanced Officer Course. The participants in the advanced officer education had to complete the Basic Officer Course.

In accordance with the obtained results, the hypothesis that the level of military education is related to the acceptance of European democratic values is partially dismissed, because out of nineteen statements, only two statements confirm it.

### 3.3 Democratic Values of Society From the Law Enforcement and Standard of Living Points of View

The first part of the questionnaire refers to society from the law enforcement and standard of living points of view and it contains nine statements (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 16, 17, 18, and 19). The first five statements (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) refer to living and working in a society in which citizens choose between at least two parties, in which the law rules, there is a market economy, the property is privately owned and the standard of living is high. Table 4 shows that students at military schools (N = 187) rated high a society from the law enforcement and standard of living points of view (AS = 1.77), where there is the rule of law (AS = 1.78), and where there is a market economy (AS = 1.95). They least estimated that it is a society where most of the property is in private hands (AS = 2.88) and where citizens choose between at least two parties (AS = 2.24).

Table 7. Society from the law enforcement and standard of living points of view

| Righteous society is one in which:                                    | Min  | Max  | Arithmetic mean |                | Standard deviation | Variance | Asymmetric distribution |       | Distribution flatness |       |
|---|------|------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|----------|-------------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|
|   | Stat | Stat | Stat            | Standard error | Stat               | Stat     | Stat                    | Stat  | Stat                  | Stat  |
| 1. citizens choose between at least two parties                       | 1    | 5    | 2,24            | 0,097          | 1,332              | 1,775    | 0,956                   | 0,178 | -0,27                 | 0,354 |
| 2. the principal authority is the law, not the will of the individual | 1    | 5    | 1,78            | 0,085          | 1,156              | 1,337    | 1,426                   | 0,178 | 0,978                 | 0,355 |
| 3. there is a market economy  | 1    | 5    | 1,95            | 0,078          | 1,066              | 1,137    | 1,264                   | 0,178 | 1,147                 | 0,354 |
| 4. most of the property is in private hands                           | 1    | 5    | <u>2,88</u>     | 0,081          | 1,106              | 1,223    | 0,115                   | 0,178 | -1,19                 | 0,354 |
| 5. the standard of living is high                                     | 1    | 5    | <u>1,77</u>     | 0,076          | 1,04               | 1,081    | 1,721                   | 0,178 | 2,565                 | 0,354 |

Table 7 shows that students at all three levels of military education believe that a righteous democratic society is one where the standard of living is high and where the rule of law and not of the individual, prevails. Benić states that



democracies must promote efficiency, equality, and stability, and that they should carefully incorporate some of the elements of social sensitivity into the system “(...) in order to direct economic development and redistribution of national income through market-based economic policy. In this way, employment would be promoted, poverty eradicated, and health care and schooling opportunities improved. All of this would inevitably result in general well-being” (Benić, 2012, 852). A democratic society being one in which most of the property is in private hands was ranked very low by the students participating in military education, which can be explained by the unpleasant experience of privatization which was carried out during the Homeland War. The statement saying that a democratic society is one in which citizens choose between at least two parties was ranked lowest.

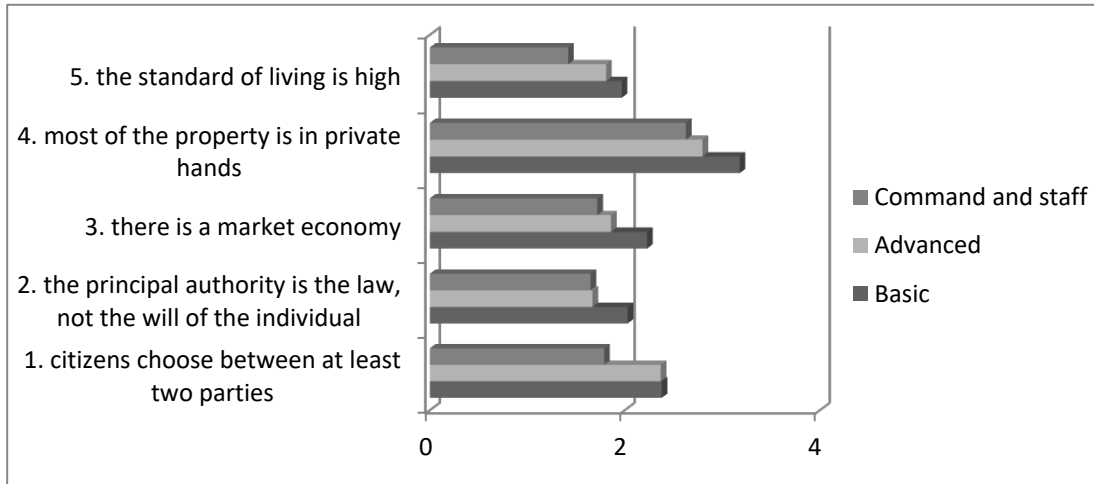


Figure 3. Society from the law enforcement and standard of living points of view

Figure 3 shows that students in the inter-service Command and Staff School think that a democratic society is where the standard of living is high, while the students in Basic and Advanced Officer Schools believe that a democratic society is where the principal authority is the law, not the will of the individual. Students in all schools think that it is not important that most of the property is in private hands in a democratic society. Bendeković (2000, 89) points out that there are negative political, social, and economic attitudes in society due to the fact that the objectives of privatization have not been achieved. Statements about democratic society being one in which there is a market economy and one in which citizens choose between at least two parties are assessed equally by the students at all levels of officer education.

### 3.4 Society From the Point of View of Accepting the Values of European Civil Democracy

Four statements (16, 17, 18, 19) refer to the acceptance of the values of European civil democracy. Table 5 shows that the respondents (N = 187) believe that the society which accepts the standard values of European civil democracy is one in which there are multiple sources of information (AS = 1.51), the right of political leaders to compete for votes (AS = 1.71), and in which elections are held (AS = 1.74). The society in which there are organized interest groups (AS = 3.11) was the lowest-rated one.

Table 5 shows that students at all three levels of military education believe that a righteous democratic society is one where there are multiple sources of information. Bedeković emphasizes that: “The free flow of information on a global level enables a virtual presence and direct participation in various events, regardless of which part of the world they take place in” (Bedeković, 2013, 81). The acceptance of the statement by the students at all three levels of officer education that a righteous democratic society is one where there are multiple sources of information might be the result of the fact that having timely and accurate information enables the officers to carry out their tasks and obtain the desired results.

Table 8. Society from the point of view of accepting the values of European civil democracy

| RIGHTEOUS SOCIETY IS ONE IN WHICH:                                 | Min  | Max  | Arithmetic mean |                | Standard deviation | Variance | Asymmetric distribution |       | Distribution flatness |       |
|--|------|------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|----------|-------------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|
|  | Stat | Stat | Stat            | Standard error | Stat               | Stat     | Stat                    | Stat  | Stat                  | Stat  |
| 16. there is a right of political leaders to compete for the votes | 1    | 5    | 1,71            | 0,07           | 0,958              | 0,918    | 1,658                   | 0,178 | 2,67                  | 0,354 |

|   |   |   |             |       |       |       |        |       |        |       |
|---|---|---|-------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|
| 17. there are multiple sources of information | 1 | 5 | <u>1,51</u> | 0,064 | 0,87  | 0,757 | 2,229  | 0,178 | 5,311  | 0,354 |
| 18. elections are held                        | 1 | 5 | 1,74        | 0,072 | 0,988 | 0,977 | 1,582  | 0,178 | 2,34   | 0,354 |
| 19. there are organised interest groups       | 1 | 5 | <u>3,11</u> | 0,105 | 1,429 | 2,042 | -0,101 | 0,178 | -1,362 | 0,354 |

Dalton (2006, 1) explains that citizens whose occupation is based on duty (soldiers, police officers) behave loyally and are subordinate to political authority. A society that is righteous because there are organized interest groups was the lowest-rated concept. “Not all citizens in a society belong to one group but many belong to different groups at the same time no matter how loose these ties are (e.g. they are members of the union and a Catholic parish)” (Offe, 2013, 22). The non-acceptance of the belief that a democratic society is one in which there are interest groups can be explained by the fact that, according to the Act on Service in the CAF, members of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia are not allowed to be organized into trade unions or political groups.

“Restrictions on the formation of trade unions and engagement in political activities

#### Article 15

- (1) Active military personnel are not allowed to organize a trade union.
- (2) Active military personnel are not allowed to call and organize a strike.
- (3) Military persons, officers, and employees are not allowed to act politically in the Armed Forces.
- (4) Active military persons are not allowed to be members of political parties or to run in the representative body of citizens, units of local or regional self-government, or the Croatian Parliament.” *Act on service in the Croatian Armed Forces* (Official Gazette, 73/2013, 75/2015, 50/2016, 30/2018, 30/2018, 125/2019).

The results of descriptive statistics (Figure 4) show that respondents believe that a democratic society is one where there are multiple sources of information. Interestingly, there are no significant differences in the levels of officer education in these claims. All respondents assessed a democratic society by the same statements. Students at all levels of officer education assessed that organizing in interest groups is not important for a democratic society. They give little preference to multiple sources of information over the holding of elections and the right of political leaders to run for the vote. Democratic values of society in terms of exercising minority rights and human freedoms.

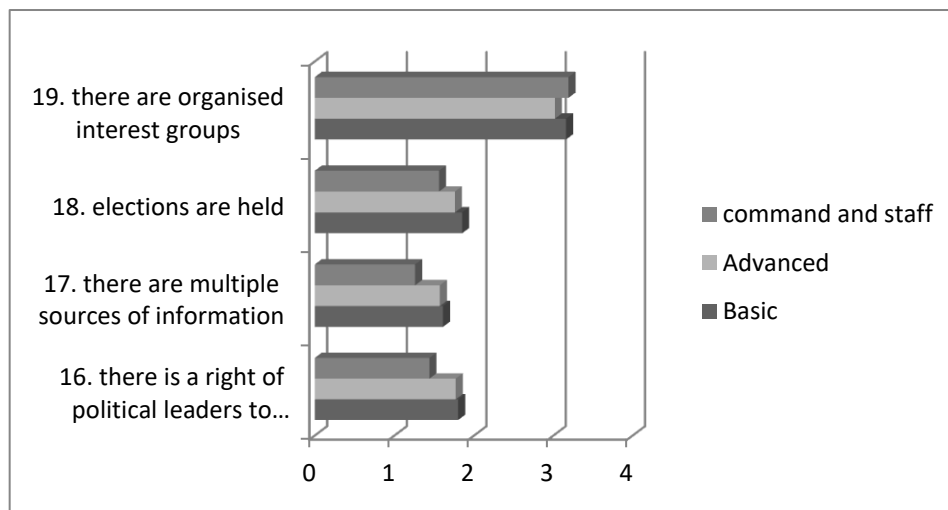


Figure 4. Society from the point of view of accepting the values of European civil democracy

### 3.5 Society in Terms of Exercising Minority Rights and Human Freedoms Among People of Different Nationalities, Preferences, Religions and Ideological Beliefs, as Well as Moral Principles

The third part refers to the value of society in terms of exercising minority rights and human freedoms as described by five items (6, 7, 8, 9, and 10). In other words, it refers to the acceptance of values and showing tolerance towards people of different nationalities, with different preferences, religious and ideological beliefs, and moral principles. From Table 9 it is clear that participants in military education (N = 187) believe that the society exercising tolerance toward people of different nationalities and with different preferences, religious and ideological beliefs, and moral principles is one where people of different preferences (AS = 1.55), religious beliefs (AS = 1.62), ideological beliefs (AS = 1.66), as well as

people of different nationalities (AS = 1.67) can live together. The society in which people with different moral principles can live together (AS = 2.41) was ranked the lowest.

As can be seen in Table 9, the respondents believe that a democratic society is one in which people with different preferences (AS = 1.55), religious beliefs (AS = 1.62), and ideological beliefs (AS = 1.66,) and those of different nationalities can live together (AS = 1.67). The society in which people with different moral principles can live together (AS = 2.41) was ranked the lowest.

Table 9. Society and its attitude toward minority rights and human freedoms

| RIGHTEOUS SOCIETY IS ONE IN WHICH...                           | Min  | Max  | Arithmetic mean |                | Standard deviation | Variance | Asymmetric distribution |                | Distribution flatness |                |
|--|------|------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|----------|-------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|  | Stat | Stat | Stat            | Standard error | Stat               | Stat     | Stat                    | Standard error | Stat                  | Standard error |
| 6. members of different nationalities can live together        | 1    | 5    | 1,67            | 0,069          | 0,949              | 0,9      | 1,777                   | 0,178          | 2,965                 | 0,354          |
| 7. members with different religious beliefs can live together  | 1    | 5    | <u>1,62</u>     | 0,064          | 0,874              | 0,764    | 1,8                     | 0,178          | 3,52                  | 0,354          |
| 8. people with different preferences can live together         | 1    | 5    | 1,55            | 0,062          | 0,85               | 0,722    | 2,179                   | 0,178          | 5,514                 | 0,354          |
| 9. people with different ideological beliefs can live together | 1    | 5    | 1,66            | 0,064          | 0,873              | 0,762    | 1,645                   | 0,178          | 3,025                 | 0,354          |
| 10. people with different moral principles can live together   | 1    | 5    | <u>2,41</u>     | 0,084          | 1,143              | 1,307    | 0,506                   | 0,178          | -0,807                | 0,354          |

According to the results, military school students do not see morality as a virtue that could influence a righteous democratic society. Such a result can be explained by the fact that the respondents consider morality a characteristic that makes us human. It should not be linked to a democratic society. Jukić points out that "(...) kindness, purity, truthfulness, justice, honesty, and humility make us human. Our humanity is not determined solely by biological or social factors" (Jukić, 2013, 405).

Figure 5 shows a descriptive statistics of society ranked according to its promotion of minority rights, human freedoms, and its stance towards people with different preferences, religious and ideological beliefs, and moral principles at different levels of officer education. The results of descriptive statistics show that respondents from all schools believe that a democratic society is one where people of different preferences can live together.

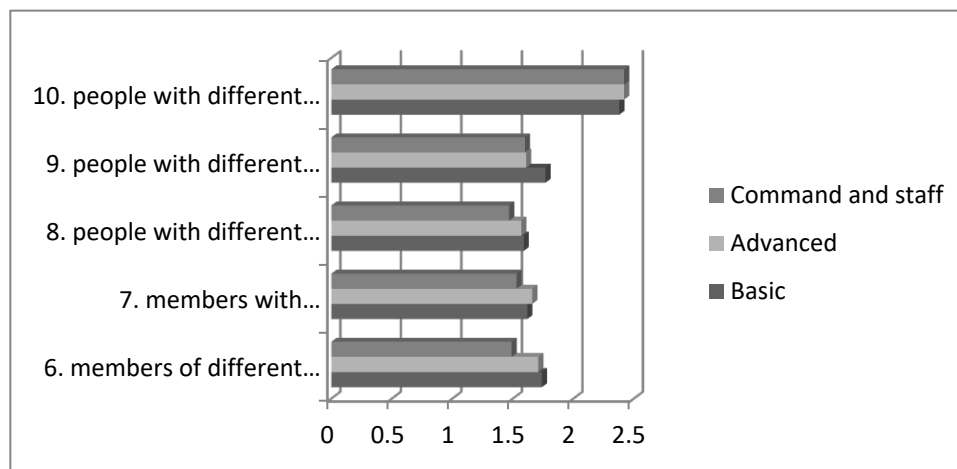


Figure 5. Minority rights and human freedoms exercised toward the people of different nationalities, and with different preferences, religious and ideological beliefs, as well as different moral principles

At three levels of officer education, there is an insignificant difference in ranking the importance of people with different preferences, religious and ideological beliefs living together. Attendees of the inter-service Command and Staff School stated that in a democratic society, people of different nationalities and with different preferences, religious and ideological beliefs should be able to live together. Students attending the Advanced Officer Course believe that a democratic society is one in which people with different preferences, ideological and religious beliefs, and only then –

nationalities, can live together. Students attending the Basic Officer Course believe that a democratic society is one where people of different nationalities and with different preferences, religious and ideological beliefs can live together. All respondents consider it irrelevant for a democratic society to be one where people with different moral principles can live together.

3.6 Society in Terms of Exercising Fundamental Human Freedoms

The other five items (11, 12, 13, 14, and 15) refer to fundamental human freedoms, and the very understanding of those freedoms contributes to the understanding of the society's democratic culture. Table 10 shows that, concerning the stance the society has adopted towards the fundamental human freedoms, students in military schools (N = 187) believe that a righteous society is one where there is a right to vote (AS = 1.34), the availability of public services (AS = 1, 4), freedom of expression (AS = 1.5) and freedom of association (AS = 1.85). A democratic society in which there are regional autonomies (AS = 2.5) was ranked the lowest. As a member of the European Union, Croatia is known for observing the principles that have been in force in the EU since 1 July 2013. "Member States are required to promote and protect the principles of pluralistic and parliamentary democracy, the indivisibility and universality of human rights, the rule of law, and a common heritage enriched with diversity, as preconditions for world security" (Spajić-Vrkaš, 1999, 585).

Table 10. Society in terms of exercising fundamental human freedoms

| RIGHTEOUS SOCIETY IS ONE IN WHICH:                                     | Min  | Max  | Arithmetic mean |                | Standard deviation | Variance | Asymmetric distribution |       | Distribution flatness |       |
|--|------|------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|----------|-------------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|
|  | Stat | Stat | Stat            | Standard error | Stat               | Stat     | Stat                    | Stat  | Stat                  | Stat  |
| 11. there are regional autonomies                                      | 1    | 5    | <u>2,5</u>      | 0,087          | 1,178              | 1,388    | 0,466                   | 0,179 | -0,789                | 0,356 |
| 12. there is freedom of establishment and association in organizations | 1    | 5    | 1,85            | 0,068          | 0,924              | 0,853    | 1,428                   | 0,178 | 2,389                 | 0,355 |
| 13. there is freedom of expression                                     | 1    | 5    | 1,5             | 0,063          | 0,857              | 0,735    | 2,362                   | 0,178 | 6,069                 | 0,354 |
| 14. there is a right to vote   | 1    | 5    | <u>1,34</u>     | 0,058          | 0,797              | 0,635    | 3,043                   | 0,178 | 9,88                  | 0,354 |
| 15. there is access to public services                                 | 1    | 5    | 1,4             | 0,057          | 0,779              | 0,607    | 2,747                   | 0,178 | 8,968                 | 0,354 |

It is clear that military school students understand fundamental democratic principles and values (e.g., freedom of expression, a right to vote, access to public services), but their knowledge is somewhat general. Spajić-Vrkaš, Rajković, and Izvor emphasize that "(...) it is now generally accepted that civic ability to build democracy cannot be reduced only to information, or knowledge, but must include skills, values, attitudes, and patterns of behaviour" (Spajić-Vrkaš, Rajković, and Izvor, 2014, p. 13). Therefore, it is necessary to enable the attendees of military schools to acquire competencies and systematic knowledge of democratic freedoms and democracy itself without exceptions. In a democratic society, military school students should gain and strengthen their competencies for democracy through schooling, serving in their units, and their families.

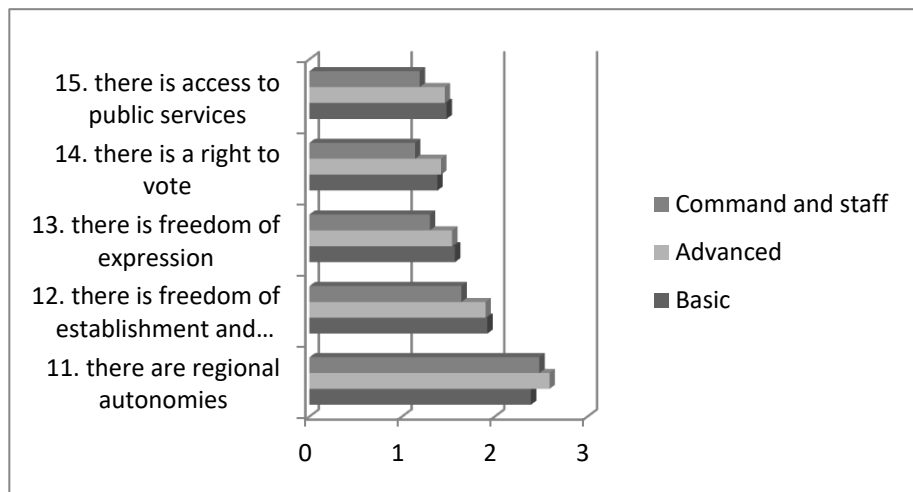


Figure 6. Society in terms of exercising fundamental human freedoms

Figure 6 shows the ranking of society at all levels of officer education in terms of exercising fundamental human rights. Attendees of all schools believe that a democratic society is one where there is a right to vote. It is interesting that there are no significant differences in the claims among the students at military schools because everyone assessed that regional autonomy is not important for a democratic society.

Regarding the exercise of fundamental human freedoms, there is an insignificant difference in the way students at all three levels of officer education ranked a righteous society. All respondents gave the same answers as to what is important for a democratic society in terms of exercising fundamental human freedoms – that there is a right to vote, access to public services, freedom of expression, and freedom of establishment and association. Students at all three levels of officer education believe that the existence of regional autonomies is the least important for society in terms of exercising fundamental human freedoms. This can be most easily explained by the fact that in the Republic of Croatia there are no classical autonomies but all citizens in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette 56/1990, 135/1997, 08/1998, 113/2000, 124/2000, 28/2001, 41/2001, 55/2001, 76/2010, 85/2010, 05/2014) have equal rights. Deren-Antoljak (1991, 109) points out that “(...) observing the rights and peculiarities of certain minorities, i.e. the need to grant special autonomous status to certain nationalities and other ethnic, cultural and linguistic communities are the causes and goals of establishing regional autonomy”.

#### 4. Conclusion

The data obtained from the research show that this is a generation of military school students who first came into contact with the notion of interculturalism in civilian education, especially at universities (on average 34%). Some respondents (22%) first came into contact with the concept of interculturalism during their military education. As far as their participation in peace support operations is concerned, it is clear that 26% of respondents have been deployed outside the Republic of Croatia at least once in their careers.

It is also evident that respondents attending the inter-service Command and Staff Schools expressed a higher degree of acceptance of the European society's democratic value for the statements:

- a) a righteous society is one in which most of the property is in the right hands and
- b) a righteous society is one in which the standard of living is high.

According to the obtained results, the hypothesis that the level of military education is related to the acceptance of democratic values of European society among students of military schools is partially rejected, because out of nineteen statements, only the two above-mentioned confirm this.

The Democratic Value Survey identified four factors from the law enforcement and standard of living points of view. The first factor is *The righteous society in terms of exercising the rights of minorities and human freedoms among people of different nationalities, with different preferences, and moral and ideological beliefs*. From the obtained results, it is clear that the participants in military education believe that a righteous democratic society is one where the standard of living is high and where there is the rule of law and not of individuals. Respondents do not believe that a democratic society is one in which most of the property is in private hands, which can be explained by the unpleasant experience of privatization in our country.

The second factor is *The righteous society from the point of view of accepting the values of European civil democracy*. Participants in military education believe that a righteous democratic society is one where there are multiple sources of information. This can also be explained by the fact that, as active military personnel, they know that the accomplishment of tasks or the achievement of a higher goal depends on acquiring the right information. The non-acceptance of the claim that a democratic society is one in which there are interest groups can be explained by the fact that members of the Croatian Armed Forces are not allowed to join trade unions or seek membership in political parties under the Croatian Act on Service in the Croatian Armed Forces.

The third factor is *The right society in terms of exercising the rights of minorities and human freedoms among people of different nationalities, with different preferences, religious and ideological beliefs, and moral principles*. The respondents believe that the least important requirement for a righteous society is enabling the people with different moral principles to live together. According to the obtained results, they do not consider morality to be a virtue that can influence a righteous democratic society. The attendees of all military schools believe that a righteous democratic society is one where people with different preferences can live together. High arithmetic mean was obtained for the following statements:

- a) A righteous society is one in which people of different nationalities can live together.
- b) A righteous society is one in which people with different religious beliefs can live together.
- c) A righteous society is one in which people with different preferences can live together.
- d) A righteous society is one in which people with different ideological beliefs can live together. Therefore, it can be

concluded that the respondents have significant predispositions for interculturalism. There is a small difference in rating the coexistence of people of different nationalities and those who have different religious and ideological beliefs.

The fourth factor is *The righteous society in terms of exercising fundamental human freedoms*. The results show that respondents understand basic democratic principles and values (e.g. freedom of expression, a right to vote, access to public services), but their knowledge is somewhat general. Therefore, they need to systematically acquire competencies and knowledge about democratic freedoms and democracy itself. Concerning society's stance on fundamental human freedoms, one in which there is a right to vote was rated highest. All respondents rated the righteous society using the same statements. Students at all levels believe that regional autonomy is not important for a righteous society. It is especially important to emphasize that the analysis of the arithmetic mean of the answers shows that students of military schools have an extremely positive attitude toward European democracy and that the obtained results confirm a high degree of agreement with democratic values. Following the obtained results, it can be argued that there is a significant degree of tolerance and readiness of military school students to get actively involved in a democratic society. In addition, it is evident that the curriculum of officer schools significantly affects the development of European values.

The paper examines the degree of acceptance of European values by students at all three levels of officer education from the law enforcement and standard of living points of view, namely the minority rights and human freedoms among people of different nationalities, with different preferences, religious and ideological beliefs, and moral principles. The scientific contribution is seen in a new perspective on rating the stances on democratic values in the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia and their components. Based on the obtained results, new research can be conducted with other respondents, such as cadets, military school teachers, other officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers. The results obtained by assessing the degree of acceptance of European values by students at three levels of officer education are probably not the result of the respondents' cognitive knowledge, but of several factors, such as the influence of mass media, previous education, life and work experience, family upbringing and Croatia's accession to the European Union.

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