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MACEDONIAN ELECTORAL SYSTEM FOR ELECTION OF MPS: A STABILIZER OR A CREATOR OF THE POLITICAL CRISES IN THE MACEDONIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM?

Abstract

The electoral system is one of the basic subsystems of each political system. Having that in mind, it is easily noticeable that the legal and political theory is filled with authors, who analyse the influence of the electoral system over the functioning of the political system. In this regard, it is entirely expected that the electoral system for election of the Macedonian MPs affects the whole functioning of the Macedonian political system, as well. Starting from 2002, up until present day, for elections of Macedonian MPs, the proportional electoral model is used with the application of the D'Hondt method and closed electoral lists when choosing the Macedonian MPs. Created in this way, although it is a proportional electoral model, which according to all rules has the capacity to fragment the party system in one society, still in the end, the impression is that the predicted solutions contribute to stabilization of the Macedonian party system and functionality of the Macedonian political system. However, since 2008, up until present day, the Macedonian society quite often was affected by political crises, which ultimately led to early parliamentary elections. Within the last political crisis, related to the wiretapped telephone conversations, the opinion that reigned the Macedonian society was that the electoral system for election of MPs contributes to development of authoritarian tendencies in the Macedonian society. The thing that was mostly emphasized towards such a contribution is the bigger chance for success of the bigger parties, and not the smaller ones, as well as the influence of the closed electoral lists over the power of the political leaders. Thus, in the period of the political crisis, different actors had many different ideas to change the electoral system for parliamentary election. Certain political actors advocated a return to the majority electoral model, others, on the other hand, advocated using the proportional electoral model, but with open electoral lists or, by creating the whole territory of the country one constituency. In that direction, this paper will try to find an answer whether the current electoral system for parliamentary election contributes or has contributed for the development of political crises or, such political crises are a result of other matters. Moreover, this paper will try to give an answer to whether the

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advocated solutions during the political crisis could contribute to creation of more democratic and more functional political system.

Key words: *politics, political system, democracy, elections, electoral system, political parties.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Since 1991, Macedonian people, in spite of having for the first time its own independent country, they also for the first time began building a democratic political system. However, the overall impression is that Macedonian society even after 28 years is still far from creating a functional and stable democratic political system. There are a number of factors and reasons, which influence such reality, but in the legal-political theory, it is often emphasized that precisely the creation and functioning of an electoral system has its own influence over the functioning of one political system. In this regard, the position which is often found in theory is that the electoral system has a big role in the character and the development of certain political system.[1] Additionally, Giovanni Sartori in his famous work Comparative constitutional engineering clearly stresses that not only are the electoral systems the most manipulative instrument of politics, but they affect the shaping of the party system and the determination of the representation.[2]

Having all that in mind, we can freely say that the creation of the democratic political system in Republic of Macedonia started in 1990 with implementing multi-party elections by using majority electoral model (two – round system). Although there were many criticisms on behalf of the functioning of this electoral model in Republic of Macedonia, still the second parliamentary elections in Republic of Macedonia in 1994 were organized according to the rules of the same electoral model. The second parliamentarian elections in Macedonia have completely showed the weaknesses of the majority electoral system in light of the creation of unreal image of the mood of the citizens. Thus, on these elections the Alliance for Macedonia led by SDSM (Social Democratic Union of Macedonia) with 30 % of the citizens' votes won almost 80 % of the parliamentary mandates.[3] Under the influence of these figures, in Republic of Macedonia there was pressure for the third parliamentary elections to be organized under the rules of another electoral model. After long thinking, it was decided that the parallel electoral model was to be used for the third parliamentary elections in Republic of Macedonia implemented in 1998. Still, the use of the parallel electoral model in Republic of Macedonia for the 1998 parliamentary elections quickly revealed serious disadvantages and opened the door for another change in the electoral model for election of Macedonian MPs. Based on previous experiences, the Macedonian political elites decided that the fourth parliamentary elections in 2002 should be organized according to the proportional electoral model. That was also the last change of electoral model for parliamentary elections and the proportional electoral model accepted for the 2002 elections was applied in all subsequent electoral cycles for election of Macedonian MPs (2006, 2008, 2011, 2014 and 2016).

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[1] Milan Matic i Milan Podunavac, *Politicki sistem: Teoriji I Principe* (Beograd: Fakultet Politickih Nauka, 2007), 335.

[2] Џовани Сартори, *Компаративен уставен инженеринг* (Скопје: Табернакул, 2009), 14.

[3] Саво Климовски, Рената Дескоска и Тања Каракамишева, *Политички систем* (Скопје: Просветно дело, 2009), 386.

II. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROPORTIONAL ELECTORAL MODEL AND ITS APPLICATION IN THE MACEDONIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

The large number of lost votes, the elimination of small political parties and favoring two major political parties, as well as the possibility to show unrealistic image of the citizens' mood were the main reasons for criticizing the majority electoral models and the search for proportional electoral models. The first pressures for electoral reform and practicing the proportional electoral models can be seen in Belgium and Switzerland during the XIX century.[4] These are divided and segmented societies, in which the unrealistic image for the citizens' mood and the suppression of the small political parties by the electoral model poses danger for the political system and for the survival of one segmented country. In the divided and segmented societies, the creation of an electoral model that within the parliament will reflect the citizens' mood and will give a fair chance to all political parties regardless of their size is especially important. In this respect, the proportional electoral models enable adequate representation of all political parties that exist in the system, according to their real influence in it.[5] The main objective of the proportional electoral models is proportional allocation of the number of votes into mandates. This will help eliminate the danger of creating unrealistic image of the citizens' mood. Also will create room in the parliament for more political parties to enter and will reduce the number of lost votes. However, like all electoral models, the proportional electoral models possess certain disadvantages. There are a number of disadvantages of the proportional electoral models,[6] but in the interest of the subject of this paper, the attention will be drawn to two basic issues. Primarily, giving a chance to all political parties, including the small political parties, could lead to fragmentation of the party system because it opens the opportunity for many political parties to enter the parliament. Such fragmentation of the party system can easily cause difficulties in the process of formation of government, and further if the government is formed then the likelihood is that such government will be unstable because it will depend on the support of many political parties. Practically, the formation and the stability of the government in these conditions will depend on greater number of (mostly) small political parties, which can use that reality for political blackmail. Additionally, large number of political parties in the parliament will mean that the ruling majority in it is composed of many political parties. Such reality could lead to blockage and inefficiency of the parliament, as well as incapability for implementing coherent governmental policies.[7] All that, in the end may lead to completely blocked and inefficient political system. A

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[4] David M. Farrel, *Electoral Systems: A comparative Introduction* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 70

[5] Климовски, Дескоска и Каракамишева, *Политички систем,* 380.

[6] 1.Reducing the direct contact of the voters with the proposed candidates. 2. Reducing the responsibility and accountability of the elected candidates in front of their voters. 3. Opportunity for the radical and extreme political parties to enter the parliament. 4. Loyalty of the elected candidates to the political party and the party leader and not to the voters. 5. A more complicated way of calculating the parliamentary mandates (it is harder for the voters to understand how these electoral models function in reality)

[7] Andrew Reynolds, Ben Reilly and Andrew Ellis, *Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook* (Stockholm: Trydells Tryckeri AB, 2008), 59.

condition that seems especially dangerous for societies in which the process of democratic consolidation is not yet completed.

However, as in many other cases, in this story, Macedonian case is an exception to the general characteristics and effects of the proportional electoral models. Although in the Macedonian case, since the 2002 elections up until present day the Macedonian MPs are elected through proportional electoral model it seems that the Macedonian society does not have problems related to instability of governments and inefficiency of parliament. If we make a simple overview, then we can easily notice that in almost all cases in Macedonian society after 2002, the governments were created within a timeline shorter than two months after the parliamentary elections.[8] Only after the 2016 elections, Macedonian society was supposed to wait almost 6 months for a new government, but that situation was a result of other reasons, and not the electoral model. That tells us that in the Macedonian political system, after 2002 the process of forming a government, after completing the parliamentary elections, took place relatively easy and quickly. Additionally, in the whole period after 2002, in no case the Macedonian parliament has voted no confidence of the Macedonian government. So far, in only one case, the Macedonian government has not received confidence by the Macedonian parliament, but that has happened at the beginning of the transition in 1992 when the Parliament of Republic of Macedonia decided not to support the expert government from that time, which in the end was substituted with political government.[9] Thus, according to everything aforementioned we can freely conclude that the difficulty in forming a government, as well as its instability is practically unknown matter for the Macedonian political system, although the MPs are being elected through proportional electoral model. Even quite the opposite. In the Macedonian case, the impression is that the governments are too stable and that the parliament is subordinate to the interests of the government. Often in free speech, and in theory as well, one can find the opinion that the Macedonian parliaments represents only a voting machine of the Macedonian governments.[10] Data show that in Macedonian parliament almost every law is adopted on the proposal of the government,[11] and when adopting the laws in the parliament one can easily feel the spirit of fast fingers because often it takes only 35 to 40 seconds from the moment of reading the title of the law until its actual adoption.[12] In this respect, in the Macedonian case, in addition to the presence of stable governments we can also easily come to the conclusion that using the proportional electoral model does not contribute to inefficient parliaments. Having that in mind, the question is, why the Macedonian experience with the

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[8] **2002** (parliamentary election 15.09 – government 01.11), **2006** (parliamentary elections 05.07 – government 28.08), **2008** (parliamentary elections 01.06 – government 26.07), **2011** (parliamentary elections 05.06 – government 28.07), **2014** (parliamentary elections 27.04 – government 19.06)

[9] Gordana Siljanovska – Davkova and Renata Deskoska,"Makedonska (ne)demokratska saga: David (Skupstina) protiv Golijata (Vlada)?," In *Iskusenja Parlamentarizma*, ed. Slavisa Orlovic (Beograd: FES, 2013), 84.

[10] Renata Deskoska,"The Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia – "House" or "Cemetery" of Democracy?!," *Iustinianus Primus Law Review* Vol. 6 (2012): 16.

[11] According to the Report for the work of the eighth assembly of the Parliament of Republic of Macedonian (10.05.2014 - 17.10.2016), out of 1070 adopted laws, 1007 laws were adopted upon proposition of the Macedonian government (94 %). The number is worse regarding the work of the seventh assembly of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia (25.06.2011 – 05.03.2014). According the Report of the work of this parliamentarian assembly, out of 907 adopted laws even 888 were adopted upon proposal by the Macedonian government (98 %).

[12] Deskoska,"The Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia," 11.

proportional electoral model rebounds from the general characteristics and effects related to those electoral models. There are several reasons for that.

Primarily, in the Macedonian case the proportional electoral model causes electoral results similar to the majority electoral models.[13] The reason for that lies in the fact that the territory of the country is divided in six constituencies and the D'Hondt method is used for allocating the votes into parliamentary mandates. Both of the solutions contribute to reducing the proportionality of the electoral results and therefore we can freely say that the proportional electoral model used for Macedonian parliamentary elections gives greater chances to the major political parties. The small political parties have very little chance of securing a seat in the Macedonian parliament if they go alone on the elections, and therefore are condemned to seek their own chance to enter the parliament by joining coalition lists led by the major political parties. Such reality contributes for the small political parties to be either out of the parliament or, to seek their own chance through party coalitions. Practically, the proportional electoral model for election of Macedonian MPs does not encourage forming new political parties and their independent performance at the elections, but encourages and rewards political coalitions.[14] Thus, the final effect of the proportional electoral model in the Macedonian political system comes down to the fact that mostly after 2002 only 5 or 6 party lists succeeded in securing a seat in the parliament. According to that, instead of fragmenting the Macedonian party system, the proportional electoral model in Macedonian case contributes to its stabilization.

However, although this kind of stabilization of the party system in the legal-political theory is well desired, still the current proportional electoral model for election of Macedonian MPs has been under severe criticism such as that it contributes to huge party discipline and authoritarian tendencies. Favoring the major political parties makes the smaller political parties more dependent and in subordinate position in relation to major political parties because without them, they would not have secured a seat in the parliament. In addition, we should bear in mind that the proportional electoral model for election of Macedonian MPs is implemented by using closed party lists. In such electoral models the list is drawn up by the parties and all the voters can do is select one list for one party,[15] which means that "voters have no influence over the decision who shall represent the party of their choice."[16] Therefore, in such systems the elected candidates are more loyal to their own political parties and leaders, rather than the citizens who voted for them. In Macedonian conditions, in the end, these solutions lead and are still leading towards concentration of enormous power in the hands of the party leadership, i.e., primarily, in the hands of the leaders of the political parties.[17] Power, which in the end can easily lead to development of authoritarian tendencies in the Macedonian political system. Therefore, the last, and probably the most serious political crisis in the history of Republic of Macedonia, during 2015 and 2016, within the wider Macedonian political public, caused development of the view that precisely the electoral model for election of members of parliament contributes to development of authoritarian values in the Macedonian political system. Based on this view, during 2015 and 2016, the

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[13] Siljanovska – Davkova and Deskoska,"Makedonska (ne)demokratska saga," 78.

[14] Саво Климовски и Тања Каракамишева, *Политички партии и интересни групи* (Скопје: Правен факултет Јустинијан Први, 2006), 130.

[15] Farrel, *Electoral Systems: A comparative Introduction*, 83.

[16] Renata Deskoska,"Proportional Electoral Model and Types of Candidate Lists," *Iustinianus Primus Law Review* Vol. 2 (2010): 4 .

[17] Климовски и Каракамишева, *Политички партии и интересни групи*. 131.

Macedonian political scene was overwhelmed with debates about the need to change the electoral model. Throughout all these debates a special place is assigned to the proposal the whole territory of country to be one constituency, as well as to the proposal the closed party lists to be replaced by an open ones. However, behind these proposals there was not any substantial debate regarding their meaning for the Macedonian political system, as well as the analysis of the question whether the current electoral model contributes to the development of authoritarian tendencies and political crisis in Macedonian society. So, let's go over these questions in more details.

III. PROPORTIONAL ELECTORAL MODEL WITH OPEN PARTY LISTS

As it can be seen, since 2002, the elections of Macedonian MPs have been done by using the proportional electoral model with closed party lists. This electoral model enables parties to control their politicians, because under this system parties control the position each candidate is placed on the list.[18] Through that, the party leaders and leaderships strengthen their position and manage to establish a steady party discipline inside the political parties, because, whether and on which place of the party list the candidates will find themselves depends on the party leadership. Therefore, the members of the political parties, in order to find themselves in a winning place of the electoral lists, aim to get closer to the party leadership rather than to enter into conflict with it. Additionally, after the 2011 parliamentary elections, there were statements by some MPs from the ruling coalition that before the process of nomination, they had to sign written resignation of the MP position which will be activated by the leader, if they fail to follow the party instructions in the Parliament.[19] Such statements were also followed by statements that they needed to sign financial guarantee which meant that if they violate the obligation, they will have to pay high sum of money (about 600 000 Euros). [20]

There is no doubt that these decisions lead to huge party discipline and complete loyalty of the Macedonian MPs to their party leaders and political parties. Therefore, for several years now, on the Macedonian political scene, it is often said that the Macedonian MPs should be elected through the proportional electoral model, but by using open party lists. Such proposals are mostly coming from non-governmental organizations (especially from the citizens' association MOST)[21] and the main motivation for advocating such change of the current electoral model lies in the will to destroy party discipline and the huge power of the party leaders in the Macedonian political system. And indeed, in the legal-political theory there is an opinion that the proportional electoral models with open party lists influence the decrease of the role of the party leaders.[22] That kind of opinion is present in legal-political theory because in these systems the choice of candidates depends on their qualities to convince the voters, and not on the party leaders. Moreover, the party discipline in the electoral models with open lists is reduced also due to the fact that

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[18] Simon Hix , Ron Johnson and Iain McLean, *Choosing an Electoral System* (London: British Academy (Policy Centre), 2010), 23.

[19] Deskoska,"The Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia," 13.

[20] Ibid.

[21] https://www.mkd.mk/makedonija/politika/most-e-za-otvoreni-listi-za-kontrola-na-partiskite-pari-i-za-suspendiranje-na

[22] Hix , Johnson and McLean, *Choosing an Electoral System*, 24.

the candidates from within the same party are effectively competing with each other for votes.[23] However, the question that arises is whether the party discipline in the Macedonian political system and the huge power of the party leaders is a result of the electoral model for election of Macedonian MPs. The answer is absolutely not. It seems that the patriarchal and parochial political culture relics, as well as the domination of the subject political culture elements over the participative ones are more important factor in profiling the „ruling model", from the constitutional and legal framework.[24] The party discipline and the subordination in the Macedonian political system can also be noticed in the political functions, which are elected through the majority electoral models (mayor, president of the republic). We can freely say that the party discipline, subordination and loyalty to leaders is an integral part of the whole Macedonian society, and not only of the Macedonian politics. In that direction, the change of the party lists for election of the Macedonian MPs from closed to open lists is no guarantee that it will cause destruction of the party discipline and the great power of the party leaders. Practicing open lists at the parliamentary elections does not solve the problem by signing promissory notes and blank resignations of the candidates. The party leaders and the party leadership can again request that from the candidates, because who will and will not be on the list, again, depends solely on the party leaders and party leaderships. Therefore, it seems that the open party lists will not have a great contribution to democratization of the Macedonian political system, but we can freely say that the change of the party lists from closed to open will bring a number of weaknesses and disadvantages.

First of all, although they seem more democratic, the open party lists still can be a factor that will contribute to inflaming the conflicts in one society. Inspired by the fact that in the open lists the final decision for the election depends on the ordinary citizens, the candidates willing to get closer to the ordinary voters can resort to promotion of populist and nationalistic policies. It is quite expected that if the party lists are opened up the candidates will begin to make completely unrealistic promises hoping that through those promises they will gain the vote of the citizens. That means that the open party lists can easily inflame nude populism, which for many years now is a huge problem in the Macedonian society. In addition, we should bear in mind that Macedonian society is a multiethnic society and unfortunately the nationalism is still an actual topic in Macedonian politics. If the party lists are opened up, this nationalism can easily become main rhetoric on the Macedonian political scene. Here we can point out the example of Kosovo, where a switch from closed to open lists actually enhanced the presence of more extremist candidates.[25] Therefore, many theoreticians believe that the closed party lists accompanied by pre-election coalitions between parties from different segments lead to development of moderate political forces.[26] If the political parties in different segments create pre-election coalition and come out with mutual closed list in front of the citizens, then the candidates of that list in their own actions and speeches will have to be careful not to hurt the feelings of the members of the other segment and with that lose the votes of the citizens from that segment. All that, can lead to moderate candidates, who will contribute to normalizing and stabilizing the relations between the different segments in one divided society. In

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[23] Reynolds, Reilly and Ellis, *Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook*, 84.

[24] Гордана Силјановска – Давкова,"Современи "модели" на организација на власта: дилеми и предизвици," *Zbornik PVZ* Vol. 61 No. 2 (2011): 384.

[25] Reynolds, Reilly and Ellis, *Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook*, 90.

[26] Мајкл Галагер и Пол Мичел, *Политика на изборни системи* (Скопје: Академски печат, 2009), 381.

the Macedonian case, the development of such pre-election coalitions is especially important among the Macedonian parties and the parties of the ethnic Albanians.

Secondly, in addition to the fact that the Macedonian political culture is connected to the subject political culture, we also have to bear in mind that the Macedonian political culture is often described as clientelistic.[27] In that direction, the open party lists can contribute to even greater degree of political corruption and clientelism. Why? Precisely because the open party lists enable existence of direct contacts between the electoral body and the suggested candidate for MP.[28] This direct contact between the electoral body and the suggested candidate opens up the door for the suggested candidates to lobby for receiving the votes by offering constituency services and personal favors.[29]

Thirdly, the legal-political theory emphasizes that the proportional electoral models with closed party lists increase the percentage of women - MPs.[30] In that direction, the Macedonian parliament boasts itself with relatively high rate of women – MPs. Information say that within the last few parliamentary compositions, in Macedonian parliament, approximately 35 % of the Macedonian MPs are women. This is because the closed party lists enable implementation of electoral quotes with the aim to increase the presence of women in the parliament. By inserting the required spots for women, and not having the possibility to further influence the ballot papers, the closed party lists guarantee that there will be certain number of women within the parliament. Accordingly, the change of the party lists from closed to open practically makes it impossible to insist on implementing quotas because the party lists now will be opened to influence by the voters. Particularly in societies where the patriarchal spirit is dominating (and that is the case with the Macedonian society), it is very likely that despite the fact that there will be women candidates on the party list, still the voters can change the order of the candidates and place women at the bottom of the party lists. By placing them on the last positions of the party lists, it is very difficult to believe that somebody on those positions will succeed in securing a seat in the parliament. At the end of the electoral process, all that can cause moderate number of female representatives in the Macedonian parliament.

Finally, the legal-political theory emphasizes that when creating an electoral system it is necessary to provide a voters' condition called *easy of voting*.[31] We should bear in mind that the opened party lists usually involve much more complicated way of voting (preferential voting) which can cause difficulties for less-educated voters.[32] Practically, it may happen that great number of voters have a problem understanding the way the electoral model functions and the way of voting. Hence, such complicated way of voting in Macedonian conditions (ordering candidates according to its preferences) may lead to many invalid votes, and will also cause decrease in voters' turnout because it can cause discouragement among voters.

The aforementioned points us to the conclusion that one should be very careful when creating the electoral model for election of MPs. It should be kept in mind that the

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[27] Stefan Dehnert,"Elections and Conflict in Macedonia: Country Analysis," 4 http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/07523-b.pdf

[28] Светомир Шкариќ и Гордана Силјановска – Давкова, *Уставно право – Второ, дополнето и изменето издание* (Скопје: Култура, 2009), 476.

[29] Deskoska,"Proportional Electoral Model and Types of Candidate Lists," 8.

[30] Farrel, *Electoral Systems: A comparative Introduction*, 83.

[31] Reynolds, Reilly and Ellis, *Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook*, 10.

[32] Reynolds, Reilly and Ellis, *Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook*, 9.

open party lists besides the advantages have their own disadvantages, which for societies like the Macedonian society may pose great danger to the functioning of the political system. Thus, a detailed analysis for these solutions is needed before applying them.

IV. PROPORTIONAL ELECTORAL MODEL WITH ONE CONSTITUENCY

In the legal-political theory devoted to the elections and the electoral systems, we often come across the position that the relationship between the proportionality and the size of the electoral constituencies is proportionate.[33] This claim is very important especially for the small political parties because the more proportionate are the electoral results the bigger is the possibility these parties to secure MP mandates in the parliament by them self. In that direction, it should be taken into consideration that the best way to maximize proportionality is to have the entire country as one constituency.[34] Thus, during 2015 and 2016 despite the suggestion Macedonian MPs to be elected by open party lists, especially the small political parties constantly advocated the idea the whole territory of country to be one constituency. This solution completely goes to the benefit of the small political parties because it enables merging of their votes, i.e., they will not be split across different constituencies. The final epilogue to such a solution could come down to the conclusion that the small political parties through this change of the electoral model will be able to independently come out at the parliamentary elections and thus obtain parliamentary mandates within the parliament. When the whole territory of the country is one constituency, the number of votes that one party needs to gain a mandate is quite low, giving an opportunity to the small political parties to enter the parliament, i.e., more political parties are allowed to be represented in the parliament.[35] In that direction, the question that arises is how the Macedonian parliament would look like according to the results from the 2016 parliamentary elections, if instead of six constituencies the whole territory of the country would have been one constituency. Let's take a look:

Table 1.									
2016 elections' results	VMRO – DPMNE Gained votes: 454 577	SDSM Gained votes: 436 981	DUI Gained votes: 86 796	BESA Gained votes: 57 868	Alliance for the Albanians Gained votes: 35 121	DPA Gained votes: 30 964	VMRO for Macedonia Gained votes: 24 524	Levica Gained votes: 12 120	KPP – Third Block Gained votes: 10 028
6	51	49	10	5	3	2	0	0	0

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[33] Климовски и Тања Каракамишева, *Политички партии и интересни групи*. 274

[34] Farrel, *Electoral Systems: A comparative Introduction*, 79.

[35] Дејан Димитриевски,"Пропорционалниот изборен систем во една изборна единица наспроти пропорционалниот изборен систем во повеќе изборни единици," 6 https://www.sobranie.mk/content/PI/2.%20%D0%9F%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%80%D1%86%D0%B8%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD%20%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%BD-%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%BD%D0%B0%20%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%B8%20%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%9C%D0%B5%20%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BD%D0%B8%20%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%86%D0%B8.pdf

constituencies									
1 constituency	48	47	9	6	3	3	2	1	1

Table 1 show that a simple post-electoral change of the electoral model from six constituencies to one constituency for the 2016 parliamentary elections causes changes in the final allocation of MPs mandates within the Macedonian Parliament. Instead of 6 party lists, if Macedonia had been one constituency then 9 party lists would have had its own place in the Macedonian parliament. According to these results, if Macedonia had been one constituency then VMRO for Macedonia (2 MPs), Levica (1 MP) and KPP – Third block (1 MP) would have had their own seat in the parliament. That means that the change from six constituencies to one constituency even with such electoral results would have immediately caused increase in the number of parties in the Macedonian parliament. The question which now arises is related to the benefit of the Macedonian society from a parliament in which there will be more political parties.

First of all, the possibility for small political parties to independently participate at the elections and thus win a mandate increases the independence of the small political parties and decreases the power of the big political parties in the Macedonian political system. In such conditions, in order to secure themselves with a mandate in the parliament, the small political parties will not be dependent from pre-election coalitions with big political parties. They will be able to independently come out at the elections, to gain MPs' mandates and in that way be more independent in the relations with the big political parties. Practically, in such a model the success of the small political parties will not only be due to pre-election party coalitions lead by the big political parties.

Secondly, more political parties in the parliament will mean that the ruling majority will have to be composed (and with that at the same time it will depend on) of more political parties. That will mean that the support by many political parties in the parliament will be needed to form a government and to maintain normal functioning. Accordingly, in the Macedonian political system, this kind of solution should stimulate greater cooperation, more independent MPs and MPs with greater quality, and at the same time bigger control over the work of the government by the parliament. Practically, this change will create difficulties for the big political parties in imposing and grabbing the whole power in their own hands. That, on the other hand, will influence the decrease of the authoritarian tendencies in the Macedonian political system.

Thirdly, more political parties in the parliament will, at the same time, mean that large number of citizens and many interests are being represented in the parliament.

However, at the same time, it should be taken into consideration that the creation of an electoral model in which the whole territory of the country would be one constituency possesses big opportunity for fragmentation of the Macedonian party system. Table 1 shows that the same electoral results from the 2016 parliamentary elections would lead to the presence of MPs from three more party lists/parties, if Macedonia on those elections had been organized as one constituency. (in total 9 party lists). We have to bear in mind that this number would have been even bigger if the political parties, and the voters also before voting, had been aware that the whole territory of Macedonia would have been one constituency. Primarily, if Macedonia

would have been one constituency, then we could have expected that the small parties, which for the 2016 parliamentary elections had been part of certain party coalition list lead by a big political party, would have come out independently on the elections. Additionally, the decision for the whole territory of Macedonia to be one constituency would have made many voters to vote for smaller parties. In a situation when the territory is divided in six constituencies and this division goes in favor of the big political parties, and is not in favor for the small political parties, many voters are faced with the dilemma whether to vote for small political parties and with that to risk their vote to fail. As a result of this dilemma many voters will not express their sincere choice but rather will vote for another candidate (usually from a major party) who they believe has a realistic chance of winning the seat.[36] If the entire territory of Macedonia would have been one constituency, and not six constituencies, then this dilemma would not have existed between the voters any more. The voters will be aware that the electoral model is in favor of the small political parties and that if they vote for the small political parties their vote will not fail because there is a big possibility for the small political parties to secure a seat in the parliament. That means that many voters, who previously wanted to vote for the small political parties, but voted for the big political parties because they feared that their vote would have failed if they had voted for small political parties, now will be able to vote for the small political parties because they will be aware that the electoral model will support those small political parties. Accordingly, this kind of electoral model can easily lead to a situation where, at the end of the electoral cycle, more than 15 Macedonian party lists/political parties will secure their seat in the parliament. Total fragmentation of the party system which in the end could lead to almost impossible formation and maintenance of stable government. A government and a parliament, which will have more resemblance to a bazaar rather than political institutions. This is precisely the reason due to which, almost every country, which applies the proportional electoral model with small number of electoral constituencies, in order not to allow excessive fragmentation of their party system decides to introduce electoral threshold. What is easily noticeable is the fact that the height of the electoral threshold varies from one country to another. Experience tells us that usually legal thresholds range from 0.67 per cent in the Netherlands to 10 per cent in Turkey. In that direction, the following question arises, if an electoral threshold is introduced in Macedonian electoral system then which electoral threshold is the most acceptable for Macedonian conditions. Therefore, let's take a look at how the electoral results from the last parliamentary elections in Macedonia would have looked like, if different kinds of electoral thresholds had been implemented and if the whole territory of Macedonia had been one constituency.

Table 2. (According to the electoral results from the 2016 parliamentary elections)						
Political party:	With 6 constituencies	With 1 constituency	Electoral threshold 1 %	Electoral threshold 2 %	Electoral threshold 3 %	Electoral threshold 5 %
VMRO – DPMNE Votes gained: 454 577	51	48	49	49	53	56
SDSM Votes gained: 436 981	49	47	47	48	51	54

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[36] Reynolds, Reilly and Ellis, *Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook*, 6.

DUI Votes gained: 86 796	10	9	9	9	10	10
BESA Votes gained : 57 868	5	6	6	6	6	0
Alliance for the Albanians Votes gained : 35 121	3	3	3	3	0	0
DPA Votes gained : 30 964	2	3	3	3	0	0
VMRO for Macedonia Votes gained : 24 524	0	2	2	2	0	0
Levica Votes gained : 12 120	0	1	1	0	0	0
KPP – Third block Votes gained : 10 028	0	1	0	0	0	0
Liberal party Votes gained: 3 840	0	0	0	0	0	0
PDP Votes gained: 1 143	0	0	0	0	0	0

The analysis from table 2 reveals the fact that in the Macedonian parliament, if the whole territory of the country is one constituency, only with threshold of 1% or, even 2 %, those political parties which did not succeed to enter the parliament in the 2016 parliamentary elections would have secured themselves a seat in the parliament. If the results of the 2016 parliamentary elections remain the same, and the whole territory of Macedonia had been one constituency, with electoral threshold of 1%, then the seats in the Macedonian parliament would have been allocated in the following way: VMRO for Macedonia (2 MPs) and Levica (1 MP). The threshold in this case will not have been passed by the party list of KPP – Third block, which with one MP would have been part of the Macedonian parliament if Macedonia had been one constituency and if there would not have been an electoral threshold. This means that an electoral threshold of 1 % would not be suitable for KPP – Third block. The same destiny would have been experienced by Levica, on the 2016 parliamentary elections if Macedonia had been one constituency and the electoral threshold would be 2%. Unlike KPP – Third block and Levica, the party VMRO for Macedonia would have secured itself a seat in the Macedonian parliament with two MPs in a situation when the electoral threshold is 2 % and Macedonia is one constituency (a situation which is unreal when Macedonia is divided into six constituencies). What needs to be noted here is that with 1% or even with 2 % of electoral threshold, the big political parties have less MP seats compared to the solution when the territory of Macedonia is divided into six constituencies. However, it is particularly interesting to go over the results when for the 2016 parliamentary elections Macedonia would have been one constituency, and the electoral threshold would have been 3% or, over 3 %. With an electoral threshold of 3%, the entrance into the Macedonian parliament is eliminated

not only for the smaller parties but also for those which succeeded to secure a seat when Macedonia had been divided into six constituencies (Alliance for the Albanians and DPA). The situation is even more dramatic when the electoral threshold in Macedonia would be 5 % (a solution which had been implemented for the parallel electoral model in 1998 and an electoral threshold, which is especially popular because it is related to the mixed electoral model in Germany). In such a scenario, even BESA would not have succeeded to overcome the posed electoral threshold and only three party lists would have secured a seat in the Macedonian parliament (VMRO – DPMNE, SDSM and DUI).

Therefore, it is quite expected that in the Macedonian society the solution the whole territory of the country to be one constituency will raise the question of electoral threshold. The issue regarding the height of the electoral threshold would be immediately imposed and here one has to be very careful because the game with the electoral threshold could lead to a solution, which would be even worse for the interests of the small political parties, in comparison to the current solution (six constituencies). From what can be noticed, the current electoral model for Macedonian MPs although does not have a formal (legal) electoral threshold, still the division of the country territory into six constituencies causes a hidden electoral threshold in the height of around 2,5 %. In that direction, if the goal is to meet the needs of the small political parties then the decision the whole territory of the country to be one constituency has to be followed by an electoral threshold of 2 or under 2 %. If the electoral threshold would be 3 % or over 3 % then there is a big probability that the small political parties would be even bigger losers in the electoral race in Macedonian parliamentary elections. This is probably where the biggest problem for introducing of one constituency on the whole territory for parliamentary elections is located – the height of the electoral threshold.

V. CONCLUSION

The electoral system is one of the basic subsystems of every political system. In this regard, the insufficient knowledge of the matter related to the effects of the electoral systems could lead to major consequences over the development and functioning of the political system. When creating it, the creators of the electoral system should be very careful and possess a good knowledge the electoral matters and to know precisely what kind of effects want to achieve or avoid by creating the electoral system. It seems that in legal-political theory the position that dominates is that when creating the electoral systems more attention should be given to effects that need to be avoided. Therefore, the recommendation is first to list the things which must be avoided at all costs[37] because if those effects are achieved then a danger that the functioning and survival of the whole political system and country is questionable.

If we have that in mind, then it is very obvious that introducing open party lists in Macedonian society or, creating the whole territory of the country as one electoral constituency possess far more things that have to be avoided at all costs. The ultimate idea of both proposals consists in the will to reduce the party discipline and the power of the party leaders and that opens up the door towards bigger democracy of the Macedonia political system. However, it should be taken into account that the opening of the party lists hides the danger of inciting nationalism, populism and clientelism, and additionally it is likely that it will contribute to reducing the number

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[37] Reynolds, Reilly and Ellis, *Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook*, 15.

of women MPs in the parliament, as well as to the general decrease of turnout at the parliamentary elections due to more complicated way of voting. On the other hand, creation of the whole territory of the country as one constituency possesses huge capacity to contribute towards complete fragmentation of the party system. Such fragmentation of the Macedonian party system will contribute towards difficult formation and maintenance of stable government, as well as towards creating dysfunctional parliament. There is a big likelihood that in such a circumstances the parliament will become a place for political blackmails, which in the end will have an additional negative influence over the Macedonian political system. In such a situation, the main conclusion is that both proposals have the capacity to contribute towards large number of negative effects in the Macedonian political system and thus will not have a major role towards democratization of the Macedonian political system by reducing the party discipline and power of the party leaders. There will not be major contributions towards these issues because the root of these problems lies in the political culture and absence of inner party democracy and not the electoral model. The electoral model is not the problem. The political crises and the development of authoritarian tendencies in Macedonian society were/are not result of the electoral model but rather of the subject political culture and the so called sultan – parties. Therefore, the search for a solution should take place precisely at this point.

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