

## BEYOND PARALLEL DEMOCRACY?

### Abstract

In ethnically divided political systems, the election campaign and ethnic tensions usually has a strong mutual connection. However, although election campaigns could provoke tensions (which usually does) their intensity, or at least their visibility in successive election cycles is on a different scale. From a theoretical perspective, the occurrence of tensions during elections in ethnically divided societies is not a controversial process. Based on past experience, ethnic tensions could be predicted in a political system composed entirely or partially from ethnically defined political parties, as a process usually accompanied with common allegations from both sides of the ethnic barrier for the responsibility of its emergence. Although, usually the both sides has their share in intensification of ethnic disputes during elections, it could be not neglected, that depending on observed election period in general, one side is more persistent in amplification on its ethnic agenda, than the other. The favorable public attitude on different pre-election policies and election programs, especially concerning ethnic provisions, is of a paramount importance for the campaign decisions made by the ethnic political elites, who are hardly ever prepared of pursuing the unfavorable (among its own ethnicity) political solutions which can endanger their popularity, and more important, that could not ensure new votes. Therefore, the election campaigns of political parties in divided societies are mainly based on attitudes which could ensure immediate inclusion among its own ethnic group, especially from the so called “extreme voters.” This part of the electorate is easier to be attracted with profoundly elaborated ethnic agenda, especially if a party is faced with downfall support or it is not included in the Government (opposition party). Those pre-election agendas are easier and more exploited by the parties, than the creation of an ethnically exclusive, but inter-ethnically inclusive civic premises which could have blurred effect for the party, with expectations for possible political gains only over extended time frame.

**Key words:** *Political parties, ethnic agenda, Macedonia, Elections, Coalitions*

The public opinion and democratic governance has a strong mutual connection. From one side their correlation is controversial with common allegations that there is an unbalanced influence of the public opinion over decision making process, and vice versa, depending of the approach and the observation perspective. From the other side however, the majority agree that the favorable public attitude on different policies is of a paramount importance for the decisions made by the political elites, who are hardly ever prepared of pursuing the unfavorable decisions that can endanger their popularity. The decisions in democratic societies are mainly based on attitudes which ensure immediate public inclusion rather than on exclusive premises which have blurred effect expected within longer time frame, or their acceptance has immediate controversy

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among wider public. In a new democratic societies as Macedonia, which is based on political competition of several ethnically predetermined political parties, contesting only among their respective ethnicity for opportunity to be part of the multiethnic government in a post-election coalitions, usually established by the winners in different ethnic campus, this is even more emphasized. The different political priorities of the parties included in the new government, articulated on the premises established during the election campaigns, can widen the gap in positions and expectations among different ethnic groups. Therefore, it is not uncommon the general attitudes on key policy issues to be sharply divided among the ethnic lines, which creates the atmosphere of mistrust and ethnic tensions. Since the prospects of multiethnic parties could be hardly anticipated, the pre-election multiethnic coalitions are probably one of the most viable solutions of this problem in the foreseen period, although the lack of the ideological frames of the ethnic minority parties creates another serious obstacle.

## **I. REPRESENTATION IN THE ETHNIC OR MIXED POLITICAL PARTY SYSTEMS**

In its pursuit of public support, the political party in certain democratic society should and must find viable reason for validation of its establishment as primary factor for foreseeable future existence. Commonly, the contemporary political party appeals to citizens through different ideological constructions, designated to create, a set of norms which will transform and narrow various individual political expectations towards particular collective interest and therefore generate a wider group support. However, instead of creation of a new multitude of individuals, the political party usually addresses its premises to already existing social groups in order to attract their attention and create a new partisan political identity. In the societies composed of individuals with different ethnic origins, the political elites, at least in the Balkans, tends to explore the salience of ethnic background in the construction of primary collective identity, as glue for establishment of political identification within distinctive ethnic groups and to create parallels between ethnic identities and party identities. Ethnic political parties, according to Strmiska, can be defined as “formations which ideology, program and organizational identity, as well as the sources of political standing and electoral mobilization used by them are of ethnic character.”<sup>1</sup>

The political mobilization is ensured with extracting the political priorities based on “tangible ethnic characteristics such as shared culture or race, because they contribute to the group’s feeling of identity.”<sup>2</sup> These priorities are composed of commitments for promotion of ethnic essentials as tradition, language, culture or symbols perceived as collective rights which should be granted and accomplished by the state. If not, “the group considers perceived and real threats to its tangible characteristics as risks to its identity. If the group takes steps to confront the threat, ethnicity becomes politicized, and the group becomes a political actor by virtue of its shared identity”<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the durability and public support of the ethnic political entities are ensured within the time frame of accomplishment of perceived collective rights for the represented ethnic community.

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<sup>1</sup> Hloušek, Vít and Kopeček, Lubomír “*Origin, Ideology and Transformation of Political Parties*” Burlington: Ashgate, 2010, pp. 204

<sup>2</sup> Ishiyama, John T. and Breuning, Marijke editors “*21st Century Political Science*” London: Sage Publications, 2011, pp. 142

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*

In political systems which either includes ethnic parties or they are composed primarily of ethnic parties, these political entities “appeal almost exclusively to voters from their own group rather than to all voters and their mobilization drives are *catch us* rather than *catch all*.”<sup>4</sup>

The party system in Macedonia considering its ethnic composition and regarding the description provided by Horowitz,<sup>5</sup> could be defined as mixed, comprised of both ethnic and non-ethnic parties, although it has its own specifics which should be explained for higher accuracy in its definition.

Macedonia is a multiethnic society in which dominant ethnicity are Macedonians encompassing two thirds of total population, then Albanians with around one quarter of total citizens and other smaller ethnic groups which are less than 10 percent combined.<sup>6</sup> The two major political parties<sup>7</sup> are conservative VMRO-DPMNE and social-democratic SDSM. The ethnic background of their members is mixed, including dominant ethnicity and all other smaller ethnic groups with exception of ethnic Albanians, although during the last parliamentary elections in 2016, SDSM was successful in their attempt to attract part of the ethnic Albanian votes, which resulted in around 40000 ethnic Albanian votes for SDSM (out of around 240000 ethnic Albanian voters) The political platforms of both parties are predominantly civic with main focus on economic growth, unemployment or NATO and EU membership.

The support from smaller ethnic groups (including Serbs, Turks, Roma or Vlach) is direct, as members in the main party organization, or intermediary through support of small ethnic parties which are in permanent coalitions with either conservative or social-democratic party. Although the existence of these small ethnic parties could indicate strong ethnic divisions among these groups, several factors are against of such rigid definition. First, they are in coalitions on all level of governance together with other small civic political parties (liberals, socialists, liberal-democrats), second, they never go independently on elections, so their support could not be precisely measured in order to compare direct and intermediate ethnic votes for the coalitions, and third, their programs are integrated in the major parties platforms through which they also exercise political representation in the parliament, together with other small non-ethnic parties. Therefore, although in those coalitions could be recognized some essentials of multiethnic alliances, it is more accurate and probably more appropriate to label them as civic coalitions, including one dominant and several small political parties, from which some of them put greater emphasis on distinctive ethnic features.

The ethnic component in the Macedonian party system is provided by the political entities which represents the ethnic Albanian minority, located mainly in north-western part of the country. The public support for these political parties is located exclusively among members of this ethnic group, and their political agendas are predominantly focused in direction for greater promotion of collective rights based on ethnicity, defined as core values in their party programs.

Twenty eight years ago, after the introduction of the political pluralism, the process of democratization and political plurality foster the establishment of Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP), as sole representative of ethnic Albanian political agenda. However, the later

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<sup>4</sup> Taylor, Rupert, editor “*Consociational theory: McGarry and O’Leary and the Northern Ireland conflict*” London: Routledge, 2009, pp. 147-148

<sup>5</sup> Horowitz, Donald L. “*Ethnic Groups in Conflict*” Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, pp. 298-306

<sup>6</sup> State Statistical Office [http://www.stat.gov.mk/PrikaziPublikacija\\_en.aspx?id=54&rbr=221](http://www.stat.gov.mk/PrikaziPublikacija_en.aspx?id=54&rbr=221)

<sup>7</sup> The current representation in the Macedonian parliament is 100 out of 120 seats, for both parties (coalitions) combined

development introduces several new political entities as the beginning of process of intra-ethnic competition, which could be generally explained as consequence of leadership rivalries within the ethnic group, which is one of the five main possibilities for political competition within the ethnic group, in accordance with classification of Donald Horowitz.<sup>8</sup> After the last parliamentary elections in 2016, the ethnic Albanian political parties, Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), Democratic Party of the Albanians (DPA), BESA and the Alliance for Albanians has again won the majority of votes within the community,<sup>9</sup> although for the first time in Macedonian parliamentary history, one of the two main political parties in Macedonia (SDSM), took a sizable portion of the Albanian votes, as previously mentioned.

The post-electoral coalition established after the elections, between social-democrats (SDSM) and ethnic Albanian DUI, despite the fact that VMRO-DPMNE won the majority seats in the Parliament (although only 2 more than SDSM), has broken the established common practice, where the post-electoral coalitions (or coalitions who form the Government) are made by the winner in general and the winner among ethnic Albanians, which also became an unwritten (or unpublished) rule in Macedonian politics since the *May Agreement* in 2008.<sup>10</sup> However, although this rule was breached by DUI who basically was its creator and promotor in 2008, their officials justified their decision as “only one time breach due to the political situation” or “there was no clear winner among ethnic Albanian parties in 2016,<sup>11</sup>” with clear intention for re-establishment of this winner-with-winner practice after the next elections. This pulls the main question, which is how to define these coalitions in Macedonian political system?

In order of finding viable explanation, the question should be initially explored within the existing models of multiethnic coalitions provided by Horowitz<sup>12</sup>, and in accordance with definition that “an ethnic conflict involves at least one party that is organized around ethnic identity of its members,”<sup>13</sup> the Macedonian party system should be simplified and ethicized, without further elaboration on the levels of intensity concerning its ethnic character, and thus distinguishing only two types of political parties (which could be easily justified concerning the past inter-ethnic tensions, resulting with brief but violent insurgence, launched by ethnic Albanian groups in 2001). From one side there are the ethnic Albanian parties, and from the other, the two main parties, which could be observed either as civic (SDSM), or civic/multiethnic (the conservative VMRO-DPMNE has a strong national sentiment, but also a permanent coalition with parties within smaller ethnic communities as Serbs, Roma, Turks etc.), which for this purpose (only as opposition to ethnic Albanian parties) will be defined as ethnic. Defined in such a manner, it could be stated that up to elections in 2016 Macedonia have had a political system consisting from ethnic Albanian and non-Albanian political entities. On the Election Day (December, 11) in 2016, situation changed due to the success of the SDSM to attract a significant number of ethnic Albanian votes. However, it is highly questionable does SDSM have capacity

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<sup>8</sup> Horowitz, Donald L, 1985, pp.349-350

<sup>9</sup> Out of 120 seats, DUI has won 10, DPA 2, BESA 5 and AA 3 seats

<sup>10</sup> The May Agreement is informal document which secures the post-election coalition between winning parties in general and within the ethnic Albanian community. The document is not public, but it is available through media reports

<https://novatv.mk/shto-se-krie-zad-majskiot-dogovor/>

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>12</sup> Horowitz, Donald L, 1985, pp.365-396

<sup>13</sup> Cordell, Karl and Wolff, Stefan “*Ethnic Conflict: Causes, Consequences, and Responses*” Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010, pp. 5

to retain those votes, or it was only a one time occurrence, an anomaly in the system due to the specific pre-electoral conditions triggered by the long-lasting political crisis.

It represents a great challenge to define Macedonian political relations, using the three types of multiethnic coalitions in accordance to Horowitz's classification. The coalitions are formed only after the elections and therefore they could definitely not be described as *multiethnic alliance*. Many characteristics, as mainly separate electoral identities and inconsistent positions on ethnic issues, resembles to *coalition of convenience*, or policy compromises and moderation of differences to *coalition of commitment*, but in both lacks their main feature, "the relatively short duration of coalitions,"<sup>14</sup> since the coalitions governments are relatively stable. In addition, the coalitions are established even without the need of majority, which occurred after the elections in 2008 and 2014,<sup>15</sup> and the other important feature of an ethnic party, equity of party boundaries with the ethnic group boundaries, is characteristic only to ethnic Albanian political entities, while the two major non Albanian parties are not confined within the ethnic boundaries and tend to address to all potential voters (although VMRO-DPMNE has a little to no success among ethnic Albanians).

The composition of Macedonian party system, concerning its ethnic components and the informal power-sharing provisions amended with the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA)<sup>16</sup>, makes uneasy all attempts on rigid definitions of its position. It could be probably fitted in-between the *coalition of commitment* and the *multiethnic alliance*, with features taken from both systems. However, its definition is not of such decisive significance, as its durability through avoiding or overcoming the possible threats. The main challenge remains how to secure stability of the system, which is preconditioned with the possibilities for predictability of course of its evolution. If we make observations from a political party perspectives there are two possible directions. First is going backwards through polarization of political agendas which will produce instability, and second, moving forward towards *multiethnic alliances*, as one of the opportunities for political stability, suggested by Horowitz.<sup>17</sup>

## II. THE SPIRAL OF EXPECTATIONS

As previously mentioned, the ethnic Albanian parties are the main promoters of the ethnically based political agendas in Macedonia, which is the main reason for above general classification of Macedonian parties as ethnic Albanian and non-Albanian (instead of ethnic Macedonian, Albanian, Roma, Serbian etc), and thus the solutions for stability or instability of the system rests, almost solely among ethnic Albanian political elite, based on projections for future development of its political entities.

The voting behavior and public support towards political parties has a strong correlation with the satisfaction of voters as the result of fulfilled political expectations which could be

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 395

<sup>15</sup> In 2008, VMRO-DPMNE won 63 seats which was the absolute majority of the parliament mandates (120 in total), but they still created post-electoral coalition with ethnic Albanian DUI (18 seats). After the 2014 elections VMRO won majority of 62 out of 123, but they again established coalition with DUI  
[http://www.sec.mk/arhiva/2008\\_predvremeniparlamentarni/index.htm](http://www.sec.mk/arhiva/2008_predvremeniparlamentarni/index.htm)

<sup>16</sup> Wolchik, Sharon L. and Curry, Jane Leftwich editors "Central and East European Politics: From Communism to Democracy" Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2011, pp 296 and Florian Bieber in "Power Sharing- New Challenges for Divided Societies" Edited by Ian O'Flynn and David Russell, London: Pluto press, 2005 pp. 107-123

<sup>17</sup> Horowitz, Donald L, 1985, pp.632

measured as promise/realization ratio, based on the equation among frustration and the desire versus satisfaction (want/get ratio), on which Lerner builds his theory of a "revolution of rising frustrations (expectations)."<sup>18</sup> Although Lerner uses this equation as part of his communication theory, in order to explicate the rising frustrations as the result of the mass-media revolution among the public in the third world countries, it could be also applied as indicator of political (dis)satisfaction which could lead towards political extremes-apathy or antagonism oriented to previously favored political party. Therefore, the political entities should not only mind the gap between promises and expectations, but in order to sustain or elevate their ratings, the parties should also anticipate its future political platforms, which generates *the spiral of expectations*. In contemporary civic party platforms those spirals are open and after implementation of given policy, they move public expectations towards another issue. However, in the programs of ethnic parties, the spiral of expectation is closed, since the whole platform is based on ethnic incentives, and after their completion, the entity has only two solutions, to completely cease to exist or to initiate its transformation from ethnic to civic political agendas.

The Ohrid Agreement was established as an instrument of effective settlement of ethnic conflict in Macedonia and a framework for implementation of the ethnic minority rights, (especially for the large Albanian minority). With its completion all ethnic minority issues will be solved, as agreed by all main political entities, including ethnic Albanian parties, as stated in its preamble

The following [agreement] comprise an agreed framework for securing the future of Macedonia's democracy and permitting the development of closer and more integrated relations between the Republic of Macedonia and the Euro-Atlantic community. This Framework will promote the peaceful and harmonious development of civil society while respecting the ethnic identity and the interests of all Macedonian citizens.<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, faced with the above dilemma imposed by the spirals of expectations, ethnic Albanian parties preferred the third solution, contesting the Ohrid Agreement and therefore ensuring the continuance of their ethnic policies. This implicates that parties are not willing or they don't know how to introduce the civic concept in their political platforms, since the only instrument of intra-ethnic political competition which they use is political radicalization, which is also "one theoretical assumption, often adhered to: intra-ethnic competition will foster radicalization based on elite appeals of mass-radicalization."<sup>20</sup> Also, "Ethnic parties as vote-maximizers are expected to choose radical over moderate strategies in intra-ethnic competition because the basic assumption is that in virtue of mobilization ethnicity, voters have radical and homogeneous group preferences."<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, Horowitz suggests that "Intra-ethnic competition can foster radicalization, but it can also lead to inter-ethnic alliances, or they can

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<sup>18</sup> Lerner, Daniel "The passing of traditional society : modernizing the Middle East" London: Macmillan, 1964 pp. vii ,102, also in "Is International Persuasion Sociologically Feasible?" <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1038919>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.ucd.ie/ibis/filestore/Ohrid%20Framework%20Agreement.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> Caspersen, Nina "Contested Nationalism: Serb Elite Rivalry in Croatia and Bosnia in the 1990s" Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010, pp.2

<sup>21</sup> Zuber, Christina Isabel "Ethnic parties in competition – more flexible than anticipated? Evidence from Serbia" <http://www.ecprnet.eu/databases/conferences/papers/844.pdf>

coexist, one can be manifested primarily before elections, and the other after,”<sup>22</sup> which is the case in Macedonian political pluralism.

The continuance of ethnic agenda as a single political platform will encourage further polarization which could lead towards deeper division, but also radicalization of non-Albanian parties. Due to the possible shift in non-Albanian public opinion, in attempt to maintain their support, they could alter their civic platforms with primarily ethnic, as was the case with the shift of civic agenda of VMRO-DPMNE towards almost entirely ethnic, before the 2016 elections.

Thus, it should be initiated a process of de-ethnicization of the Albanian parties, if the main objective is stabilization of the political system. The present ethnic platforms of Albanian entities could be perceived only as an ephemeral solution with relatively short duration in order of a modest extension of their political existence in present forms. The question is how to start a process of conversion of an ethnic political agenda towards civic (or multiethnic) platform in order to be compatible for establishment of multiethnic alliance?

### III. THE ROLE OF PUBLIC OPINION

The political entities which was founded and organized as ethnic parties aspiring for votes from the smaller communities in Macedonia, in time become an integral part of wider civic/multiethnic coalitions, maintaining some distinctive ethnic characteristics, but only as addition to their main civic programs, and thus representing a positive example of de-ethnicization of political entities, which could be also exerted in the case of ethnic Albanian parties.

It could be argued that the transformation of parties of the smaller ethnicities occurred primarily as result of territorial dispersion of ethnicity, or inappropriate electoral system, and therefore they seek access to political scene through non-ethnic parties, “but this could be true or major possibility, only in the plural electoral systems.”<sup>23</sup> Macedonian proportional model enables sufficient concentration of votes for most minorities, and therefore shifting towards economic incentives as fundamental platform for political activity and increased political influence, ensured through coalition with one of the two major parties, could be recognized as primary factors of transformation while importance of ethnic privileges is shifting towards economic and social prosperity towards community which they claim to represent.

Another positive implication for the process of de-ethnicization is its relative stability in the civic or mixed environment. Re-ethnicization of political party could emerge if the whole system is moving towards ethnic reorganization. In the case of strong civic political entities, the party which will attempt such experiment could be faced with the diminishing from the political scene, and considering Macedonian politics, it could be best illustrated with the example of the New Democracy (ND). The new political entity with ethnic background, start to promote itself as civic organization, exceeding its ethnic boundaries and addressing to all electorate. Its leader Selmani, who was a presidential candidate for 2009 elections, was called “Macedonian Obama,” and his election score was 150000 votes from all ethnic communities. However, during the next two or three years, he start a process of re-ethnicization featuring political flirting with ethnic issues in the pursuit of new voters among ethnic Albanians. Nevertheless, on the Election Day in June 2011, the party won only 20000 votes and none parliamentary seats, because Selmani could

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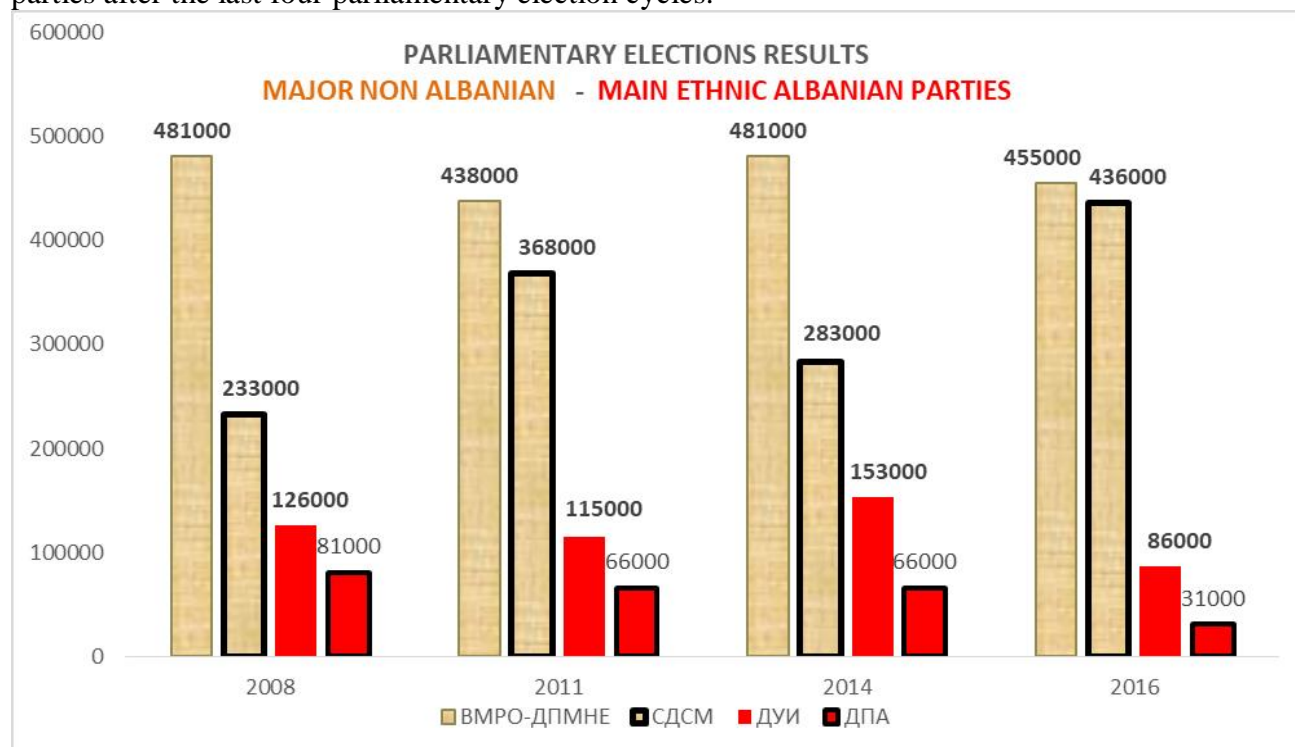
<sup>22</sup> Horowitz, Donald L, 1985, pp. 359-360

<sup>23</sup> Birnir, Jóhanna Kristín “*Ethnicity and Electoral Politics*” Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 55

not gain new ethnic votes with his previous civic experience, and lose his credibility among non-Albanian supporters, since the party abandons its civic political program.

Although, the impossibility of re-ethnicization, will give positive impetus to the durability of de-ethnicized systems, it could also impose a possible threat if the process is limited or partially implemented, since the remaining ethnic entity could recognize possibility of growing among radical ethnic flanks and thus, it will continue with the political radicalization.

The fostering of the process of de-ethnicization of the Albanian political parties in Macedonia will have twofold benefit, for both political system and ethnic entities. The additional continuance of ethnic policies will require further radicalization, and destabilization of the political system. “Political leaders who gain power on a confrontational election platform in order to maximize votes from within their own ethnic community not only contribute to the polarization of society, but also create expectations and a climate of adversarial, ‘no-compromise’ post-electoral politics. Once elected to office, they may opportunistically change their mind, but their electorates are less likely to do so, thus potentially leading to a situation in which inclusive institutions lack moderation and, what is worse, legitimacy.”<sup>24</sup> In Macedonian example, the both older ethnic Albanian parties (DUI and DPA) experienced lack of legitimacy, not only with their incapability to attract new voters, but also trends shows downfall in their support. The next graph shows the vote distribution among four major Macedonian political parties after the last four parliamentary election cycles.



*Graph 1-comparative parliamentary election results 2008-2016<sup>25</sup>*

Beside negative trends in their support, or because of that, the moderate wing of the ethnic party elites could be forced to step aside in favor of more radical members. “Where party systems are divided along communal lines, elections can increase intra-community political

<sup>24</sup> Stefan Wolff in “Power Sharing-New Challenges for Divided Societies” pp. 64

<sup>25</sup> State election commission <http://www.sec.mk/>



competition, and make this intra-community political arena more important than the inter-community one. As a consequence, politicians compete for a clearly defined pool of votes in their own community, and in order to win a major share in it they must prove that they are the best representatives of their community's interests. It is easy to see how such a situation plays into the hands of extremists and disadvantages moderates."<sup>26</sup> This could implicate and spread the ethnic extremism among other party members and supporters, which could infect the whole community, since both public opinion and political elites have mutual interaction and influence.

The last example of ethnic radicalization due to the downfall of its political support was the so-called *Tirana Platform*<sup>27</sup> prepared by DUI several days after 2016 elections in which they experienced the biggest loss in their support since its establishment in 2001. After becoming part of the government they continue to insist of putting the *Platform's* provisions on a fast track, especially the so-called *Law on languages*<sup>28</sup>, hoping that it will give them the much needed bust among ethnic Albanian voters. As expected, the other ethnic Albanian parties accept the challenge as an intra-ethnic competition for extreme ethnic votes.

The political intra-ethnic disagreement can foster radicalization intensifying the ethnic conflict which in some cases could end with violence. Although Horowitz suggests that the possibilities for violent conflict are greater if the ethnicity is represented only by one united political entity, with unquestioned authority, these can also occur as the result of internal intra-ethnic political divisions. According to Kubo, the radicalization of an ethnic minority could vary in terms of the means to achieve their goals which can differ with provisions taken- peaceful or violent. Nevertheless, "in both kinds of radicalization processes...there is often an intra-ethnic division...the radicalization of an ethnic minority, in terms of both goals and means, reflects not only the deliberate decision made by some leaders of the ethnic group, but also a shift of the balance of power within the ethnic group...how and why this shift of balance takes place...certain analysts who point to such factors as democratic elections and inter-ethnic as well as intra-ethnic electoral competition."<sup>29</sup>

The further implications of political radicalization promoted by ethnic entities which could intensify the ethnic conflict in Macedonia, is its sensitive geopolitical surroundings (Kosovo-Serbia dispute), especially with considerations to Kosovo, as neighboring and predominantly ethnic Albanian country. Brecher and James argued that "many interstate crisis have their origins in political, economic and social upheavals at the domestic levels, while in other cases, these events have fueled the fires of internal disruption...much of today's ethnic strife is internationalized and naturally associated with foreign or interstate events...the behavior of one state creates a crisis for one or more state actors who perceive a core threat to values, finite time for response, and a heightened likelihood of military hostilities."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Stefan Wolff in "*Power Sharing-New Challenges for Divided Societies*" pp. 68

<sup>27</sup> *Focus magazine* <https://fokus.mk/zaednichkata-platforma-na-albanskite-partii/>

<sup>28</sup> Ministry of Justice (Republic of Macedonia)-Law of Languages  
[http://www.pravda.gov.mk/Upload/Documents/Predlog%20Zakon%20za%20upotreba%20na%20jazicite%20so%20obrazlozenie%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.pravda.gov.mk/Upload/Documents/Predlog%20Zakon%20za%20upotreba%20na%20jazicite%20so%20obrazlozenie%20(1).pdf)

<sup>29</sup> Pavković, Aleksandar and Radan, Peter editors "*The Ashgate Research Companion to Secession*" Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011, pp. 215

<sup>30</sup> Carment, David, James, Patrick and Taydas, Zeynep "*Who Intervenes?: Ethnic Conflict And Interstate Crisis*" Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006, pp. 1

“One of the principal mechanisms linking ethnic divisions with the breakdown of democracy is the so-called “outbidding effect.” According to theories of ethnic outbidding, ethnic divisions inevitably give rise to one or more ethnic parties. The emergence of even a single ethnic party, in turn, “infects” the political system, leading to a spiral of extreme bids that destroys competitive politics altogether.”<sup>31</sup> In other words “the politicization of ethnicity in general and ethnic parties in particular is regarded as *major threat* to democratic stability.”<sup>32</sup> In Macedonia the intra-ethnic rivalries between ethnic Albanian political entities, produces widening and deepening of the intra-ethnic disagreements, which reflects in the inter-ethnic relations with other communities, including, or primarily with the main Macedonian ethnicity. “Among ethnic Albanians in particular...the competition with their main intra-group rival for a limited number of votes...contributed to growth of intense ethno-centric rhetoric, especially at election time.” [Although] once in power, the reality of governance...meant that one-time radical activists became moderates,”<sup>33</sup> the frustration of their supporters remains, as presented in previous text.

The future of Macedonian democracy and the multiethnic tolerance depends on the process of gradual de-ethnicization of the ethnic Albanian political entities. During that process the dominant ethnic component should be altered in favor of civic values. If the ethnic subjects are suppressed or replaced with other social issues, the problem of intra-ethnic competition which produces radicalization and influence the public opinion of the ethnic group will be surpassed and the multi-ethnic alliances could be established. The other possibility is gradual decline of the main ethnic Albanian parties, if ethnic Albanian support towards SDSM on the last elections became stable and growing instead of a “*single occurrence*.” The third scenario is combination of the previous two, with part of the ethnic Albanian votes going directly to one of the two main parties (SDSM) with possibility of an additional support from one of the ethnic Albanian parties and the other party (VMRO-DPMNE) forming the multi-ethnic alliance with the strongest remaining ethnic Albanian party or parties in response.

The Ohrid Agreement provide a solid framework which deals with the problems of multiethnic participation and inclusion and therefore the main reasons for existence of ethnic political entities in Macedonia becomes obsolete. The challenges imposed by uncertainty of their future survival could be solved if the process of de-ethnicization applies to all ethnic entities and ensures their inclusion into multiethnic alliances as a first phase of de-ethnicization. The multiethnic alliances could then foster the progression of de-ethnicization resulting in transformation of alliances into non-ethnic coalitions, which was the case with the political parties of smaller ethnicities and it could be used as application framework for the main objective, defined as democratic multi-ethnic sustainability. In other words, “in a democratic multiethnic society the key challenge is ‘striking the balance between cultural autonomy and social solidarity, so that the former does not lapse into separatism and essentialised identities, and so that the latter does not slide into minority cultural assimilation.’”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Chandra, Kanchan “*Ethnic Parties and Democratic Stability*” pp.2  
[http://politics.as.nyu.edu/docs/IO/4737/chandra\\_f04.pdf](http://politics.as.nyu.edu/docs/IO/4737/chandra_f04.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> Carment, David, James, Patrick and Taydas, Zeynep, 2006, pp. 1

<sup>33</sup> Cordell, Karl and Wolff, Stefan, 2010, pp. 60

<sup>34</sup> Ian O’Flynn and David Russell, London: Pluto press, 2005 pp. 216

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