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ANALYSIS OF INTERNAL PARTY DEMOCRACY IN MACEDONIA

by
Center for Research
and Policy Making



POLITICS

I M P R E S S U M

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PREFACE

Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) in its international cooperation and engagement has always been campaigning worldwide for the promotion of human rights, democracy, its values and practices, as well as for the promotion of the rule of law institutions and the principles of social market economy.

At present, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung maintains around 70 offices with 80 official representatives from Germany and more than 400 people as local employees that place a lot of effort in the process of providing political education and consulting. All these efforts aim at contributing towards the development and consolidation of democracy.

Guided by the principle that in a democracy citizens should be involved in political action, our programmes in nearly all countries provide consulting measures for cooperation with and support for democratic, modern parties, which is the focal point of our international activities. However, a direct democracy where every citizens is directly involved in the political decision-making is not possible within modern mass societies. This is why a modern democracy needs well-structured political parties that represent the will and the

interests of the citizens as authentically as possible and offer a space for their political engagement, in order to influence politics and political decisions-making.

We are convinced that a modern representative democracy is inconceivable without modern and democratic political parties, and only the parties that ensure mechanisms for the involvement of citizens guarantee that a broad voice of the society is heard. Therefore it is important to take a closer look not only at the political programmes of the parties, but also their internal organization, their way of leading internal discussions, debates and managing conflicts within and between different branches and groups of the party. Here we can add the recruitment of candidates and dealing with the involvement of their members, which are crucial characteristics of a modern democratic party structure, particularly if the party intends to govern a democratic country. The party members will only be able to fulfil their functions and duties and maintain their credibility, if they show in their own organization a clear commitment to democratic structures and rules, and if they keep working on it steadily.

This research study conducted by the Think Tank *Center for Research and Policy Making* (CRPM) in cooperation with various Macedonian authors deals with the topic of "Internal Party Democracy in the Republic of Macedonia". It examines, describes, and compares the intra-party democracy in some of the bigger political parties in the Republic of Macedonia, in order to provide a basis for the development and consolidation of democratic structures, and the possibilities for their members' participation.

For further reading on the organization and function of political parties in general we would also like to recommend the book

"Political Parties", written by my KAS-colleagues Wilhelm Hofmeister and Karsten Grabow. The book was published by KAS and can be downloaded from the internet (www.kas.de/macedonia) or obtained from the KAS office Skopje.

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1

INTRODUCTION ANALYSIS OF INTERNAL PARTY DEMOCRACY IN MACEDONIA¹

Internal party democracy in consolidating democracies has always been a challenging issue. Moreover, party democracy in these countries has mainly been analyzed and valued against its contribution to the development of the overall democratic processes (Cular, 2010). In spite of the increased popularity of the term in the academic debate it seems that no universal definition exists that comprehensively explains the concept nor there a recipe prescribing how should the implementation of democratic principles within the parties be managed in practice. Notwithstanding the conceptual and theoretical flaws, proponents of intra-party democracy argue that promotion of democratic principles in the parties could well contribute to development of the overall democratic processes in consolidating democracies (Scarow, 2005; Lehrer, 2012; Burnell and Gerits 2010). In Macedonia, similar as in the other post-communist countries of South Eastern Europe, the legacies of the party culture from the past such as strong hierarchical tendencies within, non-competitive leadership

¹ Authors of the report Aleksandar Cekov and Zhidas Daskalovski. Research assistance by Jeton Krasniqi, Marija Aleksoska, Iskra Gerazova.

elections and the top-to-bottom approach in decision making process are still part of party organization (Karasimeonov, 2005). Such characteristics of the intra-party organization in Macedonia could impede, to large extent, the development of the democratic processes within the parties, as well as in the country. Therefore, there is need for evaluation of the intra-party democracy in Macedonia aiming to identify the main challenges the process confronts with, and to offer plausible arguments for further development of the process.

The analysis proceeds with a short review of the academic debate on intra-party democracy in order to pinpoint the main features of the concept by presenting the main theoretical strands of the democracy theory motivating on this issue. After the methodology is being explained, the paper will embark on evaluation of the intra-party democracy in Macedonia by focusing on three general categories: general level of democracy, relationship between central organs and local branches, and party democracy and elections. In the conclusion, the paper presents the general situation in Macedonia regarding intra-party democracy, based on the findings of the analysis.

1.1. DEBATE ON INTRA-PARTY DEMOCRACY

Internal party or intra party democracy is a broad term that includes democratic principles in party organization and wide range of methods for effective inclusion of party constituents in both decision-making and policy creation process (Daskalovski et al., 2012). Thus, party organization based on the bottom-up approach, maintaining transparency

and inclusiveness in the decision-making process as well as accountability of the party leadership are the basic principles generally considered as benchmarks of internal party democracy. Furthermore, the creation of the political will should be carried out through a process of wide deliberation among the citizens, which are equitably represented in the party structure on a basis of geographic, gender and social dimension. In order to examine the impact that internal party democracy has on the functioning of the political parties and its importance for the development of the overall democratic process in a country, we have to delineate two competing issues inherently embedded in the concept: the feasibility of intra-party democracy and its desirability. The former is related to the impact this concept has on the functioning of political parties in terms of their ability to effectively compete in the political system. Namely, as the political parties are traditionally defined as centralized institutions with strong hierarchical tendencies within (Mitchell, 1962), this very feature enables them to strengthen party cohesion and to gain competitiveness against other parties (Durverger, 1954). On the other side, the scholars in favor of intra-party democracy argue that political parties organized on a basis of democratic principles, such as competitive and non-discriminatory intra-party elections, inclusive and participatory decision-making process, are better equipped for party struggle in the political system (Teorell, 1998; Biezen, 2004; Scarrow 2005). This assertion is based on the arguments that political parties practicing intra-party democracy will enjoy greater electoral success, given that they select more capable and appealing candidates and have more responsive policies that match citizen's needs (Scarrow, 2005).

Desirability of intra-party democracy for development of overall democratic process in a society is yet another issue on which scholars have not found common ground. The question

of desirability of intra-party democracy in a society, by and large, depends on the theoretical approach being adopted.

Thus, liberal democratic theory is not so much concerned by the intra-party democracy. According to Sartori (2005), the leadership of political parties is by far more important role they play than citizens' participation whose role is to merely accept or reject their leaders and political platforms during elections. This is in line with the strand in liberal democratic theory that understands democracy not as an end for itself, but in view of its function to safeguard democratic principles better than other political systems (Katz, 1997: 46).

Conversely, the proponents of deliberative and participatory democracy place greater value on the intra-party democracy and its main features: citizens' participation in the decision-making processes, and competitive and non-discriminatory intra-party elections. For the participatory and deliberative democracy theory, fully-fledged democratic system can be labeled the one in which the main agents of democracy (political parties) uphold democratic principles itself (Biezen, 2004). Moreover, given that democracy is seen as a product of deliberation among free, equal and rational citizens (Elser, 1998), the political parties should provide a forum where citizen could freely deliberate, so that their preferences and needs are effectively represented by the political leaders.

Drawing on the debate on intra-party democracy, it can be concluded that both theoretical strands have given plausible arguments. Too much intra-party democracy could indeed undermine party cohesiveness and lessen party competitiveness against other parties as it dilutes party leadership, which could eventually negatively affect the ability of the party to keep electoral promises. Moreover, having party factions fighting creates instability within the party

that could be reflected in the political system. Nevertheless, political parties should uphold at least basic democratic principles within the party which could prove beneficiary for the overall democratic processes in a country as they could spur democratic practices, culture and ideology in the society. Therefore, depending on the social and political context in which they operate, political parties should strive to attain the right balance between party democracy, in light of social responsiveness they bear for developing overall democratic processes on one side, and maintaining their role as effective competitors in the political system by aggregating citizens' preferences on the other side.

1.2. METHODOLOGY

The analysis applies qualitative research methodology. Data collection included text analysis of the primary sources (statutes of the parties and other relevant party documents) and analysis of secondary sources such as relevant studies on intra-party democracy for Macedonia and the region, journal articles and articles in the daily newspapers. Furthermore, legal analysis was conducted on the legal framework that regulates the functioning of the political parties which includes Law on General Elections and Law on Financing of Political Parties.

The paper examined the intra-party dynamics in six Macedonian political parties: Social-Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDMS), VMRO-DPMNE², Liberal-Democratic Party (LDP), Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), Democratic Party of the Albanians (DPA) and the National Party for Reformation (NPR).

² Vnatreshna Makedonska Revolucionerna Organizacija-Demokratska Partija za Makedonsko Nacionalno Edinstvo (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization- Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity).

In absence of universal definition on intra-party democracy, the analysis focused on the essential instrumental elements of intra-party democracy in Macedonia. Following the approach that differentiates between the three facets of the party, it was examined: party in the ground, party in the central office and party in the public office (Katz and Mair, 2002).

Employing the methodology developed by the CRPM team³, the analysis has focused on the following instrumental elements: party membership, local organization, ancillary organizations, the number of organizational levels, the number and type of party organs, selection procedures, and the relationship to the parliamentary party. Based on existing methodologies, the scale of inter party democracy in Macedonia will be evaluated using the following seven dimensions: 1) **members' rights** (including toleration of party factions, direct participation of members in direct decision-making and elections, in selection procedures etc.); 2) **the relations between the party and its parliamentary group** (including ownership of parliamentary mandates, dissenting voting etc.), 3) **prerogatives of the party president** (including right to propose/appoint vice-president, right to propose/appoint other member of the central bodies etc.); 4) **the horizontal structure of the party**; 5) **autonomy of the local party offices** (including autonomy in decision-making concerning election and replacing local leadership, local decision-making, if party officials from higher levels ex officio members of local bodies, 6) **local branches autonomy at times of elections** (dealing with the selection procedure for local elections and local coalitions); 7) **the competences and the election procedure of party leaders**, (including prerogatives of conventions vs. executive bodies); 8) **nominations of candidates for public functions and electoral lists**,

³ The same methodology was used in producing the paper "Internal party democracy in Kosovo" by the CRPM, published by KAS.

(in proportional systems ranking the candidates). All of the mentioned dimensions will be evaluated with grades 1-3.⁴ These dimensions are grouped in three categories: **general level of democracy**, (categories 1-4) **autonomy of the local branches/relations of the central and the local branches** (categories 5 and 6) and **democracy and elections** (categories 7 and 8).

⁴ Dushan Pavlovic, The Political Parties and the Party System in Serbia After 2000, in: Социолошки преглед, vol. XLI (јан.-мар. 2007), no.1, pp. 123-141.

2.

EVALUATION OF INTRA-PARTY DEMOCRACY IN MACEDONIA

Intra-party democracy is a fashionable term in Macedonia. In the public debate it has been present since the introduction of the multiparty system in the early nineties. While scholars and analysts openly criticize the low-level of party democracy in Macedonia, party leaders and dignitaries only declaratory acknowledge the need for more party democracy. Thus, according to the political analyst Mersel Billali "it is an illusion to think that we can have healthy society without healthy political parties as it is impossible to have democracy in society without democracy in the parties".⁵ In practice however, little has been done for strengthening democratic processes within the parties. The general situation in Macedonia regarding intra-party democracy has been probably best described by Gordana Siljanoska-Davkova stating that: "tragi-comical are the party leaders speaking up for democracy and development of democratic processes in the country on one side, and run sultan-parties on the other side." (Petreski: 2012) The statement epitomizes some of the essential features of party organization in Macedonia: lack of democracy and

⁵ "Party (non) democracy" column of Mersel Bilali published in the daily newspaper "Dnevnik" on 18.03.2006.

transparency within the parties and autocratic tendencies of party leaders (Karasimeonov, 2005). Moreover, it can be said that the process of development of intra-party democracy in Macedonia faces the similar challenges as the consolidating democracies from South Eastern Europe: non-competitive leadership elections, discriminatory selection of candidates and dominance of elites (Daskalovski et al., 2012). Such internal organization of the political parties leads to entrenchment of the position of the party leadership and attenuation of parties' capability to effectively represent citizens' preferences.

In modern democracies political parties are responsive to the citizens' preferences by means of adapting their policies to the public opinion. Nevertheless, preferences of the citizens and those of the party members could oftentimes strongly deviate, putting the party leadership in a position to choose whether it will be more responsive to the party membership or the general electorate (Leher, 2012). Moreover, as party leadership seeks to maintain its power within the party, during the intra party elections it tends to address the preference of the "selectorate", which Bruno de Mesquita (2002) defines as "set of people who have institutional say in choosing leaders". This creates another line of division between the selectorate and the "regular" party members with less influence in the party. Such internal structure implies that intra-party dynamics is characterized by the struggle between various groups which seek to exert as much influence as possible within the party.

In order to better understand the intra-party dynamics in Macedonia with regards to the responsiveness of the party leadership to the needs and preferences of the citizens, the selectorate and the party members, the parties' internal bodies are examined below in the text, including both formal and informal rules on which the party operates.

- ***Legal possibility for party factions (groups who form a separate interest group) based on an issue or more.***

It is not clearly stated in the Statute that there is a possibility of forming factions within the currently governing party in Macedonia, VMRO-DPMNE. In practice, however, there is evidence that tendencies for forming party faction have not been tolerated. For example, Marjan Gjorchev and Dosta Dimovska along with their followers were not allowed to act as legal factions in VMRO-DPMNE as they expressed their dissatisfaction of the party politics under the presidency of Nikola Gruevski. Moreover, strong differences in opinion between groups or individuals that have stated their specific interests within the party on one side and the majority of the party members on the other side have almost always resulted in marginalization or even exclusion of such group or individuals. Often, clashes between party dignitary and majority result in creation of a new party by the former.

It should be noted however, that personal disagreements on strategic and operational issues rather than ideological differences are the most common reasons for formation of a new party. The case was with Ljube Boskovski (who went on to form the United for Macedonia party), Marjan Gjorchev (Agricultural Party of Macedonia), Filip Petrovski (Democratic Right Party), Dosta Dimovska (Democratic Republican Union of Macedonia) Boris Zmejkovski (VMRO-Real), just to mention a few. However, after short existence on the political scene promoting (similar to VMRO-DPMNE) Christian-democratic values, all of the above mention party leaders (except for Ljube Boshkovski) at certain point have rejoined VMRO-DPMNE. According to the leaders of these parties, such step was both pragmatic and necessary for winning upcoming

elections.⁶ Justifying her decision to rejoin VMRO-DPMNE, Dosta Dimovska has stated that: "In the spirit of the Christian love, we should reconcile and forget about any *personal disagreements* between us". The question could be raised whether these parties would have been formed in a first place if party factions were normatively legalized.

Neither factions in Social Democratic Union of Macedonia⁷ (SDSM) are allowed, nor are tendencies for such activity tolerated. In 2006, the ex-party leader of SDSM Vlado Buchkovski⁸ has put forward an initiative for normative legalization of party factions in SDSM through statutory changes as part of a broader reform process in the party⁹. Nevertheless, such possibility was categorically refuted by the party leadership. Jani Makraduli, the vice-president of the party at that time, defended the party position against allowing factions in the party stating that: "We have analyzed the party statutes of lots of parties with social-democratic ideology but we have not found any example where party factions are legalized"¹⁰. In addition, Karolina Ristova Asterud, party dignitary of SDSM and International Secretary of SDSM, in her column for the daily newspaper *Utrinski Vesnik* argued that comparative party experiences and political science does not give clear and positive dossier to the party factions.¹¹

Possibility of having party factions is also not explicitly mentioned in the Statutes of both Liberal Democratic Party

⁶ "Gruevski is uniting with Zmejkovski, Gjorchev and Dimovska" article published in the daily "Dnevnik on 18.03.2006.

⁷ Socijal Demokratski Sojuz na Makedonija.

⁸ President of SDSM from 2004 to 2006.

⁹ Interview with Vlado Buchkovski published in the daily *Utrinski Vesnik* on 08.09.2012.

¹⁰ Interview with Jani Makraduli published in the daily *Dnevnik*, 21.01.2007.

¹¹ "Saloon debate on democracy in SDSM (2)" column of Karolina Ristova Asterud published in the daily newspaper *Utrinski Vesnik* on 09.02.2007.

(LDP) and Democratic Union for Integration (DUI). In DUI, strong differences in opinion on strategic and operational issues with a tendency of organizing factions have been noticed in 2005, when party members were divided on the issue for "regionalization" (set of proposals and amendments regarding the Law on territorial organization) of Macedonia¹². The differences became visible in light of the approaching local elections, when each group was seeking to better position before the elections. Ermira Mehmeti, spokeswoman of DUI in that time, denied that these "misunderstandings" are signs of divisions within the party, with a tendency to grow in party factions.¹³ It should be noted that earlier that period, Hisni Shaqiri, leader of one of the informal faction in DUI, had left the party accusing the party leader Ali Ahmeti for certain manipulations.¹⁴

As for LDP, according to the party dignitary Nano Ruzin, party factions in LDP are allowed in practice¹⁵ Ruzin, who was inter alia candidate for president of the Republic of Macedonia on the last presidential elections, asserted such possibility in light of the recent intra-party developments, when Ivica Bocevski expressed his different stance from the party official position on strategic and operational issues regarding the upcoming local elections in 2013.¹⁶ Commenting on this issue, Nano Ruzin in an interview for the daily *Utrinski Vesnik* said that to some extent this is a "revolutionary" case in context of intra-party democracy which confirms LDP's readiness to tolerate party factions.¹⁷

¹² "DUI with three streams" article published in the daily newspaper Vreme on 12.02.2005.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ "Hisni Shaqiri formed fraction in DUI from the Kumanovo branch" article published in the daily newspaper Vreme on 20.01.2005.

¹⁵ Interview with Nano Ruzin published in the daily Utrinski Vesnik, 24.10.2012.

¹⁶ Source: daily newspaper Utrinski Vesnik, published on 24.10.2012.

¹⁷ Interview with Nano Ruzin published in the daily Utrinski Vesnik, 24.10.2012.

The Statute of Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA) does not explicitly mention the possibility of having party factions. Theoretically, party factions could be formed on the ground of article 11.3/4 of the Statute that reads: "every party member has right to freely express their opinion within the party". The article 11.3/4 could also be invoked in cases where such opinion does not comply with the majority in the party. In addition, pursuant to article 16, party members cannot be held responsible for expressing their views. In practice, however, there are no indications that party factions are tolerated within the party. For example, after the confrontation of Imer Selmani with the party leadership in 2008, this party-dignitary left the party and went on to form a new political entity. The reasons for this, according to Selmani, were lack of tolerance for party factions and the general low level of democracy within the party in which he had been its member as early as 1996.¹⁸

The Statute of NPR does not mention the possibility of having party factions. No such tendencies appeared in the real political life during the relatively short period in which the party has existed.

- ***Possibility to publicly criticize the party position***

The members of VMRO-DPMNE can express their individual opinions that are opposite from the official party positions, and this is usually done through columns. Nevertheless, the freedom of expression of the individual opinion is limited with Article 16 in the statute which states that actions against the statute, the program documents and the other acts of the party can be sanctioned even by excluding a member from the party. A wide interpretation of this article can seriously limit

¹⁸ Interview with Imer Selmani published in the daily Dnevnik, 04.09.2008.

the freedom of individual expression of the party members. In practice, there is no strong evidence as to examine how the public criticism is being dealt by the party leadership.

In SDSM, members have the right to have separate opinions, proposals and positions, the right to inform and to ask for support from their membership for a renewed review of an issue for which they have not received the majority of support. However, in reality that may place them in the minority during debates and decision making or even to marginalize them. For instance, such marginalization of a party member in reality happened to party dignitary Tito Petkovski, after he publicly stated his different position from the party's stand regarding the Law for Recognition of the Albanian University in Mala Recica and the Law on Territorial Reorganization in 2004.¹⁹ After shortly acting as part of an informal faction in SDSM, Tito Petkovski left the party in which he had been a member for over 15 years and went on to form the New Social Democratic Party. The reasons, according to Petkovski were "lack of democracy in SDSM, which is also the case with other parties in Macedonia".²⁰

Expressing an opinion that is different or opposite from the official position of the party or the majority of its members in LDP is allowed under the article 13 of the Statute. Under the same article, however, such opinion is encouraged to be expressed and affirmed through the legal party organs. In reality, this was the case with the party dignitary Ivica Bocevski, who openly stated his different position from the party decision to form coalition with SDSM and other parties for the upcoming local elections in 2013.²¹

¹⁹ "Withered the rose on Petkovski's lapel" article published in the daily newspaper Utrinski Vesnik on 16.10.2006.

²⁰ "Petkovski second time in two weeks in Shtip" article published in the daily newspaper Vecer on 05.09.2006.

²¹ "Bocevski does not see himself in Crvenkovski's "future" article published

Possibility to publicly criticize the official party position or having different and opposite opinion from the majority in DUI is to large extent limited by the article 11 of the Statute, which envisages sanctions for actions against the Statute and the party program such as expelling a member from the party. In reality, party discipline and cohesiveness is maintained by the party leader Ali Ahmeti whose authority in the party is considered uncontested.²²

In DPA, the article 11 of the Statute of the party gives the possibility to the members to express freely their different and opposite opinions from the party majority without being held responsible for such actions. However, this rarely happens in practice, since in such way party members are risking minorization and marginalization in the decision making process.

According to the party Statute of NPR, party members have right to express its opinions and positions within the party bodies (Art. 25). Moreover, article 25.5/7 bestows a right of initiative to party members. The actions of party members, however, are limited by the article 26, which reads that party members are obliged to comply with the statutory provisions.

- ***Can MPs vote against the party position in the Parliament?***

The parliamentary group of the SDSM acts in coordination with the decision of the Central Board (Article 76 of the Statute) and at least twice a year the parliamentary group submits a report for its work and coordinates its activity with the Central Board. The Central Board evaluates the work of the parliamentary group and gives suggestions in relations to issues in parliamentary debate (art. 77). Thus, such

in the daily newspaper Dnevnik on 24.10.2012.

²² Interview with a party dignitary of DUI published at time.mk, 17.12.2009.

institutional set up leaves limited space for maneuvering for the MP. In practice, Tito Petkovski as MP from SDSM has abstained from confidence voting for SDSM's government, which strongly resonated in the public, accentuating thus, his conflict with the party leadership.²³

Theoretically, the members of the parliamentary group of VMRO-DPMNE have the possibility to vote differently from the official party position for a specific question, but this right of theirs is not exercised often in practice. The same is true also for the MPs of LDP. In both cases, more or less, members are subjected to party discipline which leaves less room for individual action.

The Statute of DPA prescribes that parliamentary group harmonizes the activities of its members and assures that those activities are in compliance with the party's Statute and Program (article 54.3). The Statute of DUI in a similar manner regulates the activities of its parliamentary group under the article 61.

- ***Elections procedures for party positions- Elections of Party President/ who can legally vote out the President of the Party?***

Party members of SDSM have the right to express their opinion and the same to be taken into account. That is why all members should be included in the election of leadership and office holders through primaries, and also to participate more actively in the decision-making process (Article 11/2.3.4.5).

According to the Party Statute, candidates for party functions can be nominated by the party members, through self-

²³ "Withered the rose on Petkovski's lap" article published in the daily newspaper Utrinski Vesnik on 16.10.2006.

nomination, and on a proposal by the President, the Secretary and the Executive Board of the Party (Article 68). The election of SDSM officials, including the party president, is carried out through secret voting, in two rounds. In the first round, a majority of the votes of attendees is required, under the condition that it represents no less than one-third of the total number of the members of the body. Two candidates proceed to the second round. Securing the votes of a relative majority, which should be no less than one-third the total number of members of the bodies, is sufficient for victory. As for the election of the party president, in practice usually only one candidate is nominated at the Congress, so his victory is uncontested. In 2003, rumors had it that Tito Petkovski will run for the position of party leader, challenging Branko Crvenkovski. According to Petkovski when two candidates run for the position it unequivocally contributes to strengthening of party democracy²⁴. Since the formation of the party, the position of party president of SDSM was held by Branko Crvenkovski (1991-2004), Vlado Buchkovski (2004-2006) and Radmila Shekerinska (2006-2008). On its 9th Congress in 2009, the party delegates re-elected Branko Crvenkovski as president of the party.²⁵

In VMRO-DPMNE the nomination of candidates for party president is done at a party congress (a type of convention), and according to the Statute of the party, the nominees should be supported by at least 30 members of the congress (Article 20). In this way, there is an open possibility for nomination of more than one candidate. This was the case in 2003 when Nikola Gruevski and Marjan Gjorcev ran for the position. It is

²⁴ "Crvenkovski will not have counter candidate for the leader position" article published in the daily newspaper "Dnevnik" on 18.03.2006.

²⁵ Source: History of SDSM published at the official party web site sdsm.org.mk.

also worth noting, that in practice the party president and the central committee can exercise substantial influence in the election process in order to secure victory for the candidate they favor. Such influence was exerted by the former president of the party Ljubco Georgievski, who endorsed the election of Nikola Gruevski for party leader.²⁶

The Statute of the LDP reads that the candidates are self-nominated and the Assembly of the Party elects and calls off the President of the Party (Article 34). In practice, there is usually only one candidate and the victory is uncontested. That was the case with the election of the current president of LDP Andrej Zernovski succeeding Jovan Manasievski on this position. Manasievski resigned from the position after the weak electoral result of LDP at the parliamentary elections in 2011.²⁷

The nomination of the candidates for party leader in DPA is done by a delegate of the congress of the Party, supported by at least 10% of the delegates. Then, the procedure entails secret voting by the delegates of the Congress, which also has the power to call off the mandated of the President (Article 38). In the Party, the leader was changed only once when due to health problems the previous party leader Arben Xhaferi was succeeded by Menduh Thaqi.

The same procedure is described also in the Statute of DUI under the Article 44. Nevertheless, the Statute entails that the criteria under which a candidate can be nominated are determined by the Central Committee (Article 45). It should be noted however, that no change of a party leader has ever happened since the formation of the party. This

²⁶ "Gjorchev and Gruevski have started the battle for the leader's position" ; article published in the daily newspaper Dnevnik on 16.10.2006.

²⁷ Source: daily newspaper Nova Makedonija, 03.10.2011.

function has been exercised by Ali Ahmeti whose position has not been contested until now.²⁸

According to the party statute of NPR, the election of the president is carried out on a Party Congress (36.6). The same party body has the right to vote out the party president according to the article 36.7.

- ***Who nominates and elects vice president?***

The procedures for nomination and election of vice president of SDSM is described in the Article 68, which also regulates the procedures for election of the party president and other party positions of the central party bodies. The party body that plays central role in the election process is the Central Committee, which determines the criteria for nomination and election of the candidates.

In VMRO-DPMNE, the president of the party nominates candidates for vice-presidents of the party. Under the article 24 of the Statute, the vice-presidents are voted in/out by the Central Committee of the Party. Similarly, the nomination of candidates for vice-presidents in DUI is also done by the president of the party. The General Assembly of the Party then votes on the proposal (Article 40.4). However, it should be noted that Article 44.5 which entitles the party president with the power of a veto on decisions and proposals of every party-body, could be also used to exert its influence on the elections for vice-presidents.

The right to nominate candidates for vice-presidents in DPA is given to both the president (Article 46) and the Central Committee, which can nominate a candidate supported by

²⁸ Interview with party-dignitary of DUI published in the daily Dnevnik on, 24.10.2010.

at least 1/3 of its members (Article 55). The nominees of the Central Committee, however, must be approved by the president. Vice-presidents are voted in by the Central Committee and the same body (at least ¼ of its members) can initiate procedure for voting out of the vice president. The president has also the right to vote out vice-presidents.

In LDP candidates for vice-presidents are nominated by the president of the Party, and it is the Central Committee that votes in/out the vice-president (Article 39). In the election process for vice-president the president and the Executive Board have decisive influence on the result.

The right to nominate candidates for vice-presidents in NPR is conferred to the party president, while the Central Committee elects the vice-presidents of the party (Art. 83 and 51.2). The same party bodies are involved and the same procedure is followed in the voting out of the vice-presidents. Namely, the president of the party proposes, while Central Committee votes out the vice-presidents.

- ***Who can legally vote in/out the General Secretary?***

In SDSM, the procedure for nomination, voting in/out of the General Secretary and the party bodies involved in the process is prescribed in the Statute of the Party under the Articles 68-74. The procedure is the same for party officials, the President, General Secretary and members of the Executive Board. However, the three high party officials are obliged to submit a detailed agenda to the Executive Board.

Nomination of a candidate for Secretary-General (SG) of the VMRO-DPMNE is done by the party president and he/she has right to initiate procedure for voting out of the SG (Article

22). The Central Committee of the Party votes in/out the SG (Article 24). In practice, however, the influence of the party leader on the election results is decisive.

In LDP, all interested party members for the position of General Secretary are allowed to express their intention through self-nomination.

Nomination of candidates for General Secretary in DPA is done by the Central Committee on a proposal of the President. The Central Committee is entitled by Statute to vote in and vote out the General Secretary (Article 40.5). No need to mention that the party president has the right of veto on all decisions and proposals of all party bodies under the Article 44.5.

The procedure for electing General Secretary in DUI is prescribed in Articles 58, 46 and 48. According to this procedure, the General Committee nominates the candidate with support of at least 1/3 of the members on a proposal of the party president. Then, the General Committee votes in/out the General Secretary.

Nominations for the position of General Secretary in NPR are suggested by the party president (Art. 83). Then the Central Committee votes in the General Secretary, and the same party body has the right to vote out the General Secretary (Arc. 51.3).

- ***Who can legally vote in/out the Executive Committee?***

According to the Statute of VMRO-DPMNE, the members of the Executive Board are being voted in and voted out by the Central Committee (Article 24). Also, if the candidate meets the quality norms, the president can use its authority to vote in certain candidate for a member of the Executive

Board. Likewise, the Central Committee of LDP votes in/out the members of the Executive Board under the Article 39 of the Statute of the Party. Same as in the abovementioned case, the president of the party has decisive influence in the process of voting in members of Executive Board.

According to Article 54 of the Statute of DUI, the Executive Board is accountable before the Central Committee. The nomination of candidates for members of the Executive Board is done by the party president.

In DPA, candidates of the Executive Board are selected from the members of the Central Committee, and the same party body votes in and votes out the members of the Executive Body (Article 43.7). The absolute right of a veto of the president of the party could be used here, also under the article 44.5

The Executive Board of SDSM is consisted of the Party President; Secretary of the Party, Vice-presidents, Organizational Secretary, Secretary for International Cooperation and 17-19 members elected from the members of the Central Committee. The election procedure is described in the Articles 68-74 of the Statute of SDSM.

In NPR the Central Committee is entitled to vote in and out members of the Executive Board according to article 51.1/10 of the Party Statute.

- **Level of representation of the party**

For the internal democracy of the party it is important to know if the party bodies take in consideration the distribution of the mandates across regions, gender, age and social status.

The Congress is the largest of the party bodies of VMRO-DPMNE and the criteria for the distribution of delegates are determined by the Central Committee. In general, all of the mentioned representativeness criteria are compiled in the selection of the delegates. The regular meetings of the Congress are held once in four years, but there is possibility for convoking an exceptional meeting in between the regular ones.

The Central Committee of the party has members from all of the regional committees in the country, so the regional representativeness to some extent is insured. The gender, age and social status representation are complied with. The Central Committee holds meetings when necessary, but at least once in three months.

The Executive Committee of VMRO-DPMNE as the smallest organ of the party, with only 17 members has met all of the representativeness criteria within the limits of possibility. The meetings of the Executive Committee are held once a week. The decisions adopted in the Congress are binding for the Executive Committee.

In LDP, the largest body of the party – the Assembly has some kind of regional representativeness since it has members from all of the municipal committees and the city committee (Article 31). But this cannot be concluded in the case of gender and social status. The participation of the youth members of the party is insured by the few delegates from the Liberal – Democratic Youth they have as members of the Assembly, but besides that, there is no major effort to sustain the age balance in this body. The meetings of the Assembly are held as needed, at least once in two years (Article 32).

The Executive Committee of LDP is a quite smaller body, so it is hard to maintain the regional representativeness. There is some effort to have gender and age representativeness, but

this is not the case for the social status of its members. The Executive Committee holds its meetings when needed.

The Central Committee is representative regarding the gender and age, and partially regarding regions, but not at all concerning the social status. The meetings of the committee are held as needed (Article 37).

The General Assembly of DPA, the largest representative body of the party, convenes at least twice a year (Article 41). Given that the members of the General Assembly are being elected by the Congress of the Party (Article 39), gender, social and geographic representativeness of the body can be arguable.

As a representative body, the Executive Board of DPA consists of 9 members (Article 50) in which the gender representativeness has not been well maintained since only one seat is reserved for women. However, the situation regarding representativeness of women is well maintained in the Central Committee, where 6 out of 25 members are women (Article 42).

In DUI, the number of representatives in the Assembly is determined by the Central Committee according to the number of the members in the municipal organizations (Article 42). Thus, geographical representativeness is somewhat insured. The Assembly convenes once in four years. Moreover, a party Congress could be convoked when necessary, on a proposal of the President or 2/3 of the members of the Central Committee (Article 41).

The Executive Board of the party consists of 21 members and holds meetings as needed, but at least once in a month (Article 52) while the Central Committee, consisting of 75 members (Article 47) convenes at least once in sixth months.

In SDSM, the Congress is the highest body of the party, and the delegates are elected for a period of 4 years. The Congress maintains geographical representativeness by default, since the delegates are elected from the municipal organization on a basis of proportional representation of the number of members in municipal organizations (Article 24). There are also tendencies in the Congress to maintain equitable gender representation.

The Central Committee is the highest party body between two Congresses. According to the Article 25, the Central Committee consists of 70-90 members. The gender representativeness within this body is respected, given that in the current composition 25 out of 87 members are women. According to the Article 30, meetings of the Central Committee are held as needed, but at least once in every three months.

Table 1: Index of party democracy in Macedonia-*General level of democracy within the party*

	SDSM	VMRO-DPMNE	LDP	DUI	DPA	NPR	Explanation of the Index (in-between categories possible too)
Possibility to have party factions	0	0	0.5	0	0	0	Legal and practical possibility exists=3 Legal possibility only=2 Party members in practice tolerated=1 No legal and practical possibility=0
Criticism of the party stand	2	2	2	2	2	2	Legal and practical possibility exists=3 Legal possibility only=2 Party members in practice tolerated=1 No legal and practical possibility=0
Vote against the party line	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	Legal and practical possibility exists=3 Legal possibility only=2 Party members in practice tolerated=1 No legal and practical possibility=0
Elections of party functions/recall of president	2	2	2.5	2	2	2	All members vote=3 Vote by the Congress=2 Vote by the General Council= 1 Control of the president/ presidency/executive body=0
Elections of party functions/recall of vice-president	2	1	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	All members vote=3 Congress=2 General Council= 1 Control of the president/ presidency/executive body=0
Elections of party functions/ general secretary	2	0.5	2	1	0.5	0.5	All members vote=3 Congress=2 General Council= 1 Control of the president/ presidency/executive body=0
Elections of party functions/recall of Executive Board	1.5	1	1	0.5	0.5	0.5	All members vote=3 Congress=2 General Council= 1 Control of the president/ presidency/executive body=0

Diversity/ representativeness of minority and disadvantaged groups in the party organs	2.5	2.5	1	1	1	1	High level of diversity (balance in three categories gender, age, region)=3 Medium level of diversity (balance in two categories gender, age, region)=2 Small level of diversity (balance in one of the categories gender, age, region)=1 No diversity(male, age, region centered)=0
TOTAL	12.5	9.5	10	8	7	7	

3.

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CENTRAL PARTY ORGANS AND THE LOCAL BRANCHES

In view of the intra-party democracy, relations between the Central Party Organs and the Local Branches have always been a central issue. Power relations within more centralized parties are in general being established in such manner that secures the elite's dominance over the party structures by claiming ownership by the latter of the decision-making process. Thus, the party members are often subjected to discrimination and exclusion of the political mainstream within the party. With the words of the German scholar Robert Mitchels (1962), such tendencies are in line with the endeavors of the party leadership to control the party at the expense of the party membership. Exclusiveness within the parties in consolidating democracies could undermine the development of the democratic processes to a large extent.

In the case of Macedonia, the leadership dominance has been identified as one of the main obstacles for party democracy, and consequently, for the development of democracy in the country, both by the academic circles (see for example in

Siljanoska-Davkova, 2005) as well as printed media. Below, the Macedonian case is examined in more details.

• ***Who has the right to establish party branches***

The organization of VMRO-DPMNE on a local level consists of four different types of bodies: municipal committees, committees of electoral districts, local committees, and cross-border committees (Article 39).

The municipal committee is the highest body in the municipal organization. The decision for forming a municipal committee, according to the Rules of Procedure, is brought by the Executive Committee of VMRO DPMNE. But in practice, this decision is brought by the Central Committee. The right to dismiss the municipal committee is not attributed to a specific organ in the statute and the rules of procedure, but in practice this is also done by the Central Committee.

SDSM has a decentralized model of organization. It is organized on the territorial principle, in hierarchy and subordination between the local and state levels (Article 39). Local organizations are the basic form of building political will and realizing the rights and commitments of party members. The bodies of SDSM at local level are: conference, president of municipal organization, executive municipal board and supervisory municipal board (Article 41). One municipal organization can include subdivided levels of community organizations. The conference is the highest body of the municipal organization and includes the president, the members of the presidency and the supervisory board, but also members of the municipal council, members of the central board, MPs, the ministers and deputy ministers from the related municipality organization, as well as the mayor

and the president of the local club of the Social Democratic Youth of Macedonia. The competences of the conference include: proposing candidates for the SDSM bodies as well as nominating candidates for the local self-government bodies; participating in the building and realization of the party program; electing the president of the municipal organization, the members of the presidency and the supervisory board of the municipality organization; electing delegates for the congress; debating reports of SDSM bodies, etc. (Article 42). The municipal organization according to the statute can be establish and dissolved by the central board (Article 39.3)

The organization of the Liberal – Democratic Party is also based on a territorial principal. The municipal organization is the basic form of organization for the citizens of one municipality. The decision for forming a municipal organization is made by the Central Committee of the party. The Central Committee is also the body that decides upon the dismissal of the municipal organization (Article 16 and 17).

The decision of forming municipal organization in DPA is made by the Assembly and the same body could suspend or dismiss the municipal organizations (Article 23.2) In addition, on a request by at least 20 member of the party, the Central Committee could issue a ruling of forming a municipal organization (Article 18.3). In cases of serious breaches in the work of municipal organizations with the Statute, the president of the party could propose suspension or dismissal of the municipal organization (Article 44.6).

According to the Statute of DUI, it is the Executive Committee that decides on forming municipal organization, at a request of at least 20 party members from the region (Article 22). The right to dismiss the municipal organization is appointed to

the president of the party, in cases in which he/she considers that the municipal organization acts contrary of the Statute of the party (Article 46) In NPR locals can organize a branch in cooperation with the central office which votes the proposal.

• *Who develops the program for local elections?*

The procedure for creating the program for local election, although it should be, is not framed in the statute of SDSM. In practice, the municipal organizations create the program through local debate, members' suggestions and specialized commissions of CB and SDSM consult members and the same are establish on the Municipal Conference. The Congress then adopts the program.

When it comes to the formulation of election program for the local elections in VMRO-DPMNE, a wide team is included in the process. It includes teams of experts from the municipal committees, local committees, counselors from the municipalities, teams from the executive and central committee and the citizens through a public call in the media. This election program is then adopted by the central committee.

Regarding local elections, in LDP municipal organizations do not have the autonomy to create their own election program, but this is done by much higher bodies in the party hierarchy: the Executive Committee and the President of the party. This program is than adopted by the Central Committee of the party.

The procedure for formulating the electoral program in DPA is a result of an established practice, rather than being formally established by the Statute of the party. Currently,

the formulation of the party program for the local elections is bestowed to a party member who has graduated in the field of public opinion and mass communications. However, this party member is neither member of the party leadership, nor there is such a position determined by the party statute.²⁹ After the electoral program is once defined, the local branches establish the electoral office and electoral commission.

In DUI, the party program is being formulated by a special commission formed by high level party members, academics and other scholars. The commission is not established by the party statute, but rather, it is an informal party body, which membership varies from case to case. The role of the local branches in creation of the local elections program is very limited.³⁰ In NPR it is not yet clear who will formulate the party program for the local elections as this is the first time the party participates in such elections. The expectations are that an expert group consulting the branches will formulate the program for the local elections.³¹

- ***Who nominates/approves candidates for a mayor?***

Pursuant to the article 43 of the SDSM Statute, the right to nominate candidates for elective local positions, including that of a mayor, for local elections is conferred to the municipal conference. The same article of the Statute prescribes convoking mandatory municipal conference before any local elections, and in order to analyze the results of the local elections, municipal convene must be held.

²⁹ An anonymous interview with a party member of DPA. As much of the data gathered is sensitive information all interviewees insisted on not revealing their identity.

³⁰ An anonymous interview with a party member of DUI.

³¹ An anonymous interview with a party member of NPR.

The Statute of VMRO-DPMNE does not prescribe any procedure for nomination and selection of candidates for elective position on a local level. Nonetheless, the party establishes a practice for selection of candidates. In the past, the municipal organization had the right to select a candidate which was later approved or disapproved by the central party bodies. This practice has recently been changed, so the new procedure entails open public call on which applicants (both party and non-party members) by self-nomination express their intention to run for mayor. The applications are then being examined by a commission formed by the Central Committee. The successful candidates in this pre-selection process will be then interviewed by the party leader.³²

In LDP, selection of the mayor candidates, according to the statute of the party, is conferred to the municipal organization (Article 23), but in practice this is done by the party management.

According to the Statute of DPA, Article 27 envisages convoking assembly of the municipal organization for selection of nominees for elective local positions.

In DUI, the Article 31 of the Statute confers the right for nomination of candidates for mayor to the municipal organization, which has to be done in compliance with the priorities and criteria established by the Central Committee and the party president. The Central Committee is entitled to verify the candidates list for elective local positions for the local election in all municipalities (Article 48). In NPR the local branches are responsible in consultation with the party executive.

³² An anonymous interview with party member of VMRO-DPMNE.

- ***Who nominates/approves candidates for local assembly lists?***

The procedure for nomination and approval of candidates for the local assembly in SDSM is prescribed by the Statute under the same article 43 as for the candidates for mayors. It is done by the Municipal Conference and they have full autonomy in ordering the list.

In VMRO-DPMNE the selection of the candidates for the local elections and their order on the electoral lists is approved by the central committee on a proposal by the local branches.

Similar to the selection of mayor candidates, according to the statute of LDP, the candidates for the local elections are registered by the municipal organizations and then delivered to the Central Committee. In practice, the selection is done by the party management after a previous consultation with the municipal management. The party management is also to determine the order of the candidates on the electoral lists.

The procedures in DPA and DUI respectively, for nomination and approval of candidates for the local elections are the same as the procedures for mayor candidates, as described in the previous section. Although it is to be discussed further, in NPR the local branches in consultation with the party executive are held responsible for the nomination and approval of candidates for the local elections.³³

- ***Coalition partners at local elections. Who decides?***

According to the article 47 of the statute of SDSM, the Executive Municipal Board in consultation with the Executive Board has the right to make decisions for a local coalition.

³³ An anonymous interview with a party member of NPR.

Also the EMB can put forward an initiative for local coalitions as needed. In LDP, it is the central party management that decides on the issue. In VMRO-DPMNE this right is conferred upon the Central Committee.

The Party Statute of DPA does not prescribe any special procedure on this issue and the decision is made on a basis of article 59 which says that a party coalition is possible with all democratic and progressive parties. In DUI, however, the selection of a coalition party is done by the party leader and the Central Committee (Articles 46 and 48) Although the issue has not been decided upon yet, for the 2013 elections in NPR the local branches in consultation with the party executive decide on the selection of a coalition partner.

- ***Is it possible that members of local branches are on the same position at the central level of the party***

In VMRO-DPMNE, according to the party's rules it is permitted for members of the local branches to hold a party function, but in practice the members do not exercise this right often. On the other hand, the party's rules do not allow for the members of the local branches to hold a public function, but in practice many of them are at the same time directors or members of advisory boards.

The members of the local branches of LDP have the right to hold a public function at the same time and they often do so. The municipal organization selects the delegates for the General Assembly of LDP, so every municipality has its own representative.

- ***Can local branches nominate delegates to the Party Convention/Congress & General Assembly?***

In SDSM, on a proposal of the Executive Member Board, the Municipal Conference nominates candidates for the Central Convention. The procedure for electing local delegates for the central Convention is defined by article 44.

The municipal organization selects the delegates for the General Assembly of LDP, so every municipality has its own representative.

In DPA, the Assembly of the municipal organization proposes a list of candidates for the Congress of the party (Article 19.6.5). By secret voting, the delegates approve the list at the assembly. The number of the delegates is proportional with the number of members of the municipal organization.

In VMRO-DPMNE the procedure is not described in the Party Statute, but the established practice entails the Central Committee to define the criteria for election of delegates to the Congress. In NPR the local branch nominates delegate to the Convention.

Table 2: Index of party democracy- *Relations between the Central Party Organs and the Local Branches*

	SDSM	VMRO-DPMNE	LDP	DUI	DPA	NPR	Explanation of the Index (in-between categories possible too)
Who has the right to establish party branches	1	0.5	1	2	1,5	2	Locals may initiate a new branch autonomously of central decision=3 Locals found a branch in cooperation with central office which votes the proposal= 2 Local branches are founded by General Council=1 Local branches are founded by the party executive office=0
Who develops the program for local elections	2	2.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	Local branches=3 Local branches in consultation with the General Council=2 Local branches in consultation with the party executive=1 Party executive/expert group without consulting branches=0

Who nominates/ approves candidates for mayor?	1	2.5	0.5	2	1.5	1	Local branches=3 Local branch in consultation with the General Council=2 Local branches in consultation with the party executive=1 Party executive/expert group without consulting branches=0
Who nominates / approves candidates for local assembly lists?	0.5	1.5	1	0.5	1.5	1	Local branches=3 Local branch in consultation with the General Council=2 Local branches in consultation with the party executive=1 Party executive/expert group without consulting branches=0
Ordering of candidates for local assembly lists?	1	1	1	0.5	1.5	1	Local branches=3 Local branch in consultation with the General Council=2 Local branches in consultation with the party executive=1 Party executive/expert group without consulting branches=0
Decisions on coalition partners at local elections	0.5	0	0	1	0.5	1	Local branches=3 Local branch in consultation with the General Council=2 Local branches in consultation with the party executive=1 Party executive/expert group without consulting branches=0
Is it possible that members of local branches hold a position at the central level of the party	1.5	1.5	1	1	1	1	No=3 Yes, elected by Congress =2 Yes, elected by General Council=1 Yes, elected by Party Executive Office=0
Can the local branch nominate delegate to the Convention & General Assembly	2	2	2.5	2.5	2.5	2	Yes, autonomous choice=3 Yes, but approval by General Council=2 Yes, but approval by Party Executive =1 No=0
TOTAL	9.5	11.5	7.5	10	10.5	9.5	

4

ELECTIONS AND INTRA-PARTY DEMOCRACY

The legal framework under which the election process is being carried out has a considerable influence on the level of intra-party democracy in a country as well. According to the Macedonian election law³⁴, the election of Members of the Parliament is conducted using the proportional system. The system is considered to have many advantages over the other electoral system: the number of the so called “lost votes” is largely reduced; it contributes to more equitable transfer of votes into mandates, more equitable representation of all society segments, and more equitable gender representation.³⁵ Nevertheless, regarding the intra-party democracy, in a proportional system where the list order is pre-determined (closed list) the citizens do not have the possibility to vote for individual candidates. Such a system unequivocally affects the intra-party elections, eventually determining power relations within the party.

³⁴ Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia (No.40/2006)

³⁵ Source: otverenilisti.org.

The recent debate on intra-party democracy in Macedonia has been reinvigorated in view of the project for introducing open list systems in Parliamentary elections, run by the Citizens Association "Most", the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the Institute for Parliamentary Democracy. Through public campaigns, the project seeks to raise citizens' awareness about the advantages of the proportional election model with open list systems, such as more accountability and transparency in the election process.

The arguments in favor of the open list system are that it will unequivocally contribute to more party democracy, given that the selection of the candidates will be decentralized to a large extent. Moreover, it has been argued that this system favours the more capable and appealing candidates that take well into account the citizens' preferences and needs, so the party responsiveness is more efficient (Thessin, 2004; Lehrer, 2012). Below, the paper examines the relationship between the election process and intra-party democracy in the Macedonian case, focusing on the procedures for selecting candidates for national elections.

- ***Who decides on candidates for parliamentary elections and their ordering?***

In the party Statute of VMRO-DPMNE the candidate selection process is not clearly specified, but in the practice of the party, this is very well established. The selection of the parliamentary candidates is done by the Central Committee, as is the order of the candidates in the parliamentary list. The municipal organization is included in the nomination of the candidates.

In SDSM, the statute of the party clearly specifies the body that is responsible for the selection of the candidates for the elections. It is the Central Committee that determines the candidates for the parliamentary elections and their order in the electoral lists (Article 29). Similarly, the Central Committee of LDP is also the body that is responsible for the selection of the candidates for the elections. Thus, the Central Committee according to the Statute determines the candidates for the parliamentary elections and their order in the electoral lists (Article 39). The Central Committees of DPA, DUI and NPR respectively, are the party bodies that make the selections and ordering of the candidates for parliamentary election.

- ***Who writes/approves the party platforms for national elections?***

In VMRO-DPMNE, the election program is written by teams of experts, the citizens, through a public announcement, as well as teams from the Executive Committee, the Central Committee and the Regional Committees. The election program is then adopted by the Central Committee.

According to the Statute of SDSM, the Congress is the party body that approves the party program (Article 27.10). The Statute however, does not prescribe which body formulates the party program.

The electoral program of LDP is written by experts of the party and it is then adopted by the Central Committee. So it is notable that the central figure in the process of elections is the Central Committee.

Table 3: Index of party democracy- *Elections and party democracy*

	SDSM	VMRO-DPMNE	LDP	DUI	DPA	NPR	Explanation of the Index (in-between categories possible too)
Selection of candidates for elections	2	2	2	2	2	2	Congress (General Council + branches)=3 General Council= 2 Presidency=1 President/working group in presidency=0
Ordering of candidates in the list	2	2	2	2	2	2	Congress(General Council + branches)=3 General Council= 2 Presidency=1 President/working group in presidency=0
Who writes the party platform for national elections?	2	2.5	2	1.5	1.5	0.5	Congress(General Council + branches)=3 General Council= 2 Presidency=1 President/working group in presidency=0
Who adopts the party platform for national elections	2.5	2	1.5	2	2	1.5	Congress(General Council + branches)=3 General Council= 2 Presidency=1 President/working group in presidency=0
TOTAL	8.5	8.5	7.5	7.5	7.5		

5. CONCLUSION

The aim of this analysis was to evaluate the intra-party democracy in Macedonia by focusing on essential instrumental elements of the intra-party democracy organized in three categories: general level of intra-party democracy, autonomy of the local branches and democracy and election.

In the academic debates, as well as in Macedonia, the issue of intra-party democracy in consolidating democracy has been mainly analyzed in the context of the development of the overall democratic processes in these countries. In other words, the question is to what extent party democracy could contribute to the development of the overall democratic processes in consolidating democracies. However, no clear relation is established between the democracy in a country and intra-party democracy. Thus, for some scholars, in democratic states it is fundamental that political parties provide equal opportunities for every citizen to effectively participate in the political life. On the other hand, as Hirschman (1972) has put it, the political parties are voluntary organizations which are

free to set up the rules and norms on which they will operate. Thus, the members can choose whether to comply with those rules and norms, or to leave the party (Rahat, Hazan and Katz, 2008).

Political parties in Macedonia in general, are mainly identified through their leaders which is a result of a centralized distribution of power within the parties. Hence, it could be said that party leaders in Macedonia possess great power which in most cases is uncontested and it can be exercised in different forms as to influence the party politics and the decision making process (Siljanoska-Davkova, 2005; Karasimeonov 2005). The decisions within the parties are made according to the top-to-bottom approach omitting wide deliberation among the members in the process. Furthermore, the autocratic tendencies of the leaders are a well established practice in the day to day functioning of the political parties and this is part of the party culture in Macedonia.

As for the possibility of having party factions, neither party in Macedonian has normatively legalized party factions in the Statute. In most of the cases, party factions are not explicitly mentioned in the statutes of the parties. In practice, even though there is general intolerance towards party factions, they exist informally within the party organization. It should be noted however, that in most of the cases, factions or fractions are formed as a result of personal disagreements between the party leader and party members, or dissatisfaction of a group of party members with some decisions of the party leadership, mostly on operational issues and nominations of party members for public offices. Serious disagreements between party members and the majority of the party has almost always resulted in marginalization from the decision making process in the party. If the party member enjoys

support of an influential group within the party and the citizens, oftentimes he/she chooses to form a new party as to achieve its goals.

Party members of the parliament are disciplined, and almost always vote in accordance with the suggestions of their central party bodies. Furthermore, the MPs rarely express their different position from the party's adopted policy. In some parties, the criticism is allowed by the Statute of the parties, but in practice, the critics have always been marginalized or in some cases, even excluded from the parties. From the scores the parties achieved on the index of general party democracy NPR is slightly lagging behind the other parties included in the analysis.

Dominance of elites and concentration of great power by the party leaders has been detected in all parties in Macedonia included in the analysis. In the relations with the local branches, despite the arrays of rights the local branches have in the party Statute, the influence of the party leadership is decisive in creating policies and decision making on operational issues. SDSM according to the index is the most decentralized party, where comparatively more rights have been conferred upon the local branches by the Statute.

Table 4: Summary index of party democracy

	SDSM	VMRO-DPMNE	LDP	DUI	DPA	NPR
General level of democracy within the party	12.5	9.5	10	8	7	6.5
Relations between the Central Party Organs and the Local Branches	9.5	11.5	7.5	10	10.5	9.5
Elections and party democracy	8.5	8.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	
TOTAL (Maximum 60 points)	30.5	30.5	25	25.5	25	

According to the table above, Macedonian political parties in general have achieved around half of the maximum points for intra-party democracy. In the category general level of democracy within the party, all of the parties achieved low scores which unequivocally confirms the high level of centralization of Macedonian political parties. The centralization on the other hand, could lead to further alienation of the parties from its constituents. As for the second category, the relation between the central party organs and local organs, SDMS and VMRO-DPMNE have achieved comparatively more points than the other parties. Other parties are slightly lagging behind also in this category mainly due to their procedures regarding decision making processes in the party, which by and large are owned by the party central bodies. Thus, it is evident that local branches need bigger autonomy in view of their role in the creation of local election programs, nomination of candidates for local elections and ordering of lists. In the third category, elections and party democracy, all of the parties have achieved the minimum points, which implies that the parties included in the analysis operate as the most centralized organizations during the period of parliamentary election.

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