

MACEDONIAN OBAMA OR THE PLATFORM FROM TIRANA



*How to Get the Votes of the "Others"
and What to Do with Them?*



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CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	6
2.	CASE STUDY: IMER SELMANI-MACEDONIAN OBAMA	9
3.	CASE STUDY: "UNNECESSARY ACT OF PATRIOTISM" OR SDSM TRYING TO WIN THE VOTES OF THE "OTHERS"	18
4.	MACEDONIAN OBAMA OR PLATFORM FROM TIRANA	32
5.	CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS	35

MACEDONIAN OBAMA OR THE PLATFORM FROM TIRANA: HOW TO GET THE VOTES OF THE “OTHERS” AND WHAT TO DO WITH THEM?¹

SUMMARY:

Gaining the votes of the “other” community, of “Macedonian and Albanian voters” by the “Albanian and Macedonian” candidates and parties is a mission impossible. With an attractive message and campaign, Imer Selmani in 2009 and SDSM in 2016 managed to get significant votes from the “others”. Selmani has not repeated this electoral success in the later elections, and SDSM is not certain it will either. In short terms, the gains for Selmani and SDSM were huge. Selmani got popularity and if he continued with the message and presentation in the style of his presidential campaign from 2009, his party Nova Demokratija (“New Democracy”) could have counted on a strong result at the following parliamentary elections potentially being in a position to decide on the composition of the Government coalition. *In the short run*, SDSM, with the votes from the Albanians and the increased number of votes from the other minorities, Roma, Turks, Bosnians, got a close result to the winner of the elections in 2016, VMRO-DPMNE. Following the unsuccessful negotiations of the party lead by Nikola Gruevski and DUI, to continue their governing, SDSM made a ruling coalition including DUI and another ethnic Albanian party. Without the Albanian votes, SDSM would have had less MPs, and the coalition negotiations for construction of a new Government after the elections would have been between VMRO-DPMNE and its partners from the several “Albanian” parties.

What is important is that Macedonia after Imer Selmani’s success did not focus on building multicultural policies, party programs and campaigns. SDSM’s success showed that the meeting the demands or offering of better status of one minority, could be a tool of electoral success. This success contributed to radicalization of the situation among both ethnic Albanians and Macedonians, as well as among other minorities. Hence, the Macedonian society needs a political and election system reforms. The events from 2016 and 2017 showed that our society is not matured for parties and candidates offering programs acceptable to all citizens regardless of their ethnicity. In Macedonia, interethnic conflicts are not overcome. We need new tools to immediately prevent ethnic conflicts, starting at the presidential elections in 2019.

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1.

INTRODUCTION

A just multiethnic country is the one where a civic nation is formed representative of all minorities living in the country, where all traditions and cultures are recognized, where the citizens from minority communities wishing their culture to survive and develop are supported by the state, where all citizens, not only the majority, respect the legal system and the institutions, and where the minorities feel the country as their own. Such country, or civic nation, is difficult to create because it requires harmonious relations between the communities. In practice, creating harmony between the different ethnic communities is a hardworking, “Sisyphus” process. Namely, much more frequent are the political conflicts about the Government and control over the government institutions between the different ethnic groups. Due to the danger of outraging conflicts between two nationalities and a civil war, the political scientists try to find a way to alleviate or avoid them. There are two major normative models of managing the ethnic conflicts – consociationalism and integrative power sharing. Although the models were developed in relation with the problems of nation-creation in the highly diverse Western European societies (Lijphart’s theory of consociationalism) and regarding the conditions in the newly formed countries in the post-colonial Africa (Horowitz’s integrative model), they are also relevant in solving ethnic issues in the countries of the former socialist block, such as Macedonia and the region.²

Consociationalism according to Lijphart and Horowitz’s integrative model propose the so-called power sharing principle. Power sharing is a comprehensive mechanism that not only guarantees the political representation and participation of the institutions, but also guarantees joint management, or decision making with the inclusion of all ethnical groups. Thus, the majority decision-making system is omitted. One of the general definitions by Timothy Sisk defines the power sharing systems as “those that tend to create inclusive, comprehensive coalitions involving most of, if not all, larger ethnic groups in the country.”³ The main idea behind the power sharing systems is that the democratic quality is better if it is based on wide consensus of different interests, i.e. that the majority principle is inadequate in divided societies because often in these systems the group or party winning 51% of the votes dominates over the others. Thus, the minor communities are not represented and their positions are not considered in the decision making process,

² See also: Arendt Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies*, Yale University Press, 1977; and: Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, University of California Press, 1985;

³ Timothy D. Sisk, *Power Sharing and International Mediation in Ethnic Conflicts* (Washington: US Institute of Peace & Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, 1996), page 4.

they are excluded from the “game”, may be discriminated, dissatisfied with the institutions; create parallel institutions, etc. All in all, the stability of the country will be uncertain.

Specifically, the integrative model aims to create motivating factors for the political leaders to be moderate in their acts and decisions, actually create a climate of making reasonable decisions for the sensitive or burning ethnic issues. The integrative model is based on motivating the different ethnic communities for interethnic collaboration through election systems that encourage forming pre-election pacts between the political parties or presidential candidates of different ethnic background. Ideally, the interests of both parties would be negotiated in a way that would result in uniting the different parties in one large, multiethnic party, based on the need of realizing common public interests, and eventually need that surpass the ethnic requests. The election programs of these parties would focus on economic and social issues or on regional questions within the distribution of public resources. It is clear that in countries where the electorate is ethnically divided, it is difficult to have the party leaders make compromises and act jointly. Thus, the attention must be put on introducing legal norms that would systematically evoke moderation and cooperation among the ethnic political elites. The election systems can be established in such way as to encourage and support interethnic agreements and so-called interethnic accommodation.⁴

Does Macedonia need such reform in the political and electoral system? Is our society matured to surpass all ethnic barriers during the voting process? Do the parties and candidates offer programs that are acceptable to all citizens regardless of their ethnic background? If yes, is Macedonia one of the rare multiethnic countries where the conflicts are to be considered as finished, thing of the past,. This paper will analyze the election campaigns of the parties and candidates that managed to surpass the ethnic barriers and attract the votes of the “other”. It will explain the methods and models of action of the parties and make conclusions related to the integrative model and the necessity to introduce it in Macedonia.

In principle, overcoming the ethnic barriers to win votes from the “others” at the elections in mixed societies is a difficult task. The examples from the neighborhood, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo or Bulgaria, as well as those from Northern Ireland, Belgium or Spain show that in the countries where the antagonism of different ethnic groups is large, this is a “mission impossible.” In Macedonia, since the coalitions of SDSM and VMRO-DPMNE at the parliamentary elections mainly involve parties that represent the interest of the “smaller” communities, Turks, Roma, Serbs, Bosnians, the large, “Macedonian parties”, always win the votes from these ethnic communities. The issue of the votes from the Macedonians given to the “Albanian parties” and vice versa is a different one. Except in incidental situations, such as the presidential elections in 1999, when a significant percent of the votes in the second round for Boris Trajkovski were from ethnic Albanians, although there were widely spread doubts of ballot stuffing and other irregularities, these situations are very rare. Regarding its focus of interest, this study will present the successful cases of

⁴ See also: Sisk 1996, at Reilly, B. (2001) *Democracy in Divided Societies: Electoral Engineering for Conflict Management*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, and in: Horowitz, D. L. (1985) *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, *A Democratic South Africa? Constitutional Engineering in a Divided Society*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press 1991, and *The Deadly Ethnic Riot*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001.

voter mobilization from the “others” (Albanians/Macedonians) for the presidential candidate Imer Selmani in 2009 and SDSM at the early parliamentary elections in 2016. What are the reasons and techniques in the “hunting” of such votes, how big was the success and what are the perspectives to repeat it again?

2.

CASE STUDY: IMER SELMANI-MACEDONIAN OBAMA

In 2009 there were presidential and local elections. Imer Selmani was a presidential candidate. In 2000, he was elected mayor of the municipality of Saraj in Skopje, and in 2003 he became vice-president of DPA. In the Government of VMRO-DMPNE and DPA (2006-2008), Selmani was Minister of Health. In November 2008 he left DPA and founded the party New Democracy/Demokracia e re (ND/DR).

When ND was formed, the public opinion was that it is the first party formed by the Macedonian Albanians with a “civic symbol”⁵. It claimed that the “interests

of the Albanians will be a priority, but also other communities will be involved”⁶. The presidential elections in 2009 showed that Imer Selmani is ambitious to surpass the ethnic boundaries. Inspired by the American case of electing a president from a minority community, he “believes[d] that following the example of Obama, the Macedonian citizens will vote for candidate of other minor community”. He put himself in a position of representing a “new option”, not only in the eyes of the Macedonian Albanians, but also in the eyes of the Macedonians and the other ethnic communities.⁷ The presidential elections in 2009 were at the same time as the local elections, and the main message by Selmani and his party at the electoral campaign was “New Spring – New Democracy”.



5 Vest daily, 09.17.2008 Edition:2476: Imer Selmani promoted New Democracy (link available: <http://star.vest.com.mk/default.asp?id=157076&idg=8&idb=2476&rubrika=Makedonija>)

6 Svetlana Unkovska – Utrinski vesnik, 16.09.2008: New Democracy is a foregoing process (link available: <http://utrinski.mk/?ItemID=9202DBB33CD38C4ABA1C9B8F6E304C35>)

7 Svetlana Unkovska – Utrinski vesnik, 13.02.2009: Imer Selmani's Great Ambitions (link available: <http://utrinski.mk/?ItemID=15A72DEFBC94834AA4A2E7B14F8B4A15>)



„Имавме средби во чајилници, на фарми, на градилишта, на плоштади, на средсело, во кафулиња и ресторани. Ја прошетавме цела Македонија од Струга до Струмица и од Тетово до Штип. Само така можевме да допреме поблиску до гласачите и да ја пренесеме пораката на обединување и демократија на тие кои сеуште се колебаат... Јас сакам да сум претседател на Македонија за кого ќе гласаат не само Албанците, туку и сите други Македонци, Турци, Власи, Срби, Бошњаци.“

Срекен сум да Ви ја најавам новата пролет за Македонија.

Ваш,

Имер Селмани



(Text in the table): (“We met in tea houses, on farms, at construction sites, at town squares, in cafés and restaurants. We went throughout Macedonia, from Struga to Strumica and from Tetovo to Shtip. This was the only way to really reach the voters and give them our message of union and democracy to those that are still in doubt... I want to be President of Macedonia voted not only by the Albanians, but also by all others, Macedonians, Turks, Vlachs, Serbs, Bosnians.”I am happy to offer you a “new spring” for Macedonia.

Yours,

Imer Selmani)

He started his presidential campaign in Bitola, an important city for creation of the Albanian alphabet and culture, but also predominantly Macedonian. The message he sent was for constructing contemporary, internally united and internationally respected Macedonia. With an emphasized civic approach to politics he stated: “Plans and projects that me and my professional team designed are based on the problems I heard from every citizen of Macedonia...”⁸, Selmani attracts the Macedonian voters to his idea of: “... Finally in Macedonia it is time to break the ethnic barriers and stereotypes. Don’t be fooled by the sayings that it is early to have an Albanian president that the right time will be in 2014... There is nothing to wait for, the time is now. In 2009 you can vote for a competent person to be the ruler of the country, a man that can unite and represent all citizens. Let’s send a message to the world – Macedonia stands united and strong!”⁹– Selmani in the predominant Macedonian communities is direct. Thus, in Prilep, on 15 March 2009, he says: “I present to you the new spring in Macedonia. The spring in Macedonia will begin when we unite, when we overcome the ethnic barriers, when we trust each



8 Leaflet – Imer Selmani presidential candidate.

9 Leaflet – Imer Selmani presidential candidate.

other, we will be ready to vote for a candidate of another ethnic community because we trust he will represent the interests of the country in the best possible way!”¹⁰

In Kavadarci, Strumica, Radovish and Shtip, Selmani emphasized: “They assure you that it is not the time, not now. They are lying! I’ve been traveling throughout Macedonia and I am sure that Albanians, Macedonians, Turks, Albanians, Bosnians, Roma and Vlachs are ready now, in 2009 to vote for an Albanian candidate, for Imer Selmani. The citizens are ready to vote for a person, not a party! I am the only one that can achieve economic development through an internal union and integration of Macedonia into EU and NATO!”¹¹

A Macedonian Albanian in the young Macedonian democracy called for unity. In a democratic, but yet conservative and nationally closed and divided society, these messages were novelty. His political popularity forced DUI and DPA to become more serious about the presidential elections. The fear came from the fact that the success of Imer Selmani could lead to a party success of ND. Eventually, at the end of the elections, his approach to the citizens was a success. His election results in 2009 were not only due to “Albanian” votes. Of course, their percent was high, but the Macedonian, Turkish and Roma votes were also significant.

In the first round of the elections, the majority of the votes went to Frchkoski and Ivanov, Selmani scoring third. He lacked 55,000 votes to get into the second round replacing SDSM’s candidate in the run off with Ivanov. Nevertheless, his success among the Albanian voters was very high. He won much more votes (147,500: 104,000) compared to the total of the other two candidates from the “Albanian” parties, Hoxha and Buxhaku.

Table 1: Results from the first round in the presidential elections in 2009

Candidates	Votes in the first round (%)
Gjorgje Ivanov	345,850 (35,04)
Ljubomir Frchkoski	202,691 (20,54)
Imer Selmani	147,547 (14,95)
Ljube Boshkoski	146,878 (14,88)
Agron Buxhaku	73,629 (7,46)
Nano Ruzhin	40,042 (4,06)
Mirushe Hoxha	30,225 (3,06)

Source: State Election Commission

2.1. SUCCESSFUL HUNT FOR THE VOTES OF THE “OTHERS”

Selmani’s campaign for winning votes of the other ethnic communities, besides the “Albanian” ones, was new, original and successful. CRPM analyzed the votes for Imer Selmani in the first round. The analysis of the votes per election units and ethnic groups are presented in Table 2.

¹⁰ Leaflet – Imer Selmani presidential candidate.

¹¹ Leaflet – Imer Selmani presidential candidate.

Table 2: Analysis of the votes for Mr. Selmani on the presidential elections in 2009 per ethnic groups

EU	Macedonian votes	Turkish votes	Roma votes	Bosnian votes	Other	Albanian votes	TOTAL Selmani
1	3,690	1,908	1,770	1,905	0	15,029	24,302
2	1,070	683	2,975	436	0	20,915	26,079
3	5,245	1,115	3,595	1,207	0	2,353	13,515
4	6,058	3,600	1,807	58	0	151	11,674
5	2,022	6,765	4,378	988	611	13,595	28,362
6	960	5,220	921	57	76	36,381	43,615
TOTAL	19,045	19,291	15,446	4,651	687	88,424	147,547
%	12,90	13,07	10,46	3,15	0,46	59,92	100

Source: Centre for Research and Policy Making (CRPM) analysis 2017

The calculation methodology¹² shows that the political message influenced the “non-Albanian” voters - 40% of the votes for Imer Selmani were not “Albanian”.



(Photo taken from www.tv21.mk)

Selmani successfully hunted the votes from the “others” throughout Macedonia. We give examples from six municipalities one in each election unit, where Selmani attracted votes of diverse ethnic groups.

Table 3: Votes of the “others” for Selmani in the specific municipalities in 2009

Municipality (EU)	Macedonian votes	Turkish votes	Roma votes	Bosnian votes	Albanian votes	TOTAL Selmani
Karposh (1)	990	39	147	78	700	1,954
Gazi Baba (2)	213	179	669	101	2,383	3,545
Shtip (3)	899	335	866	18	23	2,141
Prilep (4)	1,307	230	806	33	46	2,422
Bitola (5)	1,065	426	1,624	15	768	3,898
Tetovo (6)	138	672	557	33	5,851	7,251

Source: Centre for Research and Policy Making (CRPM) analysis 2017

¹² Based on publicly available data for election results, descriptions of the polling stations, and voters per polling station, www.sec.mk, <https://izbirackispisok.gov.mk/Search.aspx?type=address>, <http://www.mojotizbor.mk/arhiva/informacii/izboren-proces/opisi-na-izbiracki-mesta.html>, database was created with the data of all elections (local, presidential, parliamentary) per polling stations. In the mixed communities there were analyses of the ethnical background of the election units. The historic results were also considered for the parties, as well as the maximum support to the candidates and parties within a particular ethnic community. Thus, it also considered the turnout data at all election cycles. However, this is still an assessment analysis without guaranteeing absolute accuracy, which is not possible regarding the secrecy of the voting process and the right to the citizen of ethnic/national self-determination.

In Gazi Baba and Tetovo, it can be noticed that the Macedonian votes for Selmani are almost absent, very minor. Accordingly, in these municipalities Selmani's message was better received by the Roma, Turkish and Bosnian voters. However, if we consider Prilep or Shtip as towns with very little Albanians (below 1% at the last census), it will be noticed that Selmani won most of his votes from the Macedonian voters.

2.2. LESS THAN SELMANI, BUT STILL A SUCCESS OF NEW DEMOCRACY AT THE LOCAL ELECTIONS

In 2009, along with the presidential, local elections were also held, and New Democracy had a number of candidates for majors and lists of counselors. Selmani's success at the presidential elections was far better than the party's success at the local elections. Unlike at the presidential, at the local elections, ND did not send the same message as Selmani's of multiculturalism and unity, but mainly touched local issues and topics.

Table 4: Imer Selmani's results compared to the New Democracy's lists of counselors

	Summary results of lists of counselors	Municipalities with over 50% Albanian population ¹³	Municipalities with Albanian population of 17-43% ¹⁴	Municipalities with Albanian population of 1-9%	Municipalities with Albanian population below 1%
DUI	97,107	77,507	15,524	4,076	
ND	40,547	27,610	8,643	3,251	
DPA	36,858	31,548	4,014	1,391	
	Presidential elections	Presidential elections in these municipalities	Presidential elections in these municipalities	Presidential elections in these municipalities	Presidential elections in these municipalities
Selmani	147,547	81,257	24,964	19,381	22,267
Buxhaku	73,629	58,729	11,398	2,529	1,523
Hoxha	30,225	24,731	2,457	991	2,015

Source: State Election Commission, CRPM

Despite the large differences comparing Selmani's results, ND had great success considering that it was founded right before the elections and lacked official party structure to lead an effective election campaign. As a new party, a significant success is the fact that in the predominantly Albanian communities it was slightly behind DPA. There, Selmani's result was far better than the other Macedonian Albanians that were presidential candidates. His rating was far better than the party's. Interestingly, in the municipalities with Albanian population below 1%, Imer Selmani had great results compared to the other "Albanian" candidates. The situation was similar with the results for the lists of counselors.

¹³ Aracinovo, Bogovinje, Brvenica, Vrapciste, Gostivar, Debar, Zelino, Zajas, Lipkovo, Oslomej, Struga, Studenichani, Tearce, Tetovo, Saraj, Chair.

¹⁴ Dolneni, Zelenikovo, Jegunovce, Kicevo, Krusevo, Kumanovo, Mavrovo, Petrovec, Sopiste, Chashka, Chucher Sandevo, Butel, Gazi Baba, Shuto Orizari.

Table 5: Results from the lists of mayors in 2009 of the “Albanian” parties

	Summary	Municipalities with predominantly Albanian population	Municipalities with Albanian population of 17-43%	Municipalities with Albanian population of 1-9%
DUI	98,922	87,583	10,915	424
ND	37,410	27,803	8,602	1,005
DPA	37,377	34,385	2,992	
NDP (Rufi Osmani)	15,792			

Source: State Election Commission, CRPM

Again, the big difference in Selmani’s and ND’s counselor’s results is striking. ND is even better than DPA, but significantly weaker than DUI. Weakest compared to DUI and DPA is in the municipalities with predominantly “Albanian” population. In the municipalities of “Albanian” population of 1-9%, ND is twice better than DUI. However, it should be considered that ND *de facto* does not have a strong campaign for the list of counselors in Gostivar since it supported Rufi Osmani as a Mayor candidate, winning with 19,500 votes.

2.3. WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED?

Imer Selmani’s results at the presidential elections could have been the basis of changes in the political situation in Macedonia. If these results were repeated at the parliamentary elections, New Democracy could have been an important factor in forming the future government coalitions. It is difficult to presume the results if Selmani succeeded in transferring his success on party level. Here, according to the D’Hondt method, presidential results are put in the parliamentary simulation using the results from the presidential candidates (Selmani for *New Democracy*, Boshkovski for *United for Macedonia*, Ivanov for *VMRO-DPMNE*, etc.) as if these were party results.

Table 6: Scenario of election results “presidential as parliamentary”

Election unit (EU)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total PMs
VMRO-DPMNE	7	7	10	10	8	2	44
United for Macedonia	3	3	4	3	4	1	18
SDSM	6	4	5	6	4	2	27
DUI	1	2			1	6	10
DPA						2	2
ND	3	4	1	1	3	5	17
NDP						2	2

Source: Centre for Research and Policy Making (CRPM) analysis 2017

The table above shows that in eventual confirmation of Selmani’s success as New Democracy, this party would have been dominant among the “Albanian” parties and would have been very powerful in the coalition negotiations for the new Govern-

ment (for example, in the simulation the opportunity to form a Government could have been given to VMRO-DPMNE and New Democracy with 61 MPs, or to SDSM with United for Macedonia and New Democracy with 62 MPs).

2.4. FROM SUCCESS TO FAILURE

None of the optimistic scenarios came true. New Democracy had bad results at the early parliamentary elections in 2011. Then the party changed its approach to the non-Albanian voters. Selmani's and ND's citizen approach lacked after the presidential elections in 2009. After the presidential elections it was normal to the public that New Democracy focuses only on topics politically important for the Macedonian Albanians. The circumstances have changed. Selmani and his party changed the strategy regarding the so-called national issues. Namely, "after the first breakthrough among the Macedonian voters, that was a big step forward, now his policy came down to a firm representation of the national[ethnic Albanian] cause."¹⁵ In the fall of 2009, New Democracy was transformed into a promoter of the "ethnic Albanian issues" only. For example, ND requested the new president Gjorgje Ivanov to include at least 2 ethnic Albanians in the Security Council. The President proposed only one Albanian. Furthermore, New Democracy required change of the Coat of Arms, construction of the Burmali Mosque at the square in Skopje, equal rights on the UCK fighters with those of the national defenders from 2001, and so on.¹⁶

In 2011, ND took part at the early parliamentary elections. During the election campaign it proposed constitutional reform to reaffirm the Ohrid Framework Agreement and fast resolution of the name dispute. Selmani said that they will commit to make the Albanian language as a second official language of the country, application of the so-called Badinter principle for the election of Government, President of the Parliament, adoption of the budget and dismissal of the judges. The motto of New Democracy at these elections was: "Join us, it's worth it!"¹⁷



15 Aleksandra M. Mitevaska– Utrinski vesnik, 21.10.2008: Selmani took off the costume of the Macedonian Obama (link available: <http://utrinski.mk/?ItemID=172BF2D9F21603449D6D664C340184FC&commentID=279684&pLikeVote=0>)

16 Aleksandra M. Mitevaska– Utrinski vesnik, 21.10.2008: Selmani took off the costume of the Macedonian Obama (link available: <http://utrinski.mk/?ItemID=172BF2D9F21603449D6D664C340184FC&commentID=279684&pLikeVote=0>)

17 Dnevnik daily, 07.05.2011: Selmani presented the program and MP candidates (link available: <http://dnevnik.mk/default.asp?ItemID=8AB3DF6790579C44BD81523768615BA1>)

At the elections in 2011, ND won 19,957 votes, but not a single MP. Due to the bad results at the early parliamentary elections in 2011, Selmani resigned from being President of ND.¹⁸ ND's results in 2011 were far worse than those of Selmani in 2009. Although the results from the parliamentary elections in 2011 and the local elections in 2009 cannot be compared, this study will compare the results from EU 1, EU2, EU5 and EU6 where ND had its MP lists and the results from the lists of counselors from 2009 in the same EUs. There was a significant fall in the ratings of ND in a period of 2 years.

Table 7: Votes for New Democracy at the elections in 2009 and 2011.

Election unit (EU)	Local ND 2009	Parliamentary ND 2011
1	9,696	4,337
2	11,425	7,346
5	5,612	4,222
6	10,492	4,053
TOTAL	37,225	19,958

Source: State Election Commission, centre for Research and Policy Making (CRPM) 2017

ND at the parliamentary elections won 14,587 less than at the local in 2009. The party lost trust both in the municipalities with majority ethnic Albanian population and in the mixed communities. In the first election unit in the "Albanian" municipalities the loss was biggest in Saraj and Chair, where in 2011 ND won just 46% and 35% of the votes won in 2009. In the "Macedonian" municipalities, Karposh and Aerodrom, the loss was even bigger. In the second election unit in the "Albanian" municipalities, the loss is larger than in Lipkovo and Chair, where in 2011 it won only 54% of the party votes won in 2009, and in the "mixed" communities of Butel and Gazi Baba, it won only 52% and 55% of the votes won in 2009.

Table 8: Votes for ND at the elections in 2009 and in 2011, per Election Unit 1 and 2.

EU1 (municipality)	2009	2011	2011:2009 in %	EU2 (municipality)	2009	2011	2011:2009 in %
Saraj	3,900	1,809	46	Saraj	1,736	1,390	80
Aerodrom	352	65	18	Aerodrom	1,396	730	52
Studenichani	1,027	630	61	Studenichani	1,336	740	55
Sopishte	152	141	93	Sopishte	2,248	1,799	80
Kisela Voda, Makedonski Brod, Centre (party has no list in 2009)	0	160		Kisela Voda, Makedonski Brod, Centre (party has no list in 2009)		102	0
Chair (only part)	3,619	1,260	35	Chair (only part)	1,289	791	61
Karposh	646	273	42	Karposh	615	293	48
					2,805	1,501	54
TOTAL	9,696	4,337	45	TOTAL		7,346	64

Source: CRPM Analysis based on the data from SEC in 2009 and 2011

¹⁸ Utrinski vesnik daily, 07.16.2011: Selmani has also resigned (link available: <http://utrinski.mk/?ItemID=0A5C0E2E0D9CE8438B986BC6FF2B1A59>)

Furthermore, in EU5 in the “Macedonian” municipalities the loss was large in Bitola, where in 2011 ND won only 47% of votes the party won in 2009. The loss was also large in other predominantly “Macedonian” municipalities, such as Kichevo, Resen, Krushevo, as well as the ethnically diverse municipality of Dolneni. Only in Struga, as a predominantly “Albanian” municipality and in Ohrid as a predominantly “Macedonian” municipality, the party had good results compared to 2009 (88% and 103%). In EU6 the loss was dramatic in all municipalities, except in Debar. The loss was obvious in the “Albanian” municipalities like Zhelino and Bogovinje (12% and 6% compared to the results of 2009), but it was also large in the “Macedonian” Jegunovce (13%) and in the predominantly “Albanian” municipalities with significant percent of “other” ethnic communities, such as Tearce, Vrapchishte or Tetovo (23%, 30% and 32%). The general loss of the votes, excluding the several mentioned municipalities, brought the loss of MPs in the Parliament. The bad results at the elections in 2011 have unsuccessfully finished the story of the “Macedonian” Obama.

Table 9: Votes for ND at the elections in 2009 and in 2011, per Election Unit 5 and 6.

5 EU (municipality)	2009	2011	2011:2009 in %	6 EU (municipality)	2009	2011	2011:2009 in %
Bitola	1,049	489	47	Bogovinje	1,656	100	6
Dolneni	618	294	48	Vrapchishte	979	291	30
Kichevo	189	115	61	Gostivar	886	167	19
Krushevo	357	192	54	Brvenica	564	175	31
Ohrid	498	514	103	Zhelino	1,583	183	12
Resen	380	198	52	Jegunovce	295	37	13
Struga	2,521	2,229	88	Debar	1,282	2,009	157
Municipality where the party had no lists in 2009 ¹⁹		191		Municipality where the party had no lists in 2009 ²⁰		133	
				Tearce	949	218	23
				Tetovo	2298	741	32
TOTAL	5,612	4,222	74	TOTAL	10,492	4,053	39

Source: CRPM Analysis based on the data from SEC in 2009 and 2011

¹⁹ Vevcani, Vranestica, Debarca, Demir Hisar, Drugovo, Krivogastani, Plasnica, Centar Zupa.

²⁰ Mavrovo Rostusha, Oslomej, Zajas.

3.

CASE STUDY: “UNNECESSARY ACT OF PATRIOTISM” OR SDSM TRYING TO WIN THE VOTES OF THE “OTHERS”

At the elections in 2016, SDSM managed to win significant votes from the ethnic Albanian voters. These votes helped them achieve far better result compared to the lost elections in 2011 and 2014. The “hunt” for votes of the Macedonian Albanians was a long-term process. In 2013 Zoran Zaev had an interview with the journalist Muhamed Zeqiri in his TV-show “The Road to...” on Alsat-M channel where he spoke about the unnecessary pretending of SDSM to be a patriot party. He said:

“As a party we have tried several times to play with patriotic policies. But this does not suit our party. And we lost. It is honest to admit it, so that we can look for a chance in the future, not to make the same mistakes again. People don’t expect us to pretend to be patriots. We are a state-building party. We are a party that was an example of the multiethnic coexistence. We are a party that brought back the stability of this country. We tried to win votes from the citizens playing on the patriotic variants, such as the Law for the Defenders, Struga, Kichevo... this doesn’t suit us, the social democrats. People expect from us to be cohesive, uniting factor.”²¹

Hence, the change of the SDSM policy started with attempt of gaining the Macedonian Albanians as voters. The first election campaign when SDSM tried to win the Albanian voters in Macedonia was in 2014, at the presidential elections.

²¹ Elizabeta Galevska – Kanal 5 TV, 07.06.2013: Zaev: SDSM made a mistake playing on the patriotic policy (link available: http://kanal5.com.mk/vesti_detail.asp?ID=9319)

3.1. PENDAROVSKI IN 2014

The presidential candidate from SDSM, Stevo Pendarovski, at the elections in 2014 tried to win the “Albanian” voters. In the first round he competed with Gjorgje Ivanov from VRMO-DPMNE, Zoran Popovski from Grom, and Iljaz Halimi from DPA. At the beginning of the second round, Pendarovski asked the Macedonian Albanians not to boycott the elections, although there were only Macedonian candidates left in the race. He also lectured at the University of Kosovo emphasizing that the Macedonian Government and the President underestimated the bilateral relations with Kosovo, something that he would repair.²² While there, he met the Kosovo Prime Minister Hashim Tachi. Macedonian public thought this move to be a “hunt” for Albanian votes.²³ In his brochures, billboards and videos, Pendarovski used his motto “Macedonia deserves a President” in both languages.



(Photo taken from www.sdsm.org.mk)

In the second round of the presidential elections, the parliamentary elections were also held. Thus, the ethnic Albanian voters that went to vote at the parliamentary elections had the chance to vote at the presidential elections giving their vote to Ivanov or Pendarovski. Ivanov had a landslide victory throughout the country winning 534,910 votes, against 398,077 votes for Pendarovski. Ivanov won in almost all municipalities in the country. Except in Struga, Studenichani, Saraj and Arachinovo, he won in

all predominantly “Albanian” municipalities. Although he won some of the Albanian votes, Ivanov’s victory in the predominantly “Albanian” municipalities was a result of the many votes from Macedonian, Serbian, Turkish, Roma, Bosnian voters living there. If we compare the results in the municipalities with Albanian majority, considering only the polling stations with Albanian majority of 2/3 and more, it will be clear that the Macedonian Albanians in these “clean” or almost “clean Albanian” polling stations have voted much more for Pendarovski compared to Ivanov (see Table 10 below). Exceptions to this are the predominantly “Albanian” polling stations in Tetovo, Tearce and Bogovinje, where more voters chose Ivanov. The advantage of Pendarovski is especially visible in Kumanovo, Gostivar and Struga.

If in the first round, the Macedonian Albanians that went out to vote mostly preferred Halimi, while those that voted in the second round preferred Pendarovski

²² Kanal 5 TV, “Pendarovski from Prishtina insulted Macedonia”, available link: http://kanal5.com.mk/mobile/vesti_detail.asp?ID=37669.

²³ Vecer daily, 24.04.2014: Pendarovski on “kiss-a-hand” in Kosovo – Zaev begged Tachi, Stevo – Hashim (link available: <http://vecer.mk/makedonija/pendarovski-na-baci-raka-vo-kosovo-zaev-go-moleshe-tachi-stevo-hashim>)

over Ivanov.²⁴ These elections were a signal of what is to come in 2016 when the Macedonian Albanians in many municipalities voted for the “Macedonian party” of SDSM, *although* they could choose from several parties committed to the interests of their community, so-called “Albanian parties.” What is striking for these elections is that while the VMRO-DPMNE’s candidate in the presidential elections in 2014 got votes from ethnic Albanians, these were absent at the parliamentary elections in 2016. This is probably due to the fact that VMRO-DPMNE in 2016 did not ask for support from the Albanians in Macedonia, and severely criticized SDSM’s campaign where Zaev promised changes to strengthen the status of this community.

The Macedonian Albanians that voted in the parliamentary elections in 2016, and did not like the offer from DUI, DPA, Albanian Alliance, BESA and PDP, as well as of the smaller “Macedonian parties”, easily chose SDSM over VMRO-DPMNE. Pendarovski’s results in the Albanian municipalities were a good starting point for success of SDSM at the parliamentary elections in 2016. Certainly the parliamentary elections dynamic is different than the one at the presidential elections held in the second round, when only two Macedonian candidates compete. While in the second round of the presidential elections, SDSM and VMRO-DPMNE have an easier task to motivate the Macedonian Albanian electorate to vote, at the parliamentary elections both parties should motivate them to vote for a “Macedonian party”, instead of an “Albanian” one. In 2016 SDSM had a great success in doing this. On the other hand, the “Albanian votes” for Ivanov in 2014 were lost in the next two years and did not go to VMRO-DPMNE in 2016.

Table 10: Votes from the II round of presidential elections in 2014 in municipalities with majority if Albanian population (polling stations with over 2/3 Albanians in municipalities of over 10,000 population)

Municipality	Gjorgje Ivanov	Stevo Pendarovski
Arachinovo	376	1,151
Bogovinje	1,661	1,420
Brvenica (in predominantly Albanian polling stations)	1,298	1,490
Gostivar (in predominantly Albanian polling stations)	2,237	4,012
Debar (in predominantly Albanian polling stations)	692	680
Zhelino	1,163	856
Jegunovce (in predominantly Albanian polling stations)	287	319
Lipkovo	589	580
Studenichani (in predominantly Albanian polling stations)	832	2,285
Chair (in predominantly Albanian polling stations)	1,601 (1,211+390)	3,136 (2,306+830)
Kichevo (in predominantly Albanian polling stations)	150	189
Kumanovo (in predominantly Albanian polling stations)	1,646	3,071

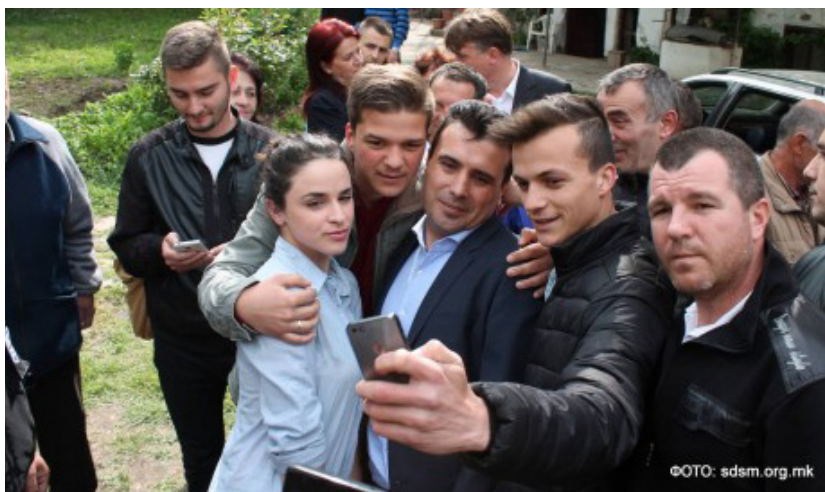
²⁴ DUI boycotted the presidential elections, because VMRO-DPMNE refused the idea of having a “consensus candidate”. This is the reason why it had significantly less votes for the ethnic Albanian candidates compared to the elections of 2009. If in 2009 Mirushe Hoxha, Imer Selmani and Agron Buxhaku had altogether 251,401 votes, Iljaz Halimi won only 38,965 votes. Even if we do not consider the “Macedonian” votes and the votes of the “others” for Selmani, the total number of votes for the Albanian candidates is 192,278.

Vrapchishte (in predominantly Albanian polling stations)	893	1,490
Tearce (in predominantly Albanian polling stations)	1,505	1,098
Struga (in predominantly Albanian polling stations)	921	3,622
Tetovo (in predominantly Albanian polling stations)	4,655	3,974
Saraj (in predominantly Albanian polling stations)	2,345	2,879
TOTAL	22,851	32,252

Source: Centre for Research and Policy Making (CRPM) 2017

3.2. CAMPAIGN FOR THE ALBANIAN VOTE AFTER THE ELECTIONS IN 2014

At the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2014, VMRO-DPMNE won and made the Government coalition with DUI. SDSM decided not to recognize these election results. Many non-institutional activities followed – protests, demonstrations and street marches. By the end of 2014, the opposition leader Zoran Zaev had meetings with the President of the Government, Nikola Gruevski. At the beginning of 2015, the President of the Government stated that there was a coup attempt. After this statement, the opposition started the project called “The Truth for Macedonia” publishing the so-called “bombs” (audio recordings) with a compromising material for the Government and indications of possible corruption. In May 2015, in the Kumanovo neighborhood of Divo Naselje an armed conflict happened between the security forces and a group of terrorists, mainly from Kosovo. After the action, Zaev visited the citizens in this neighborhood, which are predominantly Albanians. He stated that while the material damage can be repaired, the trauma of the fellow citizens is permanent. There, it was easily noticed that he became popular among the local Albanian population.²⁵



(Photo taken from www.sdsm.org.mk)

On May 17, 2015, there was a huge citizens protest supported by SDSM when along the Macedonians, there were many ethnic Albanians, with Albanian flags and symbols of Great Albania.²⁶ Although SDSM initiated the protest in front of the Government, it was considered a citizens' protest, organized by

25 Makfax, 11.05.2016: Zaev in the Kumanovo neighbourhood of Divo Naselje (link available: <http://vesti.mk/read/news/5415987/2044894/zaev-vo-kumanovska-diva-naselba>)

26 Republika, 17.05.2016: Big Albania on the SDSM's protest (link available: <http://republika.mk/431711>)

the Coalition “Citizens for Macedonia” (involving 84 non-governmental organizations and 15 political parties).²⁷ The call for the protest on May 17, 2015, said:

„This ruling Government refuses to become reasonable and thus needs to leave and free the country from being a hostage. This is a fight between the citizens and the group around Gruevski; this is fighting for bringing back the society and the country in the hands of the Macedonian citizens.”

The Declaration of the “Citizens of Macedonia” contained the following demands: “urgent constitution of a transition Government to ensure election roll update/clearance, ‘liberation’ of the public state television MRT from the Government control, election of an independent Public Prosecutor, as well as implementation of completely liberal and democratic elections that will reflect the real political will of the Macedonian citizens.”²⁸



(Photo taken from www.sdsm.org.mk)

The protest was declaratively aimed to gather all citizens, regardless of their ethnic and religious background, against the “dictatorship”, and also to make the first step towards building a civic state. Tens of thousands of citizens participated in this protest, and according to the statements from the organizers, there were over a hundred thousand people. Most of them were Macedonians, but there were also people from the other ethnic



(Photo taken from www.kurir.mk)



(Photo taken from www.libertas.mk)

communities, including the Macedonian Albanians.²⁹ At the protest there were no party symbols, and in the crowds there were flags of all minorities living in Macedonia. Zoran Zaev in his speech stated: “For twenty four years Macedonia was divided in two societies. From now on it will be one society, proud of its country. The diversities are our fortune.”³⁰ However, it should be noted that although many Macedonian Albanians participated in the protest as citizens, it wasn’t supported by any Albanian political

27 Centre for Democracy and development Bulletin, No. 1, July 2015, page 1.

28 See the article “One Year after the Biggest Civil Anti-Government Protest of the “Citizens for Macedonia”, available here: <http://slobodna.mk/2016/05/17/17maj/>

29 Centre for Democracy and development Bulletin, No. 1, July 2015, page 2.

30 Centre for Democracy and development Bulletin, No. 1, July 2015, page

party, neither in the Government, nor in the opposition. BESA Movement even publicly called the citizens not to participate in the protest due to the fact that the “truth” for the “Monstrum” case was not published. They also objected that SDSM through the “bombs” disclosed allegations of corruption only involving the Macedonian ruling party, and not the Albanian one, the Democratic Union of Integration (DUI).³¹ Consequently because of these reasons from that moment there is a “great skepticism among the Albanians in Macedonia that Zaev is interested only in taking down Gruevski, and not in improving the status of the Albanians.”³²

Zoran Zaev in May 2015 began to attract the Albanian voters. Speaking at a Kosovo television, he explained the SDSM loss of the elections in 2006 as a punishment by the citizens, also commenting on the positive influence from speaking Albanian. “In kindergartens, elementary and high schools... Why should my daughter learn Turkish, for example? She can learn Albanian. She can use it, because we are all in one society. It should be included in all daily activities, not only in public administration. Everyone should have equal opportunities in the future.” Zaev referred to the Ohrid Framework Agreement: “Now it’s time and we are ready to be equal and speak for common goals, because this will be a fulfilled political request from the Albanian community. I am scared because many citizens still talk about the Ohrid Framework Agreement; we need to talk about our common problems, move forward from the Ohrid Framework Agreement.” He also said that the previous Governments approached the problem and fulfilled the agreement insincerely, unlike what his party would do.³³

In the process of reaching a conclusion of the crisis, the international community was involved. In 2015 the so-called “Przhino agreement” was signed. It foresaw the creation of technical Government to organize the new elections. It is worth mentioning that in the first half of 2016, the participants in the so-called “colorful revolution”, who due to the opinions against the Government of VMRO-DPMNE were probably SDSM voters or at least were at the elections in 2016, in their revolt expressed with painting public institutions and monuments in different colors, did not desecrate the monuments of Albanian historical figures.

In August 2016, a match between Shkendija and Gent was played at the Filip II Arena. SDSM’s president Zoran Zaev was in the audience, supporting Shkendija, regardless of the fact that their supporters (so-called Balisti) cheered with scarves of Great Albania, flags from UCK, and the image of Hxemo Hasa.³⁴



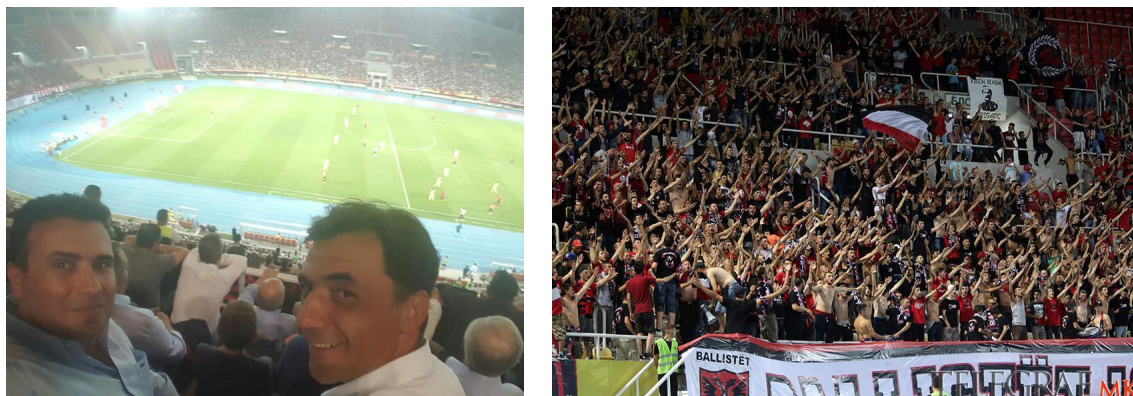
(Photo taken from www.infomax.mk)

31 Centre for Democracy and development Bulletin, No. 1, July 2015, page

32 Centre for Democracy and development Bulletin, No. 1, July 2015, page 3.

33 MKD.mk, 22.05.2015: Zaev on Kosovo Television Promises Albanian Language in Kindergartens, Primary and Secondary Schools (link available: <http://www.mkd.mk/makedonija/partii/zaev-na-kosovska-televizija-vetuva-zadolzhitelen-albanski-jazik-vo-gradinkite>)

34 Telegraf.mk, 26.08.2016: ZAEV JOINED THE “BALISTS”: SDSM’s leader supported Shkendija along with UCK flags (link available: <http://www.telegraf.mk/aktuelno/makedonija/ns-newsarticle-zaev-se-zdruzi-so-balistite-liderot-na-sdsm-pokraj-znamina-na-uck-navivase-za-skendija-foto.nspix>)



(Photos taken from www.telegraf.mk)

SDSM and Zoran Zaev in 2015 and 2016 tried to present themselves as a party that, in the name of all citizens, fights against the authoritarian regime. However, in the relation to the Macedonian Albanians SDSM applied special electoral/persuasion strategy. Considering that the country has several political parties of the Macedonian Albanians, each with their own platform focused on the rights of this community, SDSM and his leader Zaev acted with specific messages and promises acceptable to this community. These promises and messages were new and somehow made better the offer by SDSM compared to the political parties of the Albanians in Macedonia.

3.3. ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN 2016

At the elections, SDSM had the campaign called “Plan for Life in Macedonia”. The general promises made by Zaev were higher wages, democratization, decent job, and justice for all. SDSM had special campaign for attracting “Albanian” voters, as a continuation of their previous activities.



(Photos taken from www.sdsm.org.mk)



During the campaign in 2016, SDSM targeted Macedonian Albanians. In Prilep, a town with almost no Albanians, Zaev replied to a journalist question that the citizens should be allowed to speak Albanian in the local self-government units, and submit official documents in the Albanian language to the local government offices.³⁵At the same time, the topic of bilingualism was again opened. In the interview for NOVA TV, Zaev stated his opinion about the Albanian language. “I

³⁵ Press24.mk, 14.09.2016: Zaev: I will make Prilep bilingual as well (link available: <http://press24.mk/zaev-i-prilep-kje-go-napravam-dvojazichen-video>)

speak about the use of the Albanian language, I do not lose anything as a citizen of Strumica where there are almost 94% Macedonians. One thing should be clear. The Pragmatics must be followed in Macedonia. I do not lose anything as a Macedonian, not even the citizen of Shtip, of Skopje that is Macedonian by ethnicity. Now is the time, to define our country for the future. Should we leave with taboos?" said Zaev.³⁶

In 2016 SDSM had pre-election meetings in places with "Albanian" majority, such as Arachinovo and Studenichani. The Journalist Muhamed Zeqiri joined SDSM. He became part of the party's Central and Executive Board.³⁷

Edmond Ademi is also an important person in SDSM, part of the central leadership. Ademi spoke that in SDSM there were 10.000 Albanians. According to him, after the campaign activities he expected this number to rise to over 50.000. SDSM's message was clear and the Macedonian Albanians were ready to support



(Photo taken from www.zurnal.net)

them and SDSM has the trust from the Albanian voters.³⁸ "I count on the Albanian votes for SDSM, for the coalition lead by SDSM, no matter if it will make coalition with the Albanian parties. I count on the Albanian votes in this election process we are facing now and expect SDSM to get most of the Albanian votes, more than any other Albanian political party, because we have all the reasons on the world to make it real" said Zaev. Trying to attract "Albanian" voters, SDSM decided to put two Albanians on "safe spots" in the lists of candidates. The journalist Zeqiri was in the election unit 2 and Professor Gjylmser Kasapi in election unit 6.³⁹

At a debate on TV21, Zaev said that he was not afraid to lose the support from the Macedonian voters. According to him the "use of the [Albanian] language can be a strength, not a weakness". He could have lost Macedonian votes with this policy, but he said he did not care, "there will be new elections and new politicians. Now it's the time to open these topics." Regarding the changes in the Constitution, he said: "We will use the civic concept. At the time if the need comes, it will happen pragmatically."⁴⁰

As a method to attract Albanian votes Zoran Zaev had many meeting with representatives from the Albanian Diaspora. He met Musa Ljamallari, president of the

36 Netpress.mk, 14.09.2016: Zaev will hunt Albanian votes with bilingualism (link available: <http://netpress.com.mk/zaev-dvojazicnost-ke-lovi-albanski-glasovi-video/>)

37 24Vesti TV, 01.09.2016: Muhamed Zeqiri Member of CB and EB of SDSM (link available: <http://24vesti.mk/muhamed-zekiri-chlen-na-co-i-io-na-sdsm>)

38 Sefer Tahiri – prizma.mk, 10.11.2016: SDSM Expects 50 thousand Albanian Votes (link available: <http://prizma.mk/sdsm-se-nadeva-na-50-iljadi-albanski-glasovi/>)

39 Sefer Tahiri – prizma.mk, 10.11.2016: SDSM Expects 50 thousand Albanian Votes (link available: <http://prizma.mk/sdsm-se-nadeva-na-50-iljadi-albanski-glasovi/>)

40 Kurir.mk, 10.11.2016: Zaev Announced Changes in the Constitution to Fulfill the Albanian Requirements of Bilingualism (link available: <http://kurir.mk/makedonija/vesti/zaev-najavi-promena-na-ustavot-za-da-gi-ispolni-baranata-na-albantsite-za-dvojazicnost-video/>)

Albanian Diaspora in Macedonia. Ljamallari is committed to redefinition/federalization of Macedonia, following the Belgian or Swiss model. He was certain that Zaev would win many “Albanian” votes in all election units with Albanian majority and become a Prime-Minister.⁴¹



(Photo taken from www.vecer.mk)

you fight with Macedonia, the problem is Macedonia”. He spoke openly about the increased use of the Albanian language. “I am the same Zoran Zaev that publicly opened the debate of using all languages in Macedonia and the equity and equality in the country. I am the same person you saw on Facebook and on TV opening offices in Arachinovo and Chegrane. I see Macedonia in a way that if we all speak Chinese, let's understand each other in Chinese, if we speak English, let's speak English, French-French, Albanian-Albanian, Macedonian-Macedonian, let's be comfortable”, said Zaev.⁴²

In his speech, Zaev also referred to the Ohrid Framework Agreement. “The Ohrid Framework Agreement is not an Agreement. We have to go beyond it, because it is only a ‘frame.’ Why in the 21st century, after 25 years of independence Macedonia is still ‘framed?’” No, we’ll believe in equality and equity, and I will help my Albanian neighbor”, said Zaev.⁴³ Besides the opening of the branch offices in the Macedonian “Albanian” municipalities such as Arachinovo, SDSM also put a bilingual sign on its office in Chair.

SDSM continued its commitments to attract “Albanian” votes through its press releases in both Macedonian and



(Photo taken from www.b2.mk)

41 Lj. Z. – Večer daily, 28.11.2016: Musa Ljamallari: Zaev is the Messiah of the Albanians <http://vecer.mk/makedonija/musa-ljamallari-zaev-e-mesija-na-albancite>)

42 Telegraf.mk, 17.11.2016: MACEDONIA IS HIS PROBLEM: Scandalous Statements from Zaev in Switzerland, He Went Against the Constitution (link available: <http://www.telegraf.mk/aktuelno/makedonija/ns-newsarticle-makedonija-mu-e-problemot-skandalozni-izjavi-na-zaev-vo-svajcarija-udri-po-ustavnosta-video.nspk>)

43 Telegraf.mk, 17.11.2016: MACEDONIA IS HIS PROBLEM: Scandalous Statements from Zaev in Switzerland, He Went Against the Constitution (link available: <http://www.telegraf.mk/aktuelno/makedonija/ns-newsarticle-makedonija-mu-e-problemot-skandalozni-izjavi-na-zaev-vo-svajcarija-udri-po-ustavnosta-video.nspk>)

Albanian.⁴⁴ Also, in the municipalities of the Albanian minority, there were Albanian flags at the party meetings.⁴⁵ From the meetings in the “Albanian” municipalities, the most striking one is that one Zoran Zaev had in Arachinovo. “I am your man, you can count on me”, was the message that SDSM’s leader sent. “I know that I am the first Macedonian that is truly supported by the Albanians and it gives me a very serious obligation to promise all of you that I am your man. You can count on me for anything you need, as your man... Not only Macedonians, also the Albanians will have their own prime Minister, and my name is Zoran Zaev”, said Zaev in Arachinovo.⁴⁶

Albanian candidates at SDSM’s lists influenced the Albanian voters in the campaign. Gjylmser Kasapi who was second on the SDSM’s candidate list in the sixth election unit, right behind the holder Petre Shilegov, during her debate at Alsat-M confirmed that the party leader Zoran Zaev foresees in his program the introduction of Albanian language in Macedonia at a higher level. “The platform I support, as well as the principles strongly supported in the election platform pursued me that SDSM lead by Mr. Zoran Zaev will realize and remove the problem of the Albanian language from the Agenda. Thus it will surely have a special problem elected at the highest state levels”, said Kasapi.⁴⁷ The MP candidate also assures that the election program of SDSM enables solving many important questions for the Albanians, including the language issue. “I have read and studied SDSM’s program very much and I definitely believe that many problems will be solved, and among them the problem of the Albanian language” said Kasapi. She considers that the Albanian parties did not manage to solve the problems of the Albanians. Having hope that SDSM can do it, she adds: “I have a feeling that the Albanian parties, fighting with each other do not ménage to solve the main vital issues.”⁴⁸

In the fifth Chapter of “Plan for Life” titled “Building one Society”, there are several plans and goals that could be explained in the context of the campaign of “hunting” “Albanian” voters. “SDSM wants to end the ethnic divisions. We will support the language policy according to the needs and interests of the people and the society.”⁴⁹ On page 188, in the fifth chapter, it announces introducing elements of the so-called multicultural education. The first place where values of common society should be built is the kindergartens. Thus, we will introduce elements of multicultural education for all children at the earliest age, through projects and activities developing sense of freedom, tolerance and co-living. It will use practices from many successful projects for this kind of education. We will stimulate projects for multicultural socialization and interlingua communication at the higher levels of education”. Zaev, in the interview for the Kosovo TV “Jeta ne Kosove”, talked about the introduction of the Albanian language in the kindergartens.⁵⁰

44 Ivana Stojanovska – Kanal 5 TV, 09.11.2016: Bilingual Office of SDSM in Chair (link available: http://kanal5.com.mk/vesti_detail.asp?ID=108120)

45 Vecer Daily, 27.11.2016: At SDSM’s Meeting more Albanian flags than Macedonian (link available: <http://vecer.mk/makedonija/na-mitingot-na-sdsm-povekje-albanski-od-makedonski-znaminja>)

46 Vesna Kjuksanovic Krstveska – Alfa TV, 09.12.2016: Zaev from Arachinovo – I am your man, you can count on me (link available: <http://www.alfa.mk/News.aspx?ID=116151#.WVJNY5LfodX>)

47 Republika.mk, 21.11.2016: Gjylmser Kasapi from EU6 confirmed: I will vote for SDSM as an Albanian, Zaev will redefine the country (link available: <http://republika.mk/689239>)

48 Republika.mk, 21.11.2016: Gjylmser Kasapi from EU6 confirmed: I will vote for SDSM as an Albanian, Zaev will redefine the country (link available: <http://republika.mk/689239>)

49 Plan for Life in Macedonia – page 188.

50 Plan for Life in Macedonia – page 188.

In the Chapter “Protecting the Languages of Other Communities and Intercultural Communication”, SDSM announces: “we will create solutions to proportionally protect and promote the other languages and traditions, and we’ll support the intercultural projects and multilingual practices”.⁵¹ In the program, government’s decentralization becomes a top priority. On page 163, the Chapter “Strengthening Local Self-Government” talks about the delegated powers to the local self-government. According to the planned changes, the municipalities will take over some of the managing functions from MIA, the police, emergency medical service, social protection, employment centers, decentralization of the cultural institutions, etc. The program also puts forward ideas of having polytypical municipalities as a model of decentralization. “We will introduce polytypical municipalities with different authorizations, depending on its size and capacity, as well the power to generate own incomes, or divide the tasks to compulsory and electable.”⁵² These are some of the measures mentioned in the program. These ideas were severely criticized in the VMRO-DPMNE’s campaign, and could have influenced the opinion of part of the public that SDSM intends to work on “canton-ization” or federalization of the country by strengthening the local self-government, i.e. by decentralization.

On December 11, 2016, early parliamentary elections were held. SDSM’s political campaign towards the “Albanian” voters was successful. SDSM went a step further from Selmani’s citizens’ approach. Instead of citizen approach, it led the campaign of representing the interest of the “Albanians” in Macedonia. Due to this, SDSM managed to gain significant support, and in the municipalities with “Albanian” majority had far better result than the “Albanian” parties. CRPM analyzed the “Albanian” votes for SDSM at the elections in 2016.

Table11: Analyses of the “Albanian” votes for SDSM

Election unit (EU)	Total votes	Albanian votes	%of Albanian votes compared to those of SDSM
1	92,247	7,758	8.4%
2	69,842	12,531	17.9%
3	81,204	2,046	2.5%
4	94,780	40	0.04%
5	71,020	4,497	6.3%
6	25,986	11,290	43.4%
Total votes for SDSM	435,079	38,162	8.8%

Source: Centre for Research and Policy Making (CRPM) analysis 2017

Percentage wise, SDSM got large number of its votes from the Macedonian Albanians in EU2 and EU6. In EU1 and EU5 SDSM gets smaller support from the Macedonian Albanians, but it should be considered that there, in general, the number of ethnic Albanian voters is smaller compared to EU2 and EU6. Finally, in EU3 and EU4 the number of Macedonian Albanian voters is very small, and the support for SDSM from these is the smallest compared to the other election units, both in percentage and in numbers.

51 Plan for Life in Macedonia – page 188.

52 Plan for Life in Macedonia – page 163.

Table 12: Votes for the “Albanian” parties and comparison to the Albanian votes for SDSM

Election unit (EU)	Rank of SDSM per election unit	Albanian votes for SDSM	% of Albanian votes for SDSM of the total votes	DUI	BESA	DPA	Alliance for the Albanians	Total
1	3	7,758	19	12,890	11,597	4,851	3,769	40,865
2	3	12,531	22	16,868	16,119	5,938	6,051	57,507
3	1	2,046	54	1,142			587	3775
4	2	40	8	481				521
5	4	4,497	13	13,982	5,163	3,426	7,355	34,423
6	5	11,290	10	40,547	24,989	16,162	17,946	110,934
Total ⁵³	3	38,162	15	86,796	57,868	30,964	35,121	248,911

Source: Centre for Research and Policy Making (CRPM) analysis 2017

Throughout Macedonia, among the “Albanian” parties, SDSM came out third considering the number of votes from the Albanians. In EU1 and EU2, it was also third, and in EU3 and EU4 was first, and second, respectively. However, it should be mentioned that in the last two, the number of Albanian voters is very small. In EU 5, SDSM came out fourth and in EU 6 fifth in the number of votes from the Macedonian Albanians. If EU 3 and EU 4 are not considered in the percent of the total votes for the “Albanian” parties, the “Albanian” votes for SDSM are largest by number in EU 1 (19%) and EU 2 (22%). There, the support and the campaign for getting votes from the Albanians was the biggest. At some future elections, SDSM besides keeping the support, it could work more on attracting the Macedonian Albanians in EU5 and EU6.

The results from the parliamentary elections changed the political situation in the Republic of Macedonia. Namely, 38,162 Albanian votes from the total of 435,079 for SDSM seem a little. But, these 8.8% of the total number of votes were a significant factor for winning MP seats and forming the new Government afterwards. It is difficult to predict the outcome of these elections if some of the voters did not vote out of their “ethnic” community. These votes are also a good base of further success at the local elections in “mixed”, and even in some “predominantly” Albanian communities.

According to the D’Hondt’s model, these votes for SDSM are crucial for winning the MP seats in several election units. What if they were gone? The analyses shows that the votes SDSM won from the ethnic Albanians at all previous elections would have been distributed among the “Albanian” parties in Macedonia, such as DUI, DPA and the rest. CRPM made a simulation of the election results on the basis of this assumption. If in EU1 SDSM won even without the Albanian votes, in EU2 without these votes SDSM would have got 1 MP less, which would have gone to BESA. In EU3, the ethnic Albanian votes for SDSM and the increased number of votes from the other smaller communities brought one MP more for SDSM and one 1 less for VMRO-DPMNE. In EU5, the “Albanian” votes gave SDSM one MP more, taken from

⁵³ PDP has won 1,143 votes throughout the country.

DUI, and in EU6 both BESA and the Alliance for Albanians would have had one MP more, while both SDSM and VMRO-DPMNE would have got one MP less. Applying the D'Hondt's model, and assuming that the Albanian votes for SDSM were won by the other Macedonian Albanian parties, then the final results of the elections would have been different, and would have opened opportunities for possible new coalition makings.

Table 13: Projection of the MP seats of SDSM without the “Albanian votes”

Party	MP seats according to SEC	MP seats according to CRPM simulation
VMRO-DPMNE	51	51
SDSM	49	45
DUI	10	11
BESA	5	7
Alliance for Albanians	3	4
DPA	2	2
Total	120	120

Source: Centre for Research and Policy Making (CRPM) 2017

The table above presents that the “Albanian” votes for SDSM play an important role in the coalition forming. According to the simulation, SDSM without the Albanian votes would not have been able to form the Government so easily. SDSM together with DUI and Alliance for the Albanians would have had 60 MPs. VMRO-DPMNE together with BESA and DPA would have also had 60 MPs. What is more important to mention is that the success of the “hunt” for “Albanian” votes by SDSM is the basis for further political marketing and victories at the local elections in communities with mixed ethnicities. As a ruling party, SDSM announced the passing of the new Law on the Use of Languages which will de facto promote the Albanian language as a second official language at the territory of the whole country. Implementing the politics for the ethnic Albanians, SDSM creates a base of increased support by the Albanians in the municipalities and EU where they live. At the local elections, SDSM can appeal to the Albanians to vote for their candidates, instead of the one from VMRO-DPMNE.

SDSM's results among the Macedonian Albanians are important for the local elections in terms of Mayoral races and for the possible negotiations for support in the second round when SDSM can exchange votes with the ethnic Albanian parties. The table below presents several municipalities with predominantly Albanian population where SDSM has had excellent results, such as Arachinovo, Gostivar, Struga, Saraj, Chair, Gazi Baba and Tetovo.

Table 14: Municipalities with significant number of votes for SDSM from the Albanians

Municipality	Party with most votes	Total votes for SDSM	Albanian votes for SDSM	Percent of Albanians votes from all votes for SDSM
Saraj	DUI 6,615	2,973	2,304	77.5%
Arachinovo	DUI 1,456	2,052	2,032	99%
Chair (Election unit 1+2)	Besa 8,594	8,626	4,153	48%
Vrapchishte	DUI 3,513	1,345	971	72.2%
Lipkovo	DUI 4,379	773	773	100%
Kichevo (Election unit 5+6)	DUI 7,620	5,557	1,063	19.1%
Debar (Election unit 5+6)	DUI 2,075	2,153	866	40.22%
Struga	Alliance 5,730	8,420	1,328	15.8%
Gostivar	DUI 8,444	8,288	4,359	52.6
Tetovo	DUI 10,769	7,252	2,682	37%

Source: Centre for Research and Policy Making (CRPM) 2017

4.

MACEDONIAN OBAMA OR PLATFORM FROM TIRANA

The successes of Imer Selmani as a Presidential candidate of New Democracy and of SDSM at the parliamentary elections in 2016 are evident, but achieved with different methods. Imer Selmani had the message of unification of all citizens from different ethnic background in one multicultural, civic concept. With this campaign he won the sympathies and the votes from all ethnic communities, including the Macedonians. On the other hand, SDSM and Zaev “sold” the story of implementing civic values with different content. Namely, their civic concept was based on a campaign with two messages, one for the Macedonians and other minor communities for “life” in Macedonia and fight against the corrupted party elite of VMRO-DPMNE, and the other for the Macedonian Albanians, which along the promise for better life included a notion of improving the status and the political power of this community. In fact, SDSM and Zoran Zaev at the elections in 2016 offered redefinition of the interethnic relations in Macedonia defined in the Ohrid Framework Agreement from 2001. SDSM’s offer for the Macedonian Albanians in 2016 was committed to change the balance of power and the rights of ethnic Albanians agreed in Ohrid.

What were the results of the SDSM’s strategies? The Parliamentary elections in 2016 were successful for SDSM in the “hunt” of the Albanian votes. Playing in this “field”, SDSM disturbed the plans of the ethnic Albanian parties. They reacted with radicalization, or ethnic outbidding. The ethnic outbidding in the political sciences is analyzed as a term when ethnic parties adopt radical strategies aimed to maximize the support from the voters from a particular ethnic group to represent themselves as the real fighters for the *cause* and weaken the legitimacy, delegitimize the political rivals representing that community.⁵⁴ The theory of ethnic outbidding emphasizes that it leads to extreme competition, offering more radical options for the public policies that lead to the danger of destroying the political system itself. Ethnic outbidding happens when the politicians compete to get the support of a certain ethnic community and make requirements in favor of that community over the others. It is a process when within an ethnic community the political competition comes down to proving which party is a bigger defender of the community’s interests.⁵⁵ Whatever the policy or circumstances leading to ethnic outbidding, it makes

54 See also: Gormley-Heenan, C & MacGinty, R (2008) ‘Ethnic Outbidding and Party Modernization: Understanding the Democratic Unionist Party’s Electoral Success in the Post-Agreement Environment.’ *Ethnopolitics* Vol. 7, No. 1, страна 44.

55 Examples in: Coakley, J. ‘Ethnic Competition and the Logic of Party System Transformation’ *European Journal of Political Research* 47 (2008): 766–793.

ethnic negotiations almost impossible, since even the moderate ethnic elites are being radicalized, and the public discourse follows their actions. The ethnic outbidding in the divided societies can have serious political consequences, and can even lead to conflicts and eventually war.

As Gunter and Diamond say, “the electoral logic of the ethnic parties is to mobilize the base with polarized statements, by pointing out the opportunities that community should use, by threats...ethnic exclusivity of their political messages and their polarization effect have disintegrative effect and division of the society.”⁵⁶ Other renowned political scientists, such as Samuel Huntington, think that ethnic parties are dangerous to the democratization of a country. He even points out that many countries from the so-called “Third World” did not manage to sustain the democracy due to the strong influence of the ethnic parties.⁵⁷ One of the major experts on minorities and conflicts, Ted Gurr, goes as far as saying that almost all cases of civil wars in the last years were result of overtaking the government by ethnic parties and promoting their exclusivist political agenda.⁵⁸

Where is the ethnic outbidding in the Macedonian context? After the elections in 2016, DUI, Alliance for Albanians and BESA negotiated a new political agenda in Tirana, a political platform that seeks to extend the agreed reforms in Ohrid in 2001.⁵⁹ It was announced on 6 January, 2017, as the so-called “Tirana Platform”, requiring realization of goals, “in the future government mandate and/or in each future mandate,” to increase the power of the Albanian political entities in the country. It de facto aims to changes in the Ohrid Framework Agreement from 2001 and redefining Republic of Macedonia as a non-territorial federation. The platform also foresees promotion of the Albanians’ status, among else through realization of the right of “equitable implementation of the multiethnic principle in the Constitution of Macedonia, where the Albanians are [to be] considered as state-building nation...”, achieving complete language equity, use of the Albanian language at all levels of governance and guarantee that it will be applied as a fundamental and constitutional right. It is foreseen that the Constitution should define the “Macedonian language and its Cyrillic alphabet and the Albanian language and its alphabet as official languages in the Republic of Macedonia”, to open a comprehensive debate about the flag, anthem and coat of arms “in order the state symbols to reflect the societal multiethnicity and ethnic equity.” Within the ideas of reaching economic equity and social welfare, especially through equal regional development, the Platform demands to “create one Ministry of Political System and Inter-Ethnic Relations, as an authorized institution for recognizing the rights of the communities and stimulation of economic and social development in the underdeveloped areas”, “realization of equity in the security forces, the army, the prosecutors and the courts”, “taking affirmative measures to provide financing for the Albanian cultural institutions at central and local level”, as well as “realization of equity at all levels of

56 See also: Gunther, Richard and Diamond, Larry 2001. ‘Types and Functions of Parties’ in Larry Diamond and Richard Gunther (eds), *Political Parties and Democracy*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, page 23-24.

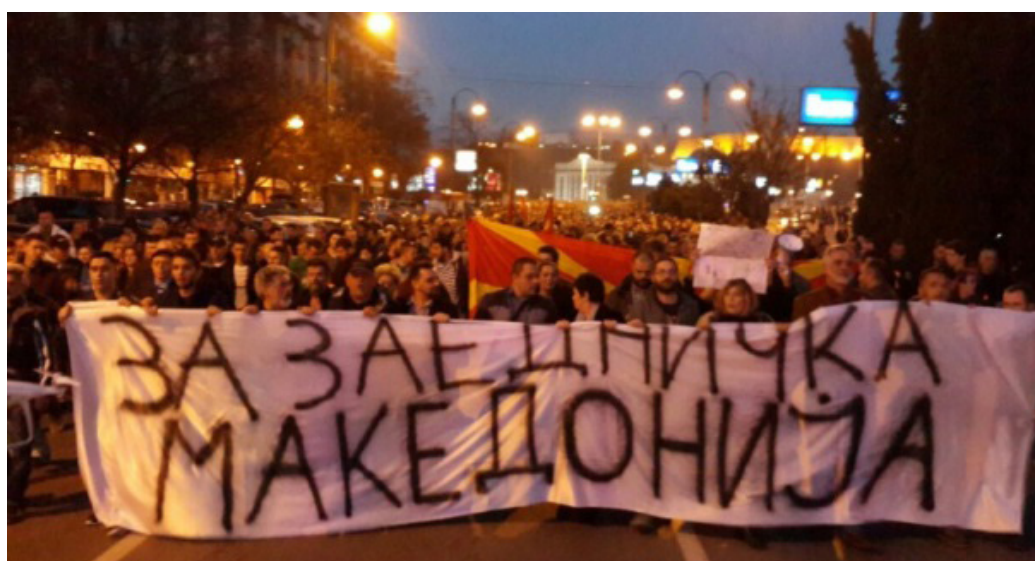
57 See also: Huntington, Samuel P. 1991. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman OH: University of Oklahoma Press..

58 See also: Gurr, Ted Robert. 2000. *Peoples Versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century*. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press.

59 Taken from: <http://puls24.mk/mk/vesti/tiranska-platforma-integralen-tekst>

central government and public services or stakeholders entities.” In the foreign affairs it requires inclusion of “Albanians in the working group for direct negotiations with Greece and Bulgaria”, “collaboration with Kosovo and Albania for integrated board management”, as well as “opening new border crossings.” Besides the other requirements at a lower symbolic level, it insists on adopting the “Resolution of the Republic of Macedonia condemning the genocide over the Albanian people in Macedonia in the period from 1912-1956.”

After the platform was published, VMRO-DPMNE did not manage to make a coalition Government with DUI, yet it was SDSM who did it, with DUI and the Alliance for Albanians. On the other hand, as a consequence of the radicalization in the requirements from the Albanian political parties, a new Macedonian protest movement involving also the other minor ethnical communities was formed. It was led by artists, such as Boris Damovski, Bogdan Ilievski, and Igor Durlovski, united under the motto of “For United Macedonia” aiming to stop the implementation of the Tirana platform, asking the President of the Republic not to give the mandate to SDSM and legalize the coalition. The three-month protests’ culminated on 27th April when in the Parliament, the parliamentary groups of SDSM, DUI and Alliance for Albanians irregularly elected the President of the Parliament. A group of protestors entered the Parliament and occupied the assembly hall and Press Centre, and some attacked MPs from SDSM and Alliance for Albanians, including their leaders Zaev and Sela. Macedonia was very close to the worst scenario of people being killed victims and even a civil war starting.



(Photo taken from www.zurnal.net)

5.

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Unfortunately, Imer Selmani's project for multicultural Macedonia was unsuccessful. Seven years later another project led to the reopening of the topics that were closed with the Ohrid Framework Agreement in 2001. The ethnic issues were back in full light on the agenda with SDSM's electoral campaign in 2016. The analysis clearly shows that SDSM's project to win votes from the Albanians through offering public policies to promote the power of this community has brought them election success. Feeling endangered, the ethnic Albanian parties united around the Tirana platform, additionally increasing their demands. The reaction by some Macedonians, Turks, Serbs and other was and still is very negative towards these issues. Since majority of the issues pertaining to interethnic relations was agreed in Ohrid in 2001, today Macedonia is facing a new challenge to discuss, and actually negotiate the basic postulates of the country. Nationalism as when a "genie is left out of the bottle" is difficult to suppress and control. New strategies are necessary to contribute to the moderation and community and civil convergence towards a common goal. We need compromises over the ethnic issues.

The integrative model is committed to this kind of election approach. Generally speaking, the interethnic conflict is a conflict over the control and ownership of the country, conflict over the superiority of one ethnicity over the others, etc. There is no single formula to reduce the conflict. In countries where the electorate is divided on ethnic grounds, it is difficult to convince the party leaders to make compromises without giving certain compensation. Thus, the attention must be focused to establishing such legal norms to initiate moderate and cooperative behavior among the ethnic political elites. These stimuli can be easily found in the election systems. They can be positioned in a way to encourage and influenced the interethnic agreements and the so-called interethnic accommodation. In this case the elections would offer specific benefits for the parties interested in interethnic collaboration. One such example is the so-called vote-pooling or a situation when the ethnic parties exchange their votes, or in order to get votes from the other communities, the ethnic parties are urged to soften or moderate their approach.

In order to alleviate the situation, it is necessary to redefine the election model for electing a President. One option is to introduce several integrative aspects at the following elections. For example, one model could be the Nigeria model for electing a president from 1978.⁶⁰ If, for example, the parliament passed amendments of the election law that would specify a certain percent of votes from all electoral units to elect the President, including those with Albanian majority, that would get the

60 See: Horowitz. 1985. Ethnic groups in conflict. Berkeley: University of California Press.

effect of moderating the election agenda of the Macedonian candidate without a formal regulation introducing the Vice-President position. Even now, there should be discussions about the parliamentary elections in 2020, including which election mechanisms could be introduced to initiate the party collaboration between the different ethnic groups.

According to Horowitz's integrative theory to alleviate ethnic tensions, it is prudent to use the majoritarian electoral system with the so-called "alternative vote". According to this model, at elections voters rank the candidates based on their preferences. If the candidate wins the majority of first-ranked preferences, he/she is elected in this electoral unit. If none candidate wins absolute majority (more than a half) of the first ranked preferences, the last-ranked candidate is eliminated, the ballots of this candidate are checked and the second-ranked preferences of this candidate are recalculated and distributed to the other candidates. If again there is no winning candidate, the procedure is repeated until one candidate gets the absolute majority.

Horowitz's idea is that the candidates, or the parties, in such an election system will have to be moderate, and actually cooperate, because it is not only the first but also the second and the third the voters' choice that could be important in winning seats. In an election system with parties representing different ethnic communities, they would depend on the votes from the "other" ethnic groups, which is an important motivation to have moderate campaigns and programs. This mechanism, where it is important and significant to "get votes of all ethnic and religious groups, through agreements with other parties to trade with the second, third and fourth preferences, requires mutual moderate behavior regarding the ethnic or racial issues and problems."⁶¹ In this case, Macedonia should change the election system from proportional to majoritarian.

The issue is of course, open to discussion. It is important to assess whether the situation in Macedonia is being normalized and whether there is danger that the interethnic relations between the Macedonians and Albanians will worsen again. Actually, in general, the liberal principle should be respected that the state institutions serve to the interest of the citizens and that their functioning or existence should be directly related to the interests and the needs of the citizens. If it is considered that these institutional reforms are necessary in Macedonia, they should be supported. Judging from the presented in this analysis, interethnic relations and the party conflicts are radicalized in Macedonia, and we need to implement these new integrative methods to prevent further ethnic conflicts.

61 Horowitz, D. L. *A Democratic South Africa? Constitutional Engineering in a Divided Society*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press 1991, page 177.

ANNEX 1

PLATFORM by DUI, Alliance of Albanians and BESA (Tirana Platform)

1. Achievement of full equality, in compliance with the Ohrid Framework Agreement and the Constitution

* Strict implementation of the principle of multi-ethnicity in the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, where the Albanians shall be recognized a nation-building population. Support for any legislation of constitutional initiative that strengthens ethnic equality for the Albanian population.

* Achievement of full linguistic equality, use of the Albanian language at all levels of governance and guaranteeing its use as a basic and constitutional right. The Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia shall determine that “the Macedonian language and its Cyrillic script and the Albanian language and its script are official languages in the Republic of Macedonia.”

* All-inclusive debate on the flag, anthem, and state coat-of-arms of the Republic of Macedonia, so that state symbols reflect societal multi-ethnicity and ethnic equality.

* Adoption of a Resolution in the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia with which to condemn the genocide on the Albanian people in Macedonia during 1912-1952.

2. Achievement of economic equality and societal wellbeing, especially through the equitable regional development

* Establishment of a new mechanism, in the form of a State Committee on Financing of Municipalities, for a more just decision-making with regard to government grants for municipalities’ benefit.

* Creation of a Ministry for Political System and Relations among Communities, as a body responsible for the respect for the rights of the communities and to incentivize economic and societal development in disfavored areas.

* Realization of equitable representation in the security bodies, the military, intelligence [agencies], and the judiciary.

* Realization of equitable representation at all levels of central governance, as well as public agencies, or public shareholder enterprises.

3. Strengthening of the Rule of Law, as a prerequisite for the advancement of the Euro-Atlantic integration process

* Implementation of the Reform Plan, in accordance with the Skopje Agreement [Przhino], the Priebe Recommendations, the Urgent Reform Priorities of the European Commission, as well as the recommendations from the High-Level Accession Dialogue with the EU.

* Support for the impartial work of the Special Prosecution [Office], without ethnic or political prejudice.

* Shedding full light on the issues and court cases of “Sopot,” “Brodec,” “Monster,” and “Kumanovo,” though an investigative committee, or an independent international body.

4. Creation of a spirit of trust in the function of good interethnic relations, as a crucial element to the political stability of the country

- * Affirmative measures to ensure the financing of Albanian cultural institutions at the local and national level.
- * Creation of a central institution for the advancement of the languages of the communities, which shall ensure the training of translators, editors and lecturers.

5. Resolution of the name issue, in conformity with European values and the principles of international law

- * Adoption of a Joint Binding Resolution in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia which shall oblige the Government of Macedonia to commit to actively work toward a solution to the name dispute.
- * Inclusion of Albanians in the working group for direct negotiations with Greece.

6. Good Relations with the Neighbors

- * Inclusion of Albanians in the working group for direct negotiations with Bulgaria.
- * Cooperation with Kosovo and Albania for the integrated border management.
- * Opening of new border crossings.

7. Quick integration in NATO and the EU

- * Accomplishing the above points shall unblock Macedonia's path toward full integration in NATO and open negotiations for membership in the European Union.