

Trends of Democratization of the Macedonian Parliamentary Elite in Seven Mandates

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to be determined the trends of democratization of the Macedonian parliamentary elite in seven parliamentary terms from 1991 to 2011. The democratization of parliamentary elites is defined as process of giving opportunities to more social group to enter to the parliament. The method of detection of democratization trends is applied by using indicators that measure a few aspects of transformation of parliamentary elites as the number of political parties in the parliament, the percent of female members of parliament, the percent of MPs representatives of ethnic minorities in parliament, the percent of elected young MPs under the age of 40, and the percent of MPs with maximum repeated parliamentary mandates. The results of investigation showed trends in growth of democratization process of the Macedonian parliamentary elite in seven mandates.

Keywords: democratization, parliamentary elite, Republic of Macedonia

1. Introduction

Legislatures act as main channels of recruitment of future political leaders who create state policies. In many developed countries and developing countries, in assemblies are recruited and trained future generations of political leaders, where they gain experience of political debate and political analysis (Heywood, 2013). Recruitment process for members of parliament is limitation of potential candidates for parliamentary seat. How does this process? In liberal democracies this process depends of the form of governance. In parliamentary democracies ministers in government are recruited from the parliamentary seats. In this relation, political parties at local level have very long-term influence in election of future political leaders. About the members of parliament (MPs), they are people that are elected on regular parliamentary elections usually for a period of four years (it can be more or less of four years, it depends of duration of parliamentary term in every country). These elected people, members of parliament could be considered as elite, because they control political functions, hold legislative political power and dominate the allocation of values.

2. Theoretical Framework of the Democratization Process of Parliamentary Elites

The recruitment process for new members of parliament has few steps or filters that select potential candidates. Significant influence to the recruitment process has the legal system, the social factor, the political party and the election process. The Figure 1 represents the four-step model of recruitment in legislatures.

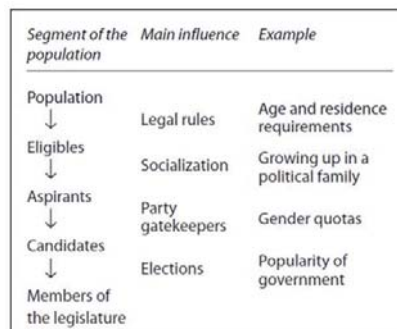


Figure 1: The four-stage model of recruitment to the legislature

Source: Hague & Harrop (2004), box 14.4, p. 260.

In the beginning, the legal rules reduce population to those who fulfill the legal requirements to be eligible for members of parliament. In many democratic countries as general rule is allowed to citizens at age of 18 plus to be elected as MPs. Except the age limitation other countries have requirement of permanent residence in a country for a period of time. The next filter is socialization of potential candidates. At this point is important the personal motivation of candidates. Their social and educational background has big influence to candidates' ambition to be nominated for parliamentary seat. As for an example, growing up in a family with political tradition has influence to personal characteristics of the candidates. Also the social environment is important at this stage. Elite recruitment is a vital and continuing function of parties (Hague & Harrop, 2004). Political parties have dominant role to the recruitment process. They could introduce gender quotas or the political leadership has the final decision to nominate future potential MPs. And the last, but not the least is parliamentary elections. At this stage in choosing candidates for the legislature, political parties are conditioned by the electoral system (Best & Cotta, 2000). Here the electoral system has the biggest influence to candidates' election. Further in the text will be mentioned more about the type of electoral systems.

The four-stage model of recruitment to the legislature has been improved by two authors Heinrich Best and Maurizio Cotta in their study of long-term transformations of the European parliamentary elites (Best & Cotta, 2000). Their study of the European parliamentary elites is in time frame starting from 1848 until 2000, which is marked by the political mobilization of significant parts of the population, the granting of freedom of association and political expression, the establishment of elected parliaments, and the expression of suffrage (Best & Cotta, 2000). According to both authors, the democratization process has been a common experience for European political systems. Their comparative and long-term approach to study of parliamentary elites gives the opportunity to be better understood the process of democratization and its internal variations (Best & Cotta, 2000).

Best and Cotta stated that it is clear that the recruitment of parliamentary elites will be affected by the process of democratization in general in the European countries. They suggested theoretical model that is described by the economical principle of formation of market prices. They see the recruitment process as demand and supply of potential members of parliament. The four-stage recruitment model offer best explanation how this process is done. At the first stage are the contenders with ambition and their personal characteristics to enter into the electoral competition. The contenders are the "offer" on the recruitment market. The next stage in the process of recruitment is the selectorates (political party organizations, local party committees, interested groups). The contenders have function of quality control of the offer and convincing function to the electorate. The third factor is the electorate, which has demand function on the recruitment market. In the fourth stage strong influence to the recruitment function has the formal structure of opportunity or formal laws and administrative rules and procedures, which form the rules of the game. These rules have direct impact to the legislative recruitment process. The study of elite background on the whole tells more about the society in which the elite exists than the policies or politics which the elite will pursue (Parry, 2005).

The long-term transformations of the parliamentary elites can be compared and analyzed by the theoretical model constructed by Best and Cotta. It is called DATACUBE. It is three-dimensional model organized by country and /or party families, by time, and by variables. It contains aggregated data for the personal and political characteristics of MPs. The two key concepts used in this theoretical model are the process of democratization and professionalization of parliamentary elites. The both processes are contradictory, because the democratization process refers to opening up the channels of political participation and legislative recruitment to more social groups, while the professionalization refers to the process whereby those recruited tend to establish area-specific standards and routines, which increase the insider-outsider differential (Best & Cotta, 2000).

The trends of democratization process of the Macedonian parliamentary elite to be determined here we will use five indicators. The first is the indicator showing the number of political parties in the parliament. If the number of parliamentary represented political parties is increased it means that the trend of democratization is increased. The second indicator is the percent of female members of parliament. If this percent is increased, it means that the trend of democratization is increased. The third indicator is the percent of MPs representatives of ethnic minorities in the parliament. If this percent it increased, it means that the democratization process is increased. The fourth indicator is the percent of elected young MPs under the age of 40. If the percent of young MPs is increased, it means that trend of democratization is increased. And the fifth indicator is the percent of MPs with maximum repeated parliamentary mandates. If this percent is getting decreased, it means that the process of democratization is increased. In the fourth part are given the results of investigation of the democratization trends of the Macedonian parliamentary elite in seven mandates.

3. Practicing the Parliamentary Democracy in the Republic of Macedonia (1991 – 2014)

The Republic of Macedonia exists as independent country since 1991. The country was part of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. The year 1991 is important for the country, because of the historical events that marked its independence. In 1991 is organized the referendum of independence, in which the majority of the Macedonian citizens choose to live to independent country. The next step was the Declaration of sovereignty in the Macedonian Assembly, which was the formal decision of constituency of the country. The text of first democratic Constitution provokes the political powers in the parliament. In conditions of lack of parliamentary democratic tradition was formed an "experts government", which did the first formal steps to organize the political life in the country. In 1992 was formed the first political government by the social-democrats (Social Democratic Union of Macedonia - SDUM), the Liberal Party (LP) and the Albanian Party of Democratic Prosperity (PDP).

In 1994 for the second parliamentary elections, the conservative party VMRO-DPMNE boycotted the second tour of elections and did not enter to the legislative arena. Again, the social-democrats formed parliamentary majority and government in a coalition with the Albanian PDP and the Liberal Party. This term the biggest oppositional political party VMRO-DPMNE did not participate in the parliamentary life and acted as outside parliamentary opposition.

In 1998 for the third parliamentary elections won the conservative VMRO-DPMNE and formed a government in a coalition with the Democratic Alternative (DA) and the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA). In 2001 there was an armed ethno-political conflict, which was peacefully solved with the Framework Agreement signed in Ohrid by the political leaders of the biggest political parties of the Macedonian and the Albanian community. This agreement was supported by the representatives of the international community (the EU and the USA). Also with this Agreement were made significant constitutional changes in the political system and was expanded the spectrum of minority rights in the legal system in the country (Shibakovski, 2015). It was moment of democratization.

The fourth parliamentary elections in 2002, the majority of the parliamentary seats won the social-democrats and formed a government in a coalition with the new Albanian party – Democratic Union of Integration (DUI). The conservative VMRO-DPMNE changed its political leadership in 2004. This period is important, because the Republic of Macedonia did its Declaration for membership in the EU in 2005.

The fifth parliamentary elections in 2006 won the conservative VMRO-DPMNE and formed a coalition with the Albanian DP, and a few small political parties. In this period, the Albanian DUI boycotted its attendance in the Assembly. There was political crisis in absence of political dialogue in the Assembly and because of the Bucharest events resulted with refuse for the Republic of Macedonia to join NATO. The Albanian DPA left the government in 2008.

In 2008 for the sixth parliamentary elections again won the conservative VMRO-DPMNE and formed a government in a coalition with Albanian DUI. The social-democrats did not participate in the parliamentary life in result of the arrest of the oppositional leader of SDSM.

In 2011 for the seventh parliamentary elections for the third time the conservative VMRO-DPMNE won the majority of seats in the parliament and formed a government with the same coalitional partners, the Albanian DUI and a few other political parties.

4. Democratization of the Macedonian Parliamentary Elite in Seven Mandates

On the basis of DATACUBE, it was created a database for the members of the Macedonian parliament for the time period from 1991 until 2011. It contains the personal and political characteristics for 841 MPs of the Macedonian Assembly (2 are missing because of lack info). There were seven parliamentary terms of the Macedonian parliament starting from 1991 until 2011. The Macedonian Assembly has 120 members of the parliament. In 2011, there were added 3 parliamentary seats more for members representing the Macedonian communities living abroad (Shibakovski, 2014a). In the database for the Macedonian MPs, there should be the characteristics for 843 members of the parliament, but there are 841 because 2 are missing in a result of lack of official data. The data for the Macedonian MPs was collected from the official web portal of the Macedonian Assembly, the Parliamentary Library of the national Assembly, the State Election Commission, and the Official Gazette of the R. Macedonia.

4.1 The number of political parties in the parliament (parliamentary represented political parties)

In Table 1 are given the number of candidate political parties for the Macedonian Parliament and the number of political parties in the parliament for seven mandates. Also it is shown the type of electoral system for each mandate.

Table 1: The number of political parties (candidates and parliamentary represented) in seven mandates

No	Mandate	Number of candidate political parties for parliament	Number of political parties in the parliament	Electoral system
1	1991	18	9	majority
2	1994	38	10	majority
3	1998	39	14	mixed
4	2002	55	14	proportional
5	2006	43	18	proportional
6	2008	42	18	proportional
7	2011	53	21	mixed

Source: The results are from own research made by the author.

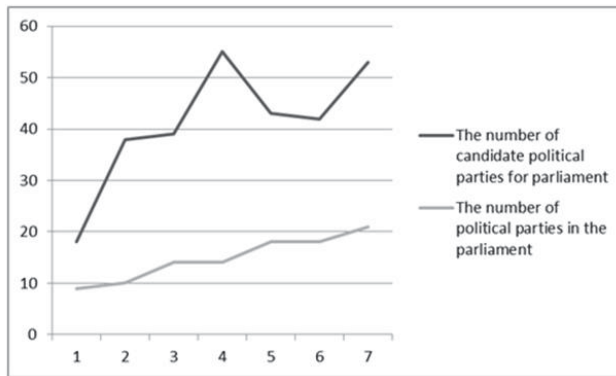


Figure 2: The trends of the number of political parties (candidates and parliamentary represented) in seven mandates

Source: The results are from own research made by the author.

From Figure 2 we can see that the trend of the index of parliamentary represented political parties is increased during the seven mandates. The first democratic elections for the Macedonian Assembly (1991) and the second parliamentary elections in 1994 were implemented under the electoral system of plurality voting. The third elections (1998) for the parliament were held by mixed electoral system (for 85 seats in the parliament were organized elections under the system of proportional representation and the political parties competed for 35 seats by plurality voting). The next three mandates (in 2002, 2006, and 2008) were held under the electoral system of proportional representation. The parliamentary elections in 2011 were held by mixed electoral system (the political parties competed for 120 seats under the system of the proportional representation, and for 3 seats more were organized elections by plurality voting for the Macedonian citizens living abroad). The plurality systems tend to reduce the number of significant parties in the legislature, resulting in a more adversarial democracy – a system of majority government and minority opposition. In contrast, proportional representation produces more multiple active parties and the survival of small parties, encouraging a more consensual democracy because more parties usually must cooperate in order to produce a legislative majority (Danzinger, 2011). According to the advantages and disadvantages of both electoral systems, we can assume and find the reasons how the number of political parties in the Macedonian Assembly was increased in result of implementation of both electoral systems. The presented results by this indicator showed increased trend of democratization of the Macedonian parliamentary elite in seven mandates.

4.2 The percent of female members of parliament

In Table 2 are given the results in percent for the male and female members of the Macedonian parliament in seven mandates.

Table 2: The gender structure of the Macedonian parliamentary elite in seven mandates

	1991	1994	1998	2002	2006	2008	2011
Men	95.9	96.8	91.3	80.7	72	66.7	67.2
Women	4.1	3.2	8.7	19.3	28	33.3	32.8

Source: Shibakovski, 2014b.

In Figure 3 are represented the trends of male and female MPs in seven mandates. We could see that the trend of female members of the Macedonian Parliament is increased and the trend of male MPs is declined. In March 2006, the Parliament passed the new election act and the most important element in this act is the condition of 30% of the nominated candidates should be women, which shall ensure gender representation in the Parliament (Pandevska, 2007).

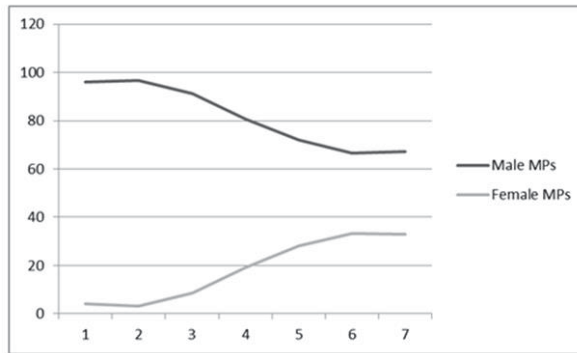


Figure 3: The trends of gender structure of the Macedonian parliamentary elite in seven mandates

Source: The results are from own research made by the author.

The index of the percent of female MPs showed increased trend of democratization of the Macedonian parliamentary elite. As it was stated this increased trend is result of the introduced election act with a goal to be ensured gender representation in the Assembly.

4.3 The percent of MPs representatives of ethnic minorities in parliament

In Table 3 is given the ethnical structure of the Macedonian parliamentary elite in seven mandates. The Macedonian MPs are majority in all seven parliamentary mandates. The Albanian MPs are the second largest representation of the ethnic minorities in the Macedonian parliament. The other represented ethnic minorities in the Assembly are Turkish, Roma, Serbian and other less represented MPs.

Table 3: The ethnic structure of the Macedonian parliamentary elite in seven mandates

	1991	1994	1998	2002	2006	2008	2011
Macedonian	77.7	79.2	76	69.4	71.2	68.3	67.2
Albanian	19	17.6	21.6	23.6	22.7	23.8	21.4
Turkish	0	0.8	0	2.8	1.5	0.75	1.5
Roma	1.65	1.6	1.6	0.7	1.5	0.75	1.5
Serb	0	0.8	0	1.4	0.8	3.2	3.1
other	1.65	0	0.8	2.1	2.3	3.2	5.3

Source: Shibakovski, 2014b.

In Figure 4 are represented the trends of the Macedonian MPs and the MPs representatives of the ethnic minorities in the Republic of Macedonia. The trend of the representatives of the ethnic minorities showed moderate growth in seven mandates. The constitutional and legal changes in result of the Ohrid Framework Agreement (2001) affected the spectrum of political rights of the ethnic minorities in the Republic of Macedonia and gave them opportunities for bigger political participation in governance of the country.

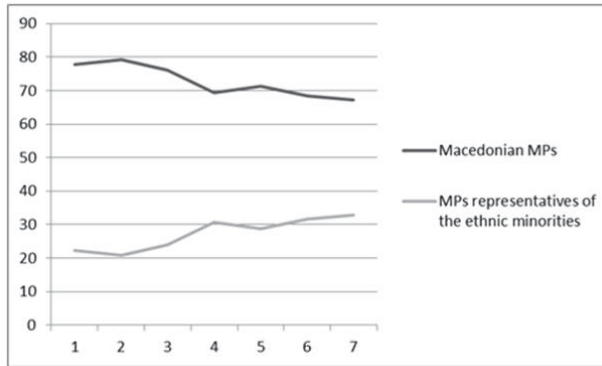


Figure 4: The trends of the Macedonian MPs and the MPs representatives of the ethnic minorities

Source: The results are from own research made by the author.

According to the index of the percent of MPs representatives of ethnic minorities in the parliament there is a trend of growth of democratization of the Macedonian parliamentary elite in seven mandates.

4.4 *The percent of elected young MPs under the age of 40*

In Table 4 is given the mean age (in years) and the age groups (in percent) of the Macedonian parliamentary elite in seven mandates. We could see that there are no big differences in the mean age between the parliamentary terms. The results in the mean age vary between 43–45 years. According to the theoretical model of Best and Cotta, the transformation into a full-time politician takes place at an average age between 40 and 45 (Cotta & Best, 2007). For example, in Italy, which has a long parliamentary tradition compared with Macedonia, the minimum age limit is 40 years for the upper house of the Parliament and it is a part of the Italian legislation (Shibakovski, 2014b). In assumption, we could detect that age of 40 is starting point for professionalization of parliamentary representatives, and MPs under the age of 40 are just at the beginning of professional parliamentary career. The input of MPs under the age of 40 can be considered as index of democratization of parliamentary elite.

Table 4: The age structure of the Macedonian parliamentary elite in seven mandates

Age group	Parliamentary term						
	1991	1994	1998	2002	2006	2008	2011
18-29 years of age (%)	5	1.6	3.3	2.2	5.3	7.1	5.3
30-39 years of age (%)	25.6	28	21.5	24.1	23.7	30.2	32.8
40-49 years of age (%)	42.1	42.4	45.5	44.40	46.6	42.1	36
50-59 years of age (%)	22.3	22.4	23.1	22.70	18.3	13.50	20.6
60 years of age and more (%)	5	5.6	6.6	6.60	6.1	7.1	5.3
Mean age (in years)	44	45	45	45	44	43	44

Source: Shibakovski, 2014b.

In Figure 5 are shown the trends of the MPs at age over 40 and the MPs under the age of 40. The trend of MPs under the

age of 40 showed trend of input of young MPs in the Macedonian parliamentary elite, and the other trend of MPs at the age over 40 showed trend of decline, which means that the parliamentary elite is getting younger.

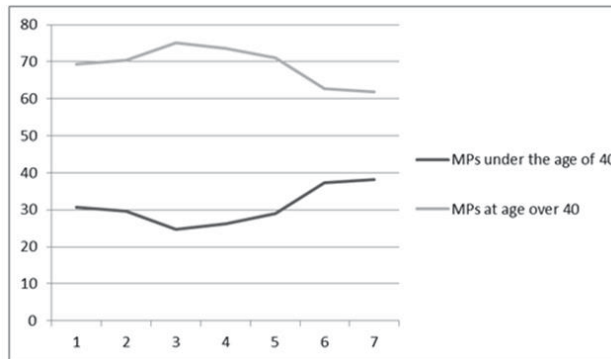


Figure 5: The trends of the MPs at age over 40 and the MPs under the age of 40.

Source: The results are from own research made by the author.

The index of the percent of elected young MPs under the age of 40 showed increased trend of democratization of the Macedonian parliamentary elite in seven mandates.

4.5 The percent of MPs with maximum repeated parliamentary mandates

In Table 5 are represented the statistical results and the trend of the MPs with maximum repeated parliamentary mandates in seven parliamentary terms.

Table 5: The results and the trend of the MPs with maximum repeated parliamentary mandates in seven parliamentary terms

№ of mandates	Parliamentary term							Total
	1991	1994	1998	2002	2006	2008	2011	
1	120 14.3%	91 10.8%	83 9.9%	101 12.0%	79 9.4%	47 5.6%	64 7.6%	585 69.6%
2	0 0.0%	28 3.3%	25 3.0%	11 1.3%	28 3.3%	47 5.6%	25 3.0%	164 19.5%
3	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	12 1.4%	3 0.4%	5 0.6%	19 2.3%	20 2.4%	59 7.0%
4	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	5 0.6%	5 0.6%	3 0.4%	9 1.1%	22 2.6%
5	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 0.4%	1 0.1%	3 0.4%	7 0.8%
6	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 0.4%	0 0.0%	3 0.4%
7	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 0.1%	1 0.1%
Total	120 14.3%	119 14.1%	120 14.3%	120 14.3%	120 14.3%	120 14.3%	122 14.5%	841 100.0%

Source: The results are from own research made by the author.

In Table 5 we could see that the trend of MPs with maximum repeated parliamentary mandates is declined and this index of democratization showed opportunity for new potential members of parliament to enter in the Macedonian parliamentary elite.

5. Conclusion

The first index showed increased number of parliamentary represented political parties, especially after the introduction of electoral model of proportional representation, which produces more multiple active parties for political participation in the parliament. The second index showed increased percent of female MPs and it was increased after the introduction of gender quote with the new election act in 2006. The third index showed trend of increased participation of the MPs representatives of the ethnic minorities in Macedonia. The fourth index showed trend of input of young MPs in the parliament during the seven mandates. The last index showed trend of decline of the MPs with maximum repeated parliamentary mandates, which give opportunity for new potential candidates to enter in the Macedonian parliamentary elite. In conclusion, the five indexes showed increased level of democratization of the Macedonian parliamentary elite in seven mandates. It means that in time period of not more than quarter century (from 1991 to 2014) the Macedonian parliamentary elite opened up the channels of political participation and legislative recruitment to more social groups.

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