



ETHNIC PARTIES: DEFINITION AND CLASSIFICATION

David Berat, PhD Candidate
Association for Education and Consulting “D-r Berat”-Skopje
beratdavid@hotmail.com

DOI: 10.1515/seeur-2017-0020

Abstract

The article is about defining ethnic parties and their classification. We define and discuss the terms politics, political party, ethnic group and ethnic party. We state differences about the traditional model of politics and the modern one. We analyze the importance of the political parties in representing the political rights of the people and what is needed so a political party can be established in the Republic of Macedonia. Also we show how to determine which party is an ethnic party and show a number of ethnic parties in Republic of Macedonia using the name of the party as an indicator. In this part we discuss the indicators and we state that good indicator is the program of the election campaign of the party. But still this is not 100% sure indicator if the party is ethnic. We concluded this because there are a lot of examples when the ruling party before the start of the election campaign does a research

about the ethnical groups and after the research makes projects meant for the ethnic groups so the party can get the votes from the chosen ethnicity. At the end we concluded that the programs and the statues of the political parties are the best indicators and answer if a political party is a non-ethnical, multi-ethnical or ethnical political party.

Key words: *politics, ethnic group, ethnic parties, Republic of Macedonia.*

Introduction

Aristotle: "Man, by his nature is social animal".

The word "politics" comes from the Greek word "polis" which means city-state. The Ancient Hellenic society was divided in many independent cities-states and they had a functioning ruling system on their own. In Ancient Greece there were more than 1,000 city-states but Sparta, Corinth, Thebes, Athens, Aegina, Argos, Syracuse, Elis, Eretria and Rhodes were the most important. Even though Sparta was the biggest "polis" spread on 8,500 km² of territory, Athens was the most important city-state at the time and for that it is claimed that Athens is the cradle of the democracy and of democratic ruling. In the Ancient Hellenic society the use of the word politics was for obligations that are coming for the interest of the city-state or obligations that are improving the living of the people in those city-states.

Aristotle has stated that: "the politics is the best and greatest art, an activity by which humans are trying to improve their lives and create a better society" (Keyt, 1995). According to Bismarck "politics is not a

science, but a skill". He refers to politics as the skill of practicing control in society by implementing and adopting collective decisions (Darmstaedter, 2008). Samuel Johnson stated in 1775 that "politics is nothing but a way to advance the world" and that the word "politics" should not be affiliated with crime, lies, trouble and manipulations (Walter Jackson Bate, 1977).

In the traditional point of view politics is what the state does, but in modern times politics is what governments do as well as the way to study the practices of authority. David Easton defines politics as the "authoritative distribution of values". He states that politics is covering different process by which the government is responding to pressure that is coming from the biggest part of society, especially by assigning fees, penalties and awards (Easton, 1981).

Politics is a tool for resolving conflicts through a usage of negotiation, compromise and mediation, not only a tool for strength and power. In any case, politics is not an easy solution because a lot of exceptions have to be made in the process of making policies, but it is a better and more acceptable solution than options like wars, killing and repression.

In the modern society, politics is commonly referred to as an activity that is connected with crime, money laundering, abuse of power, creating favored elite structures, corruption, nepotism and other illegality. Due to these actions a new phenomenon is appearing – anti politics. This phenomenon defines politicians as selfish people who use their power for their own benefits and causing harm to others. Modern politicians tend to live a double life, one that is socially correct and another that is filled with their wildest dreams and desires. There is a well-known

thought that gives a great description of this phenomenon from Lord Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton: “All power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely”.

Because the people wanted to practice their political rights and improve their living conditions they started to establish political parties. The Americans founded their first two parties in the 1790s (Federalist Party and Democratic-Republican Party) due to the actions of Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson (M.J.C.Vile, 2002). The oldest political party in Sweden is the Social Democratic Party which was established in 1889 and the first two registered parties in the Republic of Macedonia are VMRO-DPMNE in 1990 and Social Democratic Union in 1991.

According to the Macedonian Law for political parties, a political party is a voluntary organisation of citizens, established for the creation and protection of political, economic, social, cultural and other rights and beliefs and for participation in the process of adopting political decisions when participating in the government.¹⁷ The political parties achieve their goals through democratic formation and expressing the political will with participation in elections and other democratic ways.¹⁸ The program, statute and the actions of the political parties cannot be directed toward: violent overthrow of the Constitutional order of the Republic Macedonia; encouraging or calling for a military aggression; or encouragement of national, racial or religious hatred or intolerance.¹⁹

¹⁷ Article 2, paragraph 1, “Law on political parties”, (Official Gazette no. 76/04, 5/07, 8/07, 5/08 and 23/13).

¹⁸ Article 2, paragraph 2, “Law on political parties”, (Official Gazette no. 76/04, 5/07, 8/07, 5/08 and 23/13).

¹⁹ Article 3, “Law on political parties”, (Official Gazette no. 76/04, 5/07, 8/07, 5/08 and 23/13).

Every type of discrimination based on membership or non-membership in a political party is forbidden.²⁰

Definition of an ethnic group

The word “ethnic” comes from the Greek word “ethnos”, which means people, folk. In Ancient Greece the term “ethnos” referred to all the bigger groups no matter if it referred to a group of people or group of animals. Later on during the 19th century the term started to gain a new meaning – nation. An ethnic group is a group of people who have shared characteristics such as language, cultural, social or national experiences. Ethnicity has an inherited status and is defined by a shared cultural heritage, religion, history, and homeland. It is imperative that we state that the ethnic group owns an identity of a community but has a lack of mutual political ambitions. That is the key difference between the two terms ethnic group and nation.

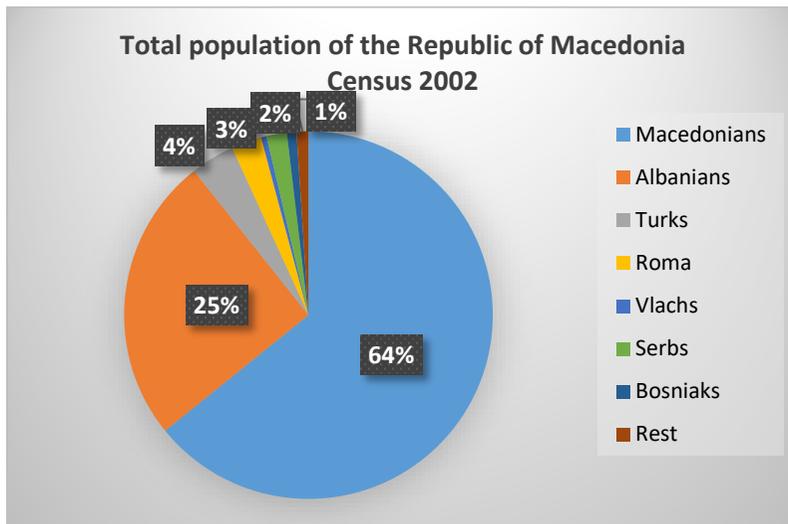
Depending of the source that is used for determination of the member status of the groups, we can recognize the following categories:

1. Ethno-national, when a policy is being shared or national identity;
2. Ethno-linguistic, when a dialect or language is being shared;
3. Ethno-religious, when a cult, religion or belief is being shared;
4. Ethno-regional, when there is a logic of belonging to a region or district; and
5. Ethno-racial, when a physical appearance is being shared.

According to the Central Intelligence Agency (Fact book, 2014) the Han Chinese are the biggest ethnic group in the world, with more than 1.3

²⁰ Article 5, “Law on political parties”, (Official Gazette no. 76/04, 5/07, 8/07, 5/08 and 23/13).

billion people. They represent 92% of the population in China, 76% of the population in Singapore, 95% of the population in Taiwan, 23% of the population in Malaysia and 18% of the world population. In the Republic of Macedonia the total population is 2.022.547 people by the last Census in 2002. There are a total of 7 ethnic groups that are recognized and are part of the Macedonian Constitution.

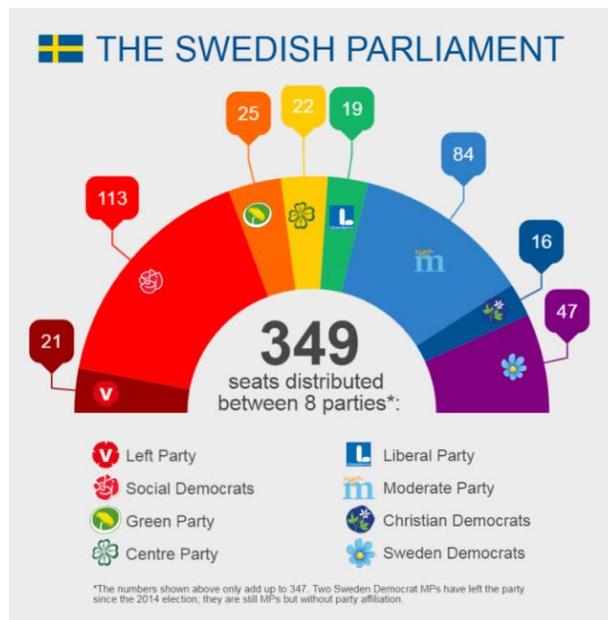


Source: State Statistical Office of R. Macedonia

Definition of an ethnic political party

According to Donna Lee and Van Cott an ethnic party is defined as an organization authorized to compete in local or national elections, the majority of its leadership and membership identify themselves as belonging to a non-dominant ethnic group, and its electoral platform

includes demands and programs of an ethnic or cultural nature.²¹ My definition is far less complex because in my opinion every party that represents and advances the rights of an ethnic group is an ethnic political party. Depending on whether the party is defending and promoting the rights of one or more ethnic groups we can classify the party as an ethnic or multi-ethnic political party. If in the name of the political party or in the program or statute of the party there is no mention of an ethnic group then we are discussing a non-ethnic party.



Source: <https://sweden.se/society/political-parties-in-sweden>

In November 2016 and February 2017 I did two study visits to Sweden where I collected data for my PhD dissertation project and that is when I

²¹ Donna Lee, Van Cott, "From Movements to Parties in Latin America". The Evolution of Ethnic Politics, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

observed the fact that the Kingdom of Sweden has no ethnic parties. None of the parties in Sweden in their name has an ethnic group and if they had it would be considered discriminatory.

In the Republic of Macedonia there are no multi-ethnic parties but we have quite ethnic parties and their number is pretty high compared to the ethnic population. All the ethnic groups that are living on the territory of the Republic Macedonia have two or more ethnic political parties based on the name of the political parties as an indicator. The greatest number of ethnic parties are the Romani political parties with the total number of 7 political parties: Party for Integration of Roma-PIR; Roma United of Macedonia-ROM; Party for Total Emancipation of Roma-PCER; Union of Roma in Macedonia-SRM; Democratic Prosperity of Roma-DPR; Democratic Forces of Roma-DSR; and United Party for Equality of Roma-OPER.

After the Romani political parties as the leaders in ethnic parties in Republic Macedonia next in line are the Macedonian ethnic parties with 6 parties and then are the Albanians ethnic parties also with 6 ethnic parties. There are also 3 Turkish ethnic parties, 3 Serbian ethnic parties, 2 Vlach ethnic parties and 2 Bosniak ethnic parties.



List of the ethnic political parties in Republic of Macedonia

No.	Name of political party	Ethnic group
1.	Party for Integration of Roma-PIR	Romani
2.	Party for Total Emancipation of Roma-PCER	Romani
3.	Union of Roma in Macedonia-SRM	Romani
4.	Democratic Prosperity of Roma-DPR	Romani
5.	Democratic Forces of Roma-DSR	Romani
6.	United Party for Equality of Roma-OPER	Romani
7.	Roma United of Macedonia-ROM	Romani
8.	Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization - Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity, VMRO-DPMNE	Macedonian
9.	Macedonian Action-MAAK	Macedonian
10.	Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Peoples Party, VMRO-NP	Macedonian
11.	Permanent Macedonian Radical Unification	Macedonian
12.	Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Party, VMRO-DP	Macedonian
13.	Macedonian Alliance	Macedonian
14.	Party for Democratic Prosperity-PDP	Albanian
15.	Democratic Party of Albanians-DPA	Albanian
16.	Democratic Union for Integration-DUI	Albanian
17.	Alliance of Albanians	Albanian
18.	BESA	Albanian
19.	National Democratic Revival-NDP	Albanian
20.	Party for Movement of Turks in Macedonia	Turk
21.	Democratic Party of Turks in Macedonia	Turk
22.	Movement for National Unity of Turks	Turk
23.	Serbian Party of Macedonia-SSM	Serb
24.	Democratic Party of Serbs in Macedonia	Serb
25.	Serbian Advanced Party in Macedonia	Serb
26.	Party of Vlachs in Macedonia	Vlach
27.	Democratic Union of Vlachs in Macedonia	Vlach
28.	Democratic Bosniak Party	Bosniak
29.	Party for Democratic Action in Macedonia	Bosniak

How to determine if a political party is an ethnic party

Ethnic Party	Multi-ethnic Party	Non-ethnic Party
-Bosniaks Party -Macedonian action -International Romani Party	-Party of Jews and Roma -English-German Party -Integration of Serbs and Croats	-Green Party -Liberal Party -New Social Democrats

BEST INDICATORS	GOOD INDICATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of the political party • Program of the political party • Statute of the party 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the political party • Ethnical heritage of the leader of the party • Campaign program during elections

There are a lot of indicators which can be used in defining whether a political party is an ethnic party. A lot of different researchers have different opinions and approaches. One of the indicators can be the leader/president of the political party. If the leader/president of the party is a member of an ethnic group then there are bigger chances that the party is ethnic party, but still this is not a rule because there are many leaders who are managing non-ethnic political parties and are members of ethnic groups (and vice versa). According to *Vishnu Bisram* “*this is very naive, because putting someone from different ethnicity to lead an ethnic party will drive the supporters of the party to another party, will the Chinese put a Tibetan to lead their party, or will the Israeli Likud put an Arab as their lider?*”²²

The programs and statutes of the political parties are the best indicators if a party is non-ethnic, multi-ethnic or ethnic. Usually the ethnic parties

²² Read more in the Trinidad&Tobago Guardian Online at <http://www.guardian.co.tt/byline-authors/vishnu-bisram>.

on the very beginning of the programs and statues highlight which ethnical group or groups will be improved by the work of the party.

A good indicator is also the program of the election campaign of the party. But still this is not 100% sure indicator if the party is ethnic. We say this because there are a lot of examples when the ruling party before the start of the election campaign does a research about the ethnical groups and after the research makes projects meant for the ethnic groups so the party can get the votes from the chosen ethnicity.

The name of the political party is also a great indicator to define if a party is ethnical or not. If the party is called African American Party then we refer to an ethnic party but if the party is called Green Party of Party of ecologists than we should realize that these parties are not-ethnic and pro environmental and ecological parties.

As an indicator we can mention the members of the party or the voters in elections. But still this is a weak indicator. This is due to the freedom of political belief that allows every adult to be a member of a political party without his religious, ethnical, gender or sexual orientation.

Conclusion

Yes, the ethnic parties are defending and improving the rights of the ethnic groups, but also at the same time they are creating political segregation and not allowing their members to integrate with others members and supporters of the rest of the political parties in the political system.

There are a lot of indicators to classify the parties as ethnic, but we have to keep in mind that different indicators can produce different counts of the number of the ethnic parties. As the best indicators we mention the following three:

1. Name of the political party;
2. Program of the political party; and
3. Statute of the party.

Even though the existence of the ethnical parties does not give a warranty that the rights of the specific ethnical group will be drastically improved, still their existence allows having a multicultural society.

In my opinion the ethnic parties represent a sword with two sharp edges because they have their positive and negative sides but, at the end, I believe that the benefits are more meaningful and important than the costs. If there are no ethnic parties, who then will fight for the rights of the ethnicities and their improvement?

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