

Topic: an analysis of the political campaign of political parties during regular presidential and early parliamentary elections in 2014

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ABSTRACT

The implementation of the electoral process in each state is the mirror of democracy. Elections send messages about the political culture of the state, its democratic capacity, and whether it has a political future. During the elections the focus of interest of domestic and international political community is always on the question of the extent of how free and fair they are and in accordance with international standards. This especially applies to the countries of the Western Balkans, where election incidents happen during the election, as well as irregularities and rejection of the election results, hatred speech, etc. In our research we will focus on hate speech as one aspect of the electoral process in the Republic of Macedonia. In all previous elections hate speech was present, and it was especially prominent in the initial period of political pluralism in the 90s, but over time this undesirable phenomenon election seems to reduce its vigor.

Our primary research question in this paper will be how and to what degree will hate speech be represented in the regular presidential campaign and early parliamentary elections in the Republic of Macedonia, which will be held in April 2014.

In our research we start from the basic research hypothesis that in Macedonia, despite increased political culture and higher level of democracy in the state electoral campaigns of political parties we can still find hate speech, which is of lower intensity than the initial period political pluralism. Also, we assume that the hate speech will come to a greater degree during the parliamentary election campaign than presidential elections.

The research will apply the method of content analysis of articles in print media, electronic media and internet portals during the election campaign. Furthermore, we will make a comparative analysis of the use of hate speech between the government and opposition,

Macedonian and Albanian political parties and between the parties of the Albanian political block (BDI, PDSH etc.).

Key words: print media, elections, campaign, political culture,

Introduction

All Balkans countries encounter the problem of hate speech as an inevitable form of political communication in their elections. Nowadays, however, even countries with long parliamentary, democratic tradition and political culture experience the phenomenon of negative political communication, albeit in somewhat weaker form. Even though the Republic of Macedonia has been building and developing its political pluralism, parliamentary democracy and political culture for more than twenty years, hate speech, insults, humiliation, etc. are still existent in election campaigns. In comparison to the initial period of Macedonia's political pluralism, hate speech has evolved significantly today. In order to determine the manifestation and extent of hate speech as an inappropriate form of political communication in the elections, newspaper articles in the print media were used in our research which was conducted during the election campaign of the regular presidential and parliamentary elections held between 24.03.2014 to 04.25.2014.

1. Methodology

This research analyzes newspaper articles in the print media¹ that contained statements by politicians in the election campaign. The research base is composed of data collection and its notation according to the content and the severity of all the words-terms (attributes, features) from the government of the opposition during the campaign. To this end, quantitative analysis will be performed in the paper noting the negative terms used in the campaign by the government position, the opposition parties of the Albanian block. Browsing negative terminology used in the print media in the aforementioned period, a total of 32 results was achieved making use of the terms in the negative campaigning.

2. political context of the election

As the the five year term of the president finished, the sixth presidential election was held in two rounds.

¹ Texts were analyzed in six newspapers including: Nova Makedonija, Vecer, Vest, Dnevnik, Sloboden Pecat and Utrinski Vesnik

On 14.01.2014, the Parliament decided to dissolve by a majority of MPs votes.² The reason for its dissolution was its inefficiency and inability to operate. Early parliamentary elections were held on 04.27.2014.

3. Hate Speech - notion and meaning

Hate speech is a phenomenon that is more common in multiethnic, multi-race, multicultural, multilingual multi-religious societies. It is an increasing response to the growing migration. There are many definitions of hate speech in the legal and political theory. A few of them will be noted below. Hate speech - speech designed to promote hatred based on race, religion, ethnicity or national origin.³ Hate speech is a type of speech that is intended to offend an individual or a racial, ethnic, religious or other group.⁴ Blacks Law Dictionary defines hate speech as "speech which does not denote anything more than the expression of hatred for some group, such as a particular race, especially in circumstances where it is likely that communication will cause violence."⁵ Hate speech carries the message of inferiority to the members of groups historically suppressed and condemned, humiliated, and is full of hate.⁶ It has often been emphasized that hate speech is intended to terrorize, humiliate, degrade, insult and injure.⁷ Apart from direct speech, it is also composed of indirect forms such as public use of symbols, burning religious signs (crosses), Internet sites, etc. The damage of hate speech is immense. It inflicts great damage: violates individuals, causes prejudice, defamation, insults, increases interethnic conflicts, creates mistrust between communities, breaches public order and peace, encourages violence etc.

Prohibition of hate speech in international law

In the attempt to prohibit hate speech as a civilizational threat, UN and Council of Europe adopted several legal instruments. Thus, the prohibition of hate speech is regulated by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, etc.

² See Article 63, paragraph 7 of the Constitution.

³ Michael Rosenfeld, Hate Speech in Constitutional Jurisprudence: A Comparative Analysis, *Cardozo Law Review* (Vol.24:4), 2003, p. 1523

⁴ D-r. Frances Henry, The expert report for the Canadian Human Rights Commission for hate speech defined as "any form of expression directed to objects of perception that perpetrators use to wound and tarnish their recipient."

⁵ Blacks Law Dictionary 1407-08, 7-th ed. 1999.

⁶ Raphael Cohen-Almagor, *The Scope of Tolerance, Studies on the costs of free expression and freedom of the press*, Routledge, London and New York, 2006, page 153.

⁷ Anthony Cortese, *Opposing Hate Speech*, Westport, Connecticut, 2006, p. 9

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations (1948) states that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" (art. 1) and that the rights and freedoms proclaimed in the Declaration belong to everyone regardless of race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or any other conditions "(art. 2). Article 18 of the Declaration states that "" Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion", while Article 19. thereof states that" Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression."Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of the United Nations (1966) guarantees freedom of expression, but also contains its limitations, which must be explicitly defined by law and necessary for respect of the rights or reputations of others, or to protect state security, public order, public health or morals. Article 20 of the Covenant reduces right to freedom of expression, that provides legal prohibition of propaganda for war or advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that is an incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence. Article 4 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of the United Nations (1965) "requires that Member-States prohibit hate speech or other forms of dissemination of propaganda of racial or ethnic superiority, and also prohibits incitement to ethnic or racial discrimination, hatred and violence." Recommendation no. (97) 20 of the Council of Europe concerning hate speech says "hate speech should be understood as coverage of all forms of expression which spread, suggest, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, including intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility towards minorities, migrants ... ".⁸

4. Presidential Election

Presidential elections were held in two election rounds in the Republic of Macedonia in the period 24.03-27.04.2014. The first round was held on 13.04.2014, the second round was held on 27.04.2014. The following candidates ran for President of the Republic of Macedonia: George Ivanov from the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE, Stevo Pendarovski from the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), Zoran Popovski, Civic option for Macedonia (GROM) and Ilijaz Halimi Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA). The top two candidates qualified for the second round: Ivanov and Stevo Pendarovski. Presidential elections in the first round were monitored by the 8325 domestic and 326 foreign observers, while in the second by 9552 domestic and 500 foreign observers.

5. Early parliamentary elections

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S.. Dimishkova Freedom of expression and democracy, Vecer Press, Skopje, 2008, p. 50-51.

The early parliamentary elections campaign took place in the period from 5.04.2014 to 04.25.2014. 14 candidate lists with 1402 candidates were submitted by the political parties and coalitions. Macedonia is divided into six election districts and three election districts abroad IE 7 (Europe and Africa), IE 8 (North and South America) and IE 9 (Asia and Australia). 1,779,572 citizens had the right to vote in 3480 and 48 polling stations abroad, administered by 17,400 electoral committee members. Temporarily, there are 70,305 voters who work or live abroad, of which 8332 with voting rights applied to vote. 25,000 Macedonian citizens applied to vote abroad in the early parliamentary elections, which is more than in the presidential election, owing to the fact that three seats in the new parliament will be occupied by overseas MPs.

6. Research results

6.1. Negative campaign among Macedonian parties

Analyzing negative terminology used by politicians during the election campaign in the newspapers: Nova Makedonija, Sloboden Pecat, Dnevnik, Utrinski vesnik, Vecer, in the period from 24.03. to 04.25.2014, 32 results were obtained, half of which (16) represents politicians of the government, and the other half (16) of the opposition. In the campaign of presidential elections, the **government** used the following negative terms against the opposition presidential candidate, S. Pendarovski: Trojan Horse, forger, legalizer of electoral fraud, manipulator, scandalmonger, intriguing person, brankovist, sauerkraut, usurper, person that is illiterate in economics and security of the state and others. The opposition, on the other hand, degradingf the presidential candidate of the government (Mr. Ivanov) used the following terms: assistant, courier, apprentice, associate, yugo-nostalgia, history forgers, creator (changer) of the new identity of the Macedonian people, uninformed president etc.

6.2. Early parliamentary elections

During the election campaign of the early parliamentary elections in 2014, almost entirely the same rhetoric was used by the **government** and the opposition. For example, the government used the following terms about the opponent: rabbit, abolished criminal brankovist, frightened man, etc..

The **opposition**, on the other hand, use the following terms about the government: hooligans, criminals, voters traded as "goods", low IQ, ...

6.3. Negative campaign among Macedonian and Albanian parties

The campaign among parties in the Macedonian and Albanian political bloc was characterized by speeches and polemics of politicians mainly focused on the concept of the Democratic Union for Integration (BDI), which advocated a consensual president acceptable to all ethnic groups boycotting the presidential elections. Parties in the Macedonian bloc were against the concept of a consensual president by BDI and boycotted the presidential elections, with BDI causing a certain amount of tensions. There were two NGOs in the campaign for the presidential elections, one of which was to boycott the presidential elections, while the other (NGO "Movement shared vision") was in favour of voting. On the other hand, tension in the campaign was also caused by the speeches of politicians and their position for greater mobilization of people from their ethnic community in order to win as many seats so as to avoid various blackmail by the parties in the Albanian political block. In its campaign "Together For Macedonia" coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE sought to win at least 62 parliamentary mandates, while BDI required at least 25 seats. Election campaign in Macedonia was attentively followed by the observation mission OSCE / ODIHR, which in its interim report noted that "the beginning of the campaign was marked by the rhetoric of ethnic divisions", and mentioned the statement of President BDI, Ali Ahmeti calling for a boycott of the presidential elections, so as not to fulfill the census 40% turnout for elections to fail.⁹

6.4. Negative campaign of the parties in the Albanian political block

The negative campaign of the parties in the Albanian political block generally waged between the major parties (BDI and DPA).

DPA, as an opposition party strongly attacked the policies of BDI using negative terms in order to attract the attention of the electorate of the Albanian ethnic community, which was responded strongly by the leader of BDI.

Thus, the DPA leader Thaci said of the leader of BDI, Ali Ahmeti, that he acted like master and lion to Albanians, while towards Gruevski he behaved like a rabbit, with BDI being servant of Gruevski that intimidated the Albanians as a devil, and that they were military thugs.

Presidential candidate of the DPA, I. Halimi, said of BDI that it entered politics by force (referring to the military conflict in 2001).

Such negative qualifications received response from Ali Ahmeti saying that DPA, M. Thaci was a criminal who wanted at all costs to enter into power in order to hide the crime he made by the privatization of a trading company.

⁹ Sloboden Pechat Nr.138 од 5.04.2014, *text titled "Gruevski and Ahmeti use rhetoric of separation"*.

7. Conclusions

Elections in Macedonia were fair and democratic.

During the election campaign of the regular presidential and early parliamentary elections in 2014, there was no hate speech, according to the theoretical definition of the term.

Although the democratic capacity and level of political culture of the political parties significantly improved, negative election campaign is still present in the country, but uses milder terminology in relation to the initial period of political pluralism.

During the second round of presidential elections and parliamentary elections, the representatives of political parties hardened political rhetoric, using terms (words) with personal insults, slander, libel, humiliation, etc., thus wanting to attract the attention of the electorate.

Presidential candidates used far less negative terminology in relation to the party leaders.

Some media had selective approach to the of politicspeeches of the poltitians while others fully transmitted speeches of certain politicians.

During the election campaign, there was negative campaign among political parties of the Macedonian block, Macedonian and Albanian, and between the political parties of the Albanian block.

The media had balanced reporting of the negative campaign between the political parties of Macedonian and Albanian bloc.

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