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INDEPENDENT RESEARCH INSTITUTE

THE INTERNAL DEMOCRACY INDEX

OF MONGOLIAN POLITICAL PARTIES **2018**

Ulaanbaatar

Canada 



The Asia Foundation

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OF MONGOLIAN POLITICAL PARTIES **2018**

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CONTENTS

Foreword	8
Executive Summary	9
Methodology	10
1. Survey & Internal Democracy Index	12
1.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents	15
1.2 Internal Democracy Index of Mongolian Political Parties	18
1.3 Participation of Political Party Members	19
1.4 Competition within Political Parties	22
1.5 Transparency of Political Parties	25
1.6 Financing of Political Parties	31
2. Expert Interviews	36
Conclusion	38
References	41

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Respondents' age distribution	15
Figure 1.2: Respondents' gender distribution	15
Figure 1.3: Employment status of respondents	16
Figure 1.4: Respondents by location	16
Figure 1.5: Party membership of respondents	17
Figure 1.6: Respondents' education	17
Figure 2.1: The internal democracy index of Mongolian political parties, by score	18
Figure 2.2: The internal democracy index of Mongolian political parties, by dimension	18
Figure 3.1: Participation of political party members	19
Figure 3.2: Who chooses the political party leader	20
Figure 3.3: Who selects the candidates for election in the State Great Khural	20
Figure 3.4: Who of the following participates in the development of the party's action plan	21
Figure 3.5: Who of the following engaged in ideological debates conducted by the party in the last 4 years	21
Figure 4.1: Competition within political parties	22
Figure 4.2: Has there been a contest for the position of party leader since the 2016 parliamentary elections	23
Figure 4.3: Has there been a contest for the position of executive committee since the 2016 parliamentary elections	23
Figure 4.4: Can party members run for positions within the party's institutions fairly	24
Figure 4.5: Are there fair opportunities for party members to run for presidential election	24
Figure 4.6: Are there fair opportunities for party members to run for parliamentary elections	25
Figure 4.7: Are there fair opportunities for party members to run for local elections	25
Figure 5.1: Transparency of political parties	26
Figure 5.2: Does the party have the following unions	27
Figure 5.3: Have there been elections for the party's institutions during the last 4 years.....	27
Figure 5.4: Do the party's accountability systems work	28
Figure 5.5: Have you ever read the party's rules	28
Figure 5.6: Is the party's activities' report readily available	29

Figure 5.7: The party's information on the internet	29
Figure 5.8: What is your source of choice for staying informed on the party's regular activities and decisions	30
Figure 6.1: Financing of political parties	31
Figure 6.2: Do you pay membership fees	32
Figure 6.3: Do you give donations to your party	32
Figure 6.4: Do you receive information on expenditures of your membership fees and donations.....	33
Figure 6.5: Does the party report its assets, income and expenditures' information to its members	33
Figure 6.6: Is the party's financing information freely available to its members	34
Figure 6.7: Do you read candidates' election expenditures' report	34
Figure 6.8: Do you receive your party's election expenditures' report	35
Figure 6.9: Do you get your party's report on funds received from the state budget	35

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We are deeply grateful to the Asia Foundation and the Canadian Government for providing financial support to our study. We would also like to thank the researchers of the Democracy Institute of Israel and the Mongolian Center for Social and Political Education for their partnership and invaluable advice on research and methodology. Also, we wish to express our sincere gratitude to all the experts who dedicated their time and skills in this effort. Last but not least, we would like to thank all the political party members who participated in this study.

The Mongolian Intra-Party Democracy Index would not have been possible without your support.

FOREWORD

In the last 10 years, The Asia Foundation conducted a “Survey on Perceptions & Knowledge of Corruption in Mongolia.” 1360 households from 8 districts of Ulaanbaatar city, 6 aimags and 22 soums nationwide participated in the survey by a random selection method. The most corrupt institutions were ranked according to 5 different categories.

In 2010, Mongolian political parties placed fifth on the list. Since then, they have kept advancing annually. In March 2015, Mongolian political parties placed second only to land-utilization authorities. A year later, the political parties placed first. In 2017, they placed second. Mongolian citizens identified political parties and land-utilization organizations as the most corrupt institutions. Keeping political parties away from corruption has become the most challenging task for democratic Mongolia today.

What should we do in order to change the current situation of political parties in Mongolia? As the result of a long search for an answer to this question, we have concluded that only continuous monitoring, pressure and demand from the public can change the situation. However, citizens need factual documentation and studies in order to monitor political parties. We thought that one such instrument could be the internal democracy index of political parties.

Political parties are the only institutions that assume the ruling power through free elections. Therefore, they are the most important institutions of the democratic ideology. If political parties themselves are not democratic, then elections will lose their meaning. And if elections are meaningless, then democracy will lose its value. Therefore, Mongolians have no choice but to participate in the development of political parties and to turn them into more open, transparent, accountable and responsible institutions.

We will publish this index annually. The main goal of this study is to contribute to the solution by asserting the importance of developing political parties as institutions. At the very least, we are confident that this study will improve the education of political party members.

The change within political parties will depend on the active involvement of the public and the application of the study by citizens and the media. We welcome any queries and comments on this study at origo@jargaldefacto.com and erdenedalai.b@ufe.edu.mn

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this study, we calculated the internal democracy index of political parties by examining four dimensions: participation, competition, transparency and financing. Only 6 from total of 28 political parties registered with the Supreme Court of Mongolia participated in this study. We reflected the challenges and further considerations for the internal democracy within Mongolian political parties in this study. The superficial state of internal democracy within Mongolian political parties is related to the insufficient level of political education and culture among citizens. The study also shows that the activities of political parties are often characterized by a top-down approach.

- The index for “Participation of political party members” has a maximum score of 20. The average score of the 6 political parties, participated in the study is 16.28.
- The index for “Competition within political parties” has a maximum score of 24. The average score of the 6 political parties, participated in the study is 9.26.
- The index for “Transparency of political parties” has a maximum score of 24. The average score of the 6 political parties, participated in the study is 13.58.
- The index for “Financing of political parties” has a maximum score of 32. The average score of the 6 political parties, participated in the study is 10.78.

From the sum total score of 100, the average score of the 6 political parties who participated in the study is 49.9.



METHODOLOGY

Defacto Institute's mission is to strengthen good public governance in Mongolia. Our mission depends on the openness and accountability of political parties as political institutions. Based on our study and comparison of domestic and international research on the formation and development of political parties, we chose the "Internal Democracy Index of Political Parties" published by the Israel Democracy Institute as a model for the internal democracy index of Mongolian political parties. Then, we contacted and collaborated with the Israel Democracy Institute who advised us on research methodology.

From international practices, such indexes are often based on expert assessments. However, independent experts that study political parties, not to mention their internal democracy, are very rare in our country.

Furthermore, the expert evaluation methodology of the Israel Democracy Institute (IDI) was inapplicable to the assessment of internal democracy of Mongolian political parties. Therefore, we conducted a survey to collect data from political party members in order to evaluate the internal democracy of political parties. We used a telemarketing method and collected information through phone calls.

Research methodology, survey questionnaire and evaluation of answers were developed in collaboration with and the support of the experts.

We evaluated the internal democracy of Mongolian political parties based on IDI's Intra-Party Democracy Index. Their index is calculated on a 0 to 100 score scale system as follows:

- Party which scores between 0 – 30 is non-democratic,
- Party which scores between 31 – 60 is semi-democratic,
- Party which scores between 61 – 100 is democratic.

We also made a qualitative analysis using in-depth interviews with experts to examine the current state of internal democracy and financing of political parties in order to understand their underlying reasons.

In this study, our research team aimed to involve a total of 28 political parties registered with the Supreme Court of Mongolia as of February 2018. However, after 2-3 attempts of contact, 22 political party leaders declined to provide the phone numbers of their party members due to unexplained reasons. As a result of consistent attempts of our research team, 6 political parties agreed to participate in the study.

With regard to the sample, we calculated it from the total population of 535,234 members of the 6 political parties covered by the survey. The survey sample size is 384. It provides the confidence level of 95% with 5% discrepancies. Over 3000 names and phone numbers of party members from Ulaanbaatar city and the countryside were collected and selected randomly to complete the survey.

For the expert interviews, we conducted semi-structured conversations. We have chosen 10 experts who work in the field of political science and are familiar with the internal structure of political parties in Mongolia. The selection of interview participants was primarily based on whether they specialized in political research. The individual party affiliations of the experts prompted us to seek for a balanced picture of the political parties.

The inquiries were derived from the main questions in the study by the Israel Democracy Institute. After the completion of the interview with each expert, the answers were encoded by content using the Nvivo software. Conclusions were drawn using the same program.

INTRA-PARTY DEMOCRACY INDEX

Several methodologies of evaluation are used internationally to determine the state of democracy in countries. For instance, Freedom House, an independent watchdog organization publishes the “World Freedom Report”, while the Economist Intelligence Unit produces the “Democracy Index”.

Israel Democracy Institute first published its Intra-Party Democracy Index in 2013. This index was the first report designed to evaluate the internal democracy of political parties as part of the political reform initiative launched by Israel Democracy Institute. The index was developed to assess the separate dimensions that comprise the internal democracy of political parties.

Political parties play a pivotal role in democratic decision-making and the development of a modern representative democracy. The formation and involvement of political parties is historically significant especially in new and emerging democracies. Political parties not only constitute the parliament, but also unify the will of citizens in a democratic society. As institutions, political parties serve as agents that connect citizens with their government, reminding voters of their civic responsibilities and recruiting future candidates for the leadership of the country. (Rahat & Shapira 2016).

The term internal democracy is defined by a broad range of different dimensions. It includes the involvement of party members in decision-making processes within political parties. Determining the level of intra-party democracy entails the consideration of the distribution of power within the political party, especially the participation of primary members. For instance, one such important criterion looks at the scope of members that are voting for the party leader or for candidates in general elections from within the party.

One of the fundamental principles of democracy is the right for every citizen to vote in a parliamentary general election. Yet, this right is not always attended to within political parties when it comes to choosing party leaders and candidates for parliamentary general elections in Mongolia.

The Mongolian law on political parties does not clearly define the degree of involvement of party members in party decisions and actions. This law mandates a general requirement for party leaders or candidates to be elected either by direct vote or representation. Political parties, as a community of people united by common will and interests, require members to organize their activities freely by choice. Therefore, they implement the representation in a variety of ways.

A. PARTICIPATION

Political participation is a broad concept that encompasses various types of actions intended to directly and indirectly influence political decision-making (Rahat and Shapira, 2016, p. 6). This index aimed to balance the direct and representative participation of party members by examining both forms and giving equal scores.

First, the evaluation included discussions related to party ideology, party programs, elections platforms and policy debates within the party. In order to effectively implement the internal democracy of political parties, it is important to ensure not only the legal regulations,

but also the active participation of citizens and the public in the development of policy. Therefore, we separately considered the process of approving and formulating the party policy in order to examine the real participation of members in policy making and not as documented on paper by the party.

Furthermore, actually involving members in policy debates is important for the political education of the public. Second, the party's key decision-makers are the leaders and candidates for parliamentary general elections. Therefore, we assessed the impact of party members' participation in the selection of leaders and candidates.

B. COMPETITION

The next significant indicator for measuring the internal democracy of political parties is competition. It means that voters have several alternatives to choose from. Thus, we examined the opportunities for party members to run for presidential elections, parliamentary elections, and local government elections. In addition, we assessed whether there were any elections for the positions within the party such as party leaders and the governing board.

C. TRANSPARENCY

In this dimension, we merged the indicators of accountability, representation and transparency together because Israel Democracy Institute's index had a few questions on the dimensions of representation and accountability. By transparency, we examined the openness of the political party operations to its members and the public. For instance, we clarified whether there is a system in place that ensures the implementation of accountability in the party, and whether party members have access to the operational plans and reports.

D. FINANCING

In the study, we added a new dimension on party financing. According to many political party studies in Mongolia, the sources of party funding have the biggest and most direct impact on party operations and its internal democracy. In this regard, we examined whether party members pay membership fees and give donations, whether they have access to information on expenditures and whether the party reports its expenditures to its members. If party members have access to knowledge of party financing, they can demand accountability from their leaders. Furthermore, if accessibility to the information on sources of party financing becomes available not only to party members but also to voters, the political party will be able to achieve internal democracy and strengthen the foundation for democracy.

Survey & Internal

DEMOCRACY INDEX

1.1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Figure 1.1 Respondents' age distribution

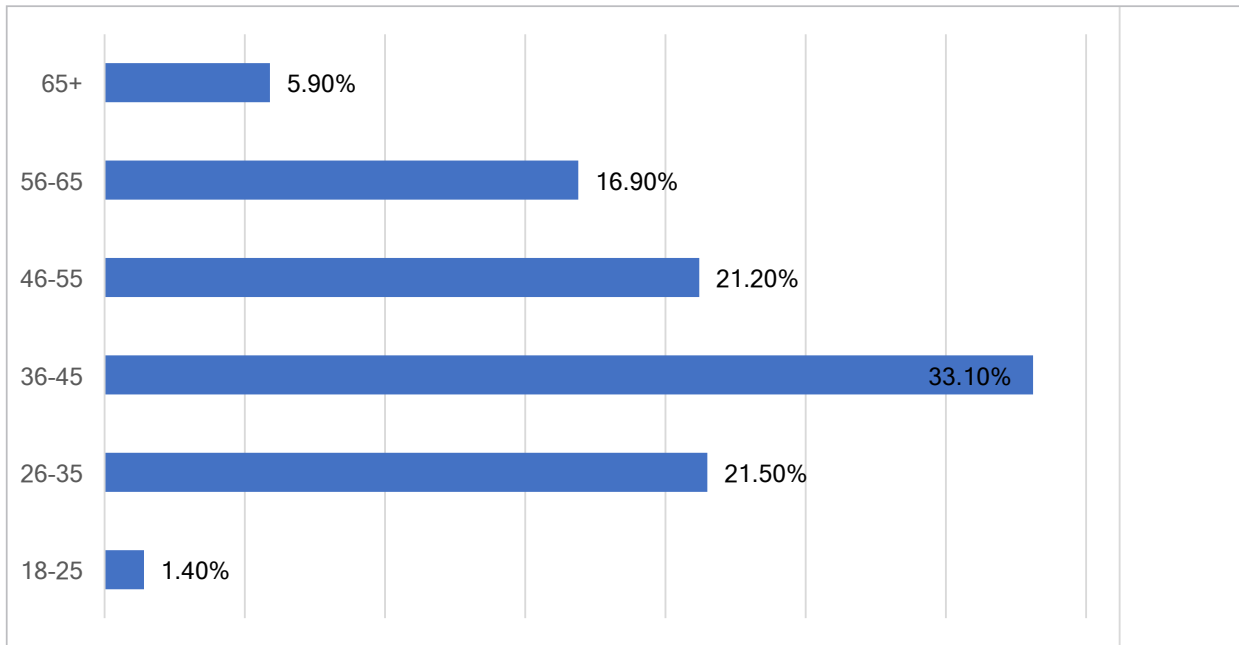


Figure 1.2 Respondents' gender distribution

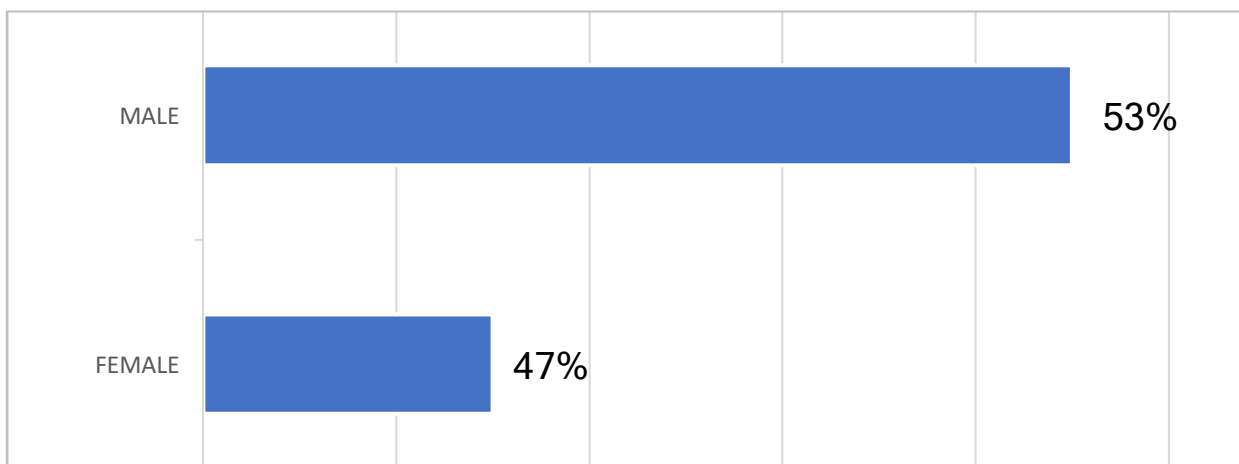


Figure 1.3 Employment status of respondents

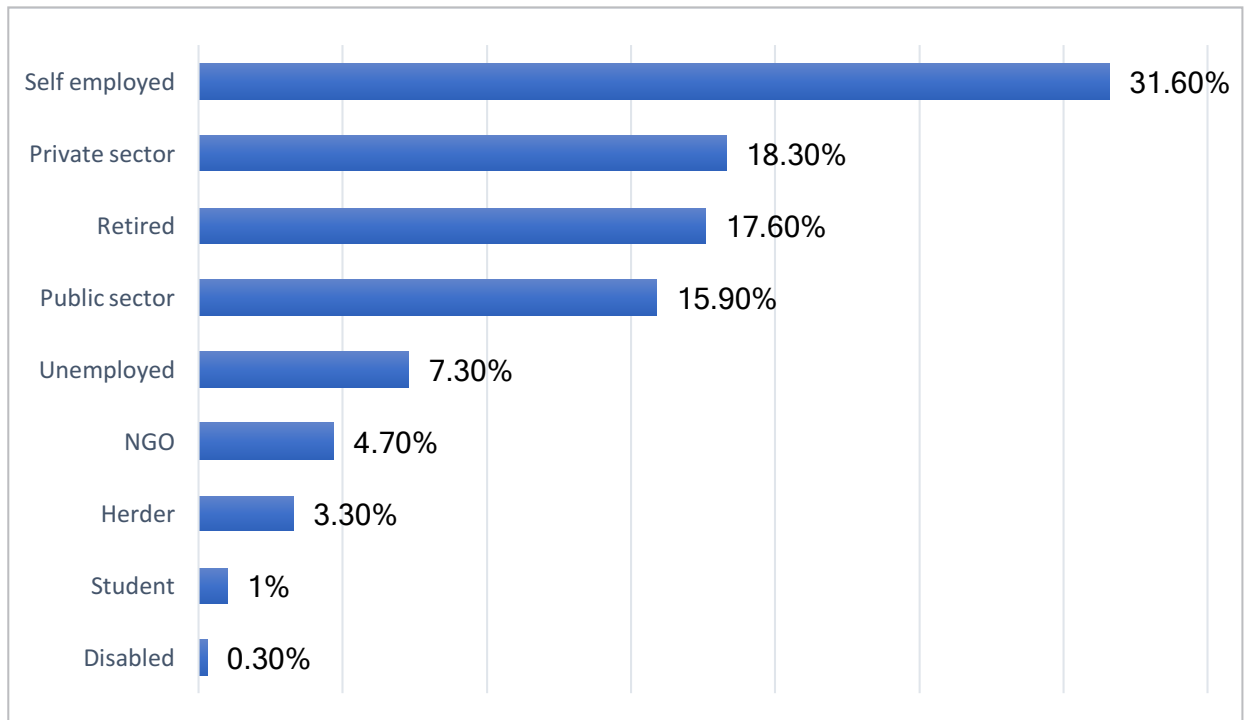


Figure 1.4 Respondents by location

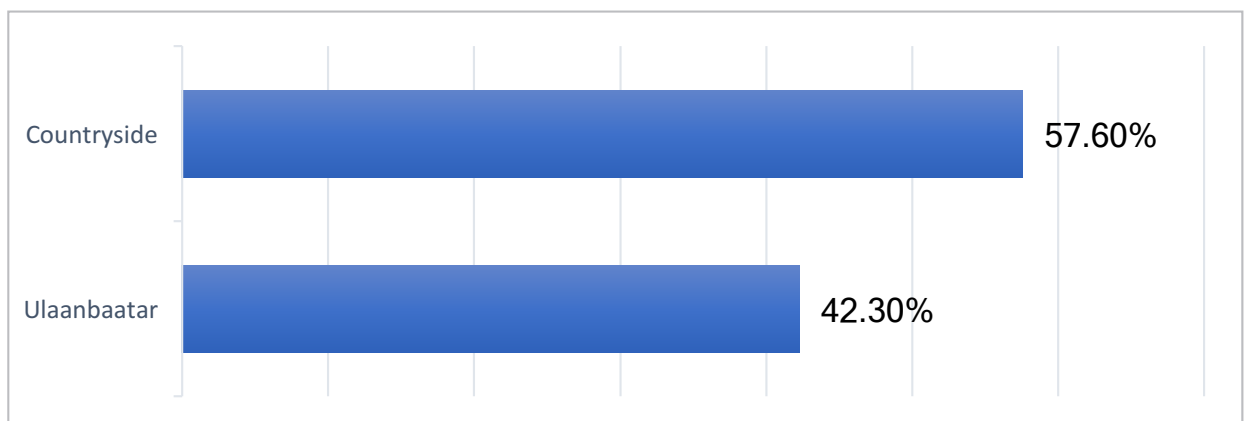


Figure 1.5 Party membership of respondents

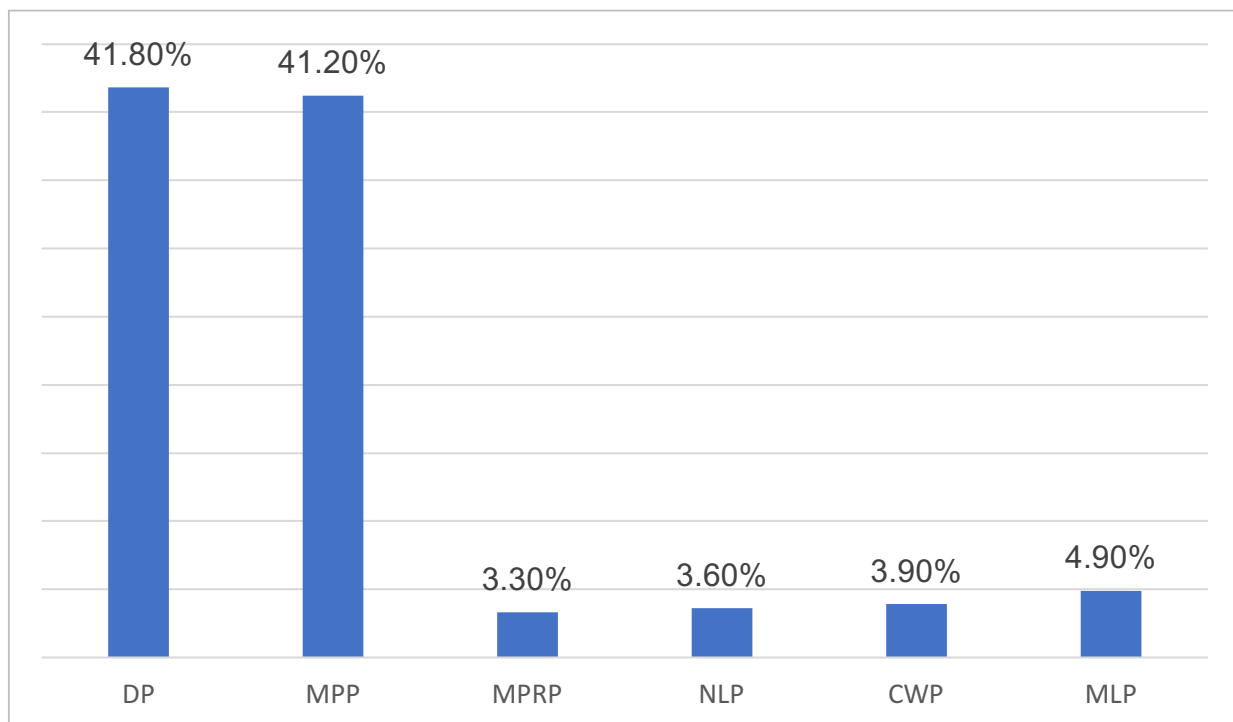
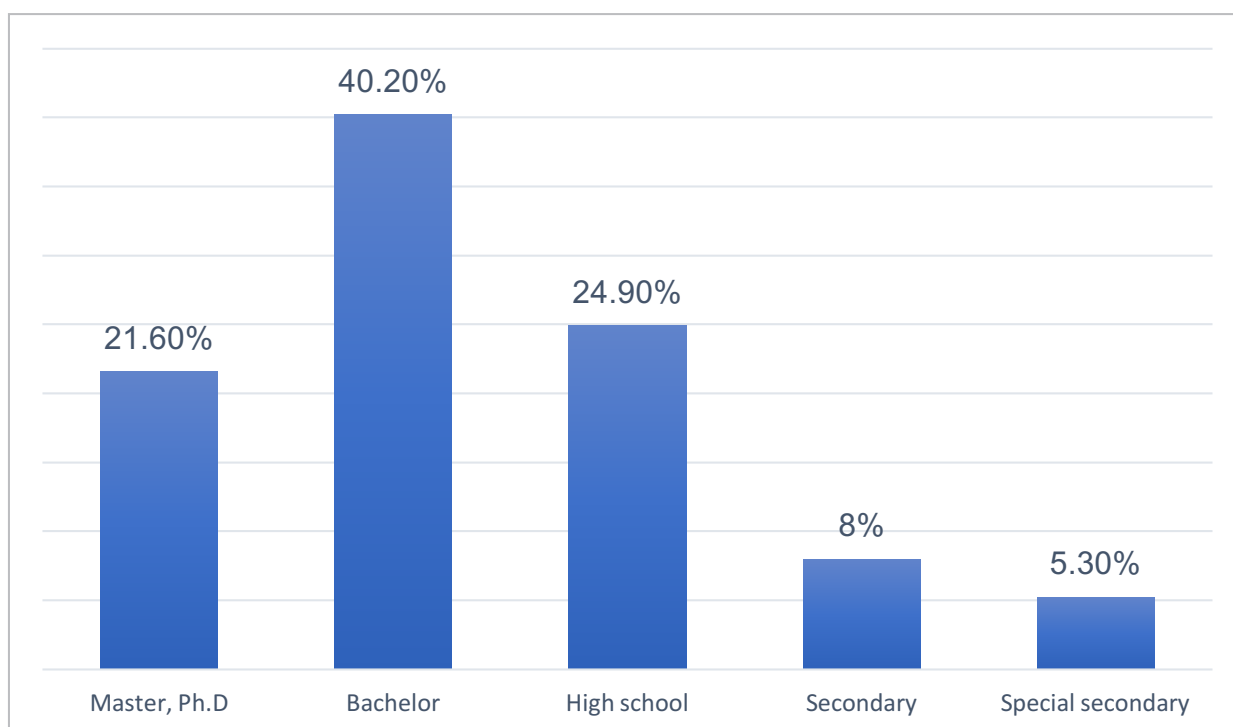


Figure 1.6 Respondents' education



1.2 THE INTERNAL DEMOCRACY INDEX OF MONGOLIAN POLITICAL PARTIES

The average score of 6 political parties who participated in the internal democracy index of Mongolian political parties is 49.9. Figure 2.1 shows the scores of each political party. The total score for the four dimensions being 100, none of the political parties scored over 60. According to their total scores including the four categories, all political parties are “semi-democratic”. Figure 2.2 shows the score of each political party in four dimensions separately.

Figure 2.1 The Internal Democracy Index of Mongolian Political Parties, by score

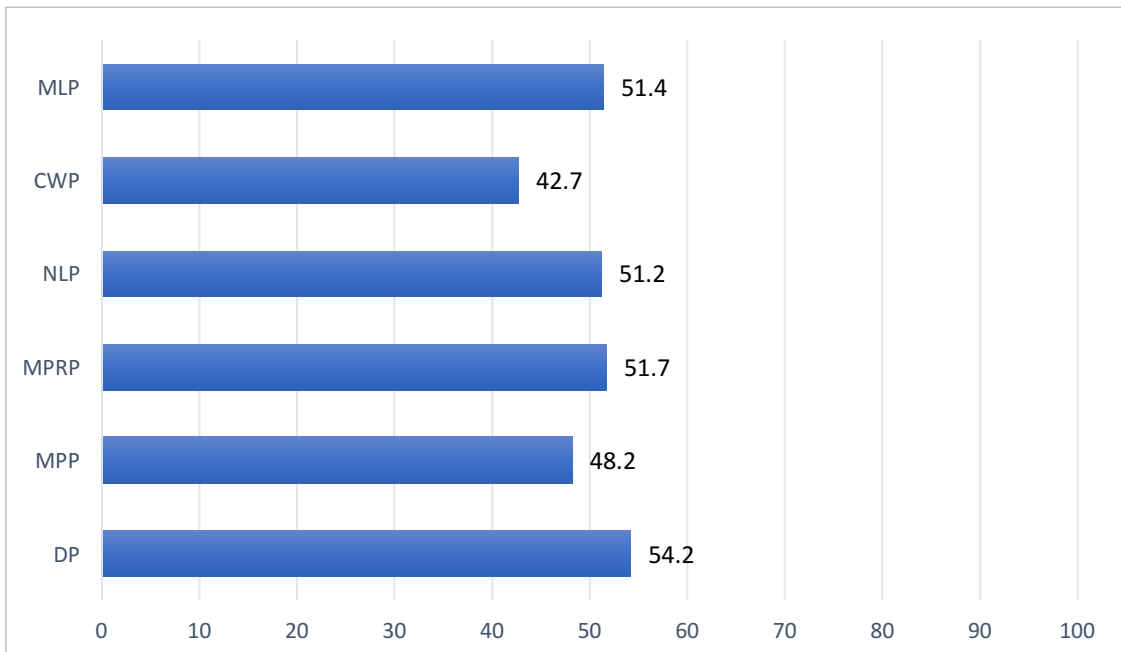
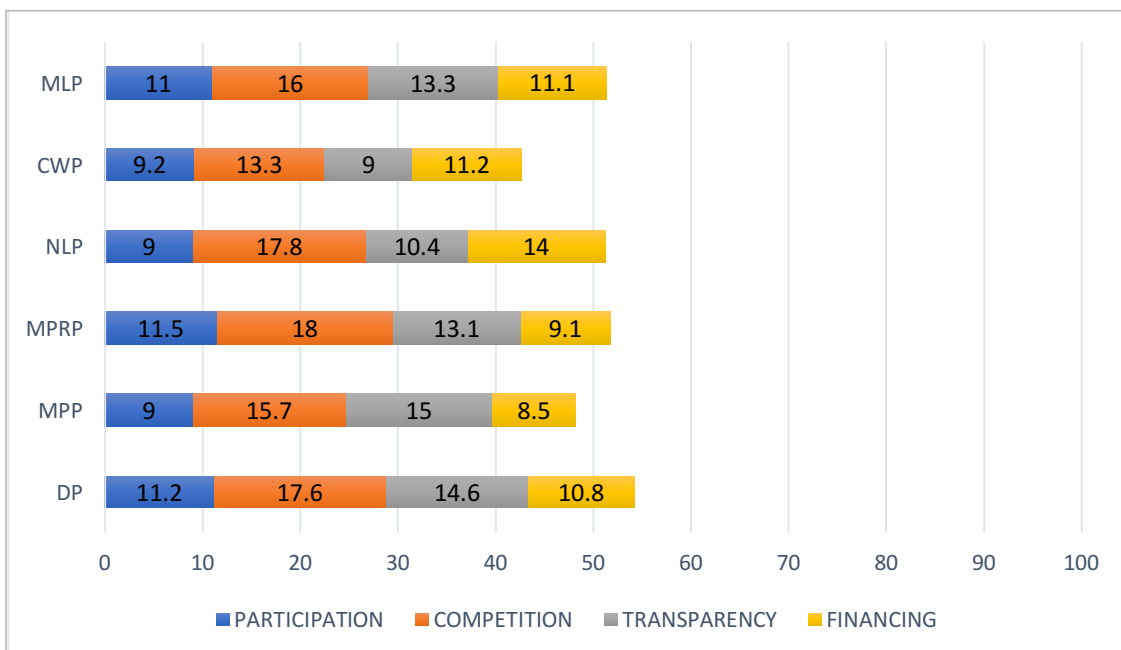


Figure 2.2 The Internal Democracy Index of Mongolian Political Parties, by dimension



1.3 PARTICIPATION OF POLITICAL PARTY MEMBERS

The dimension of Participation has a maximum score of 20. The average score of the 6 political parties who participated in the index is 10.25. Figure 3.1 shows the score of each political party in this dimension.

Figure 3.1 Participation of Political Party Members (20 scores)

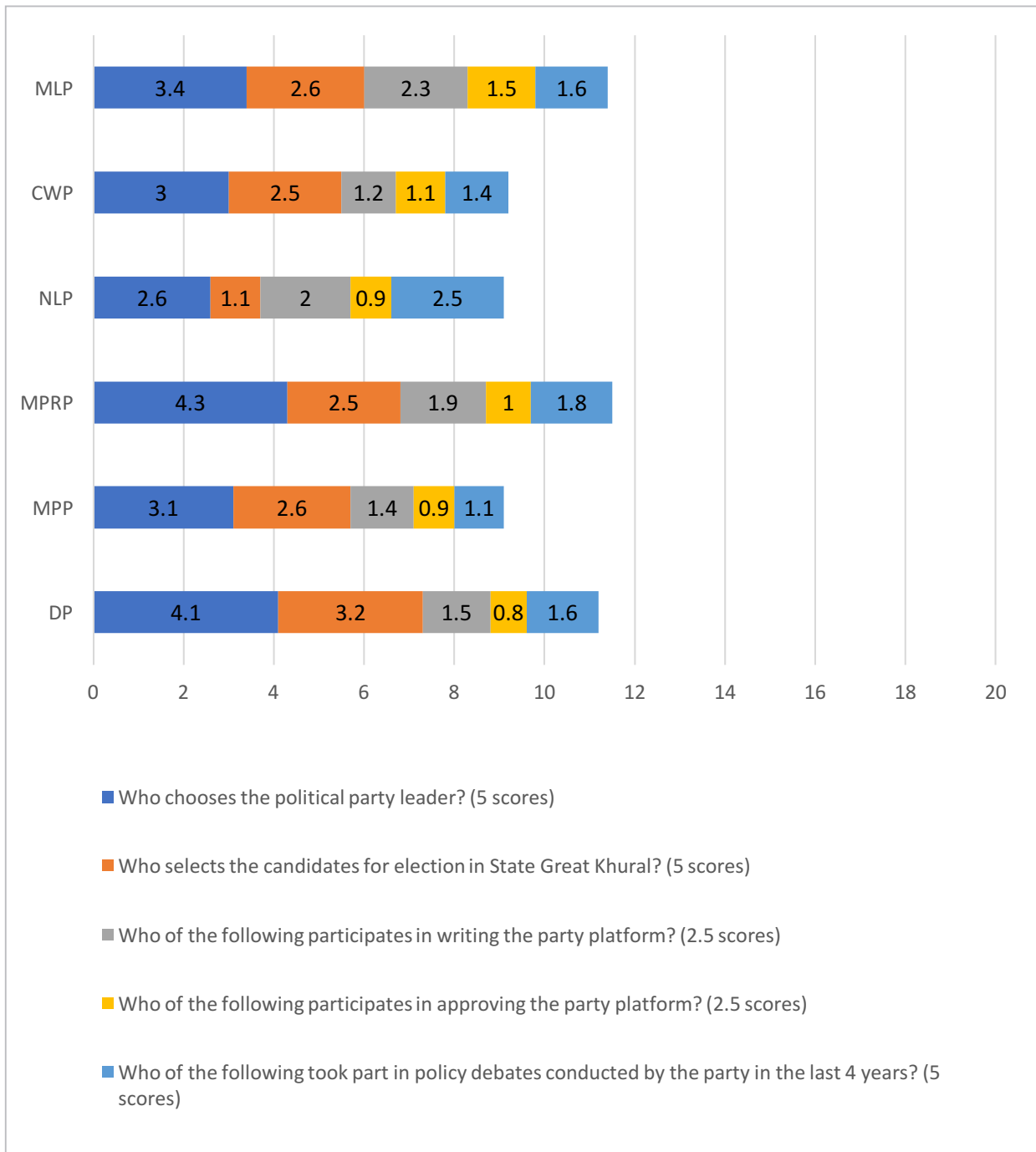


Figure 3.2 Who chooses the political party leader (5 scores)

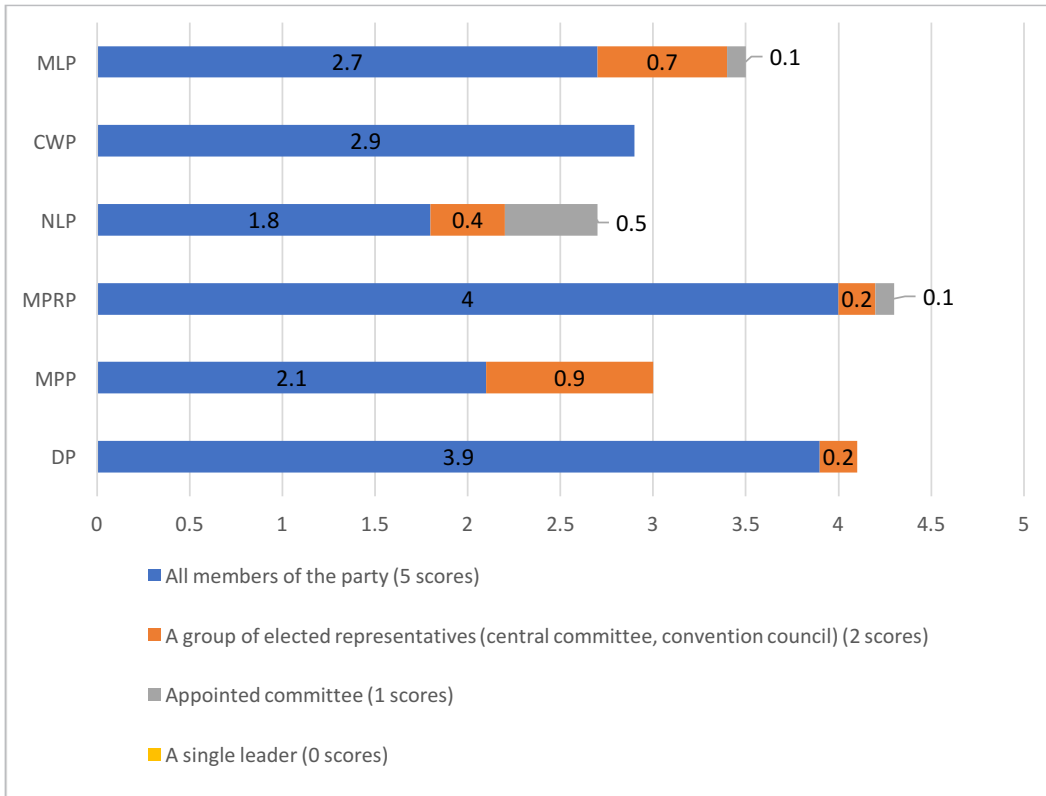


Figure 3.3 Who selects the candidates for election in the State Great Khural (5 scores)

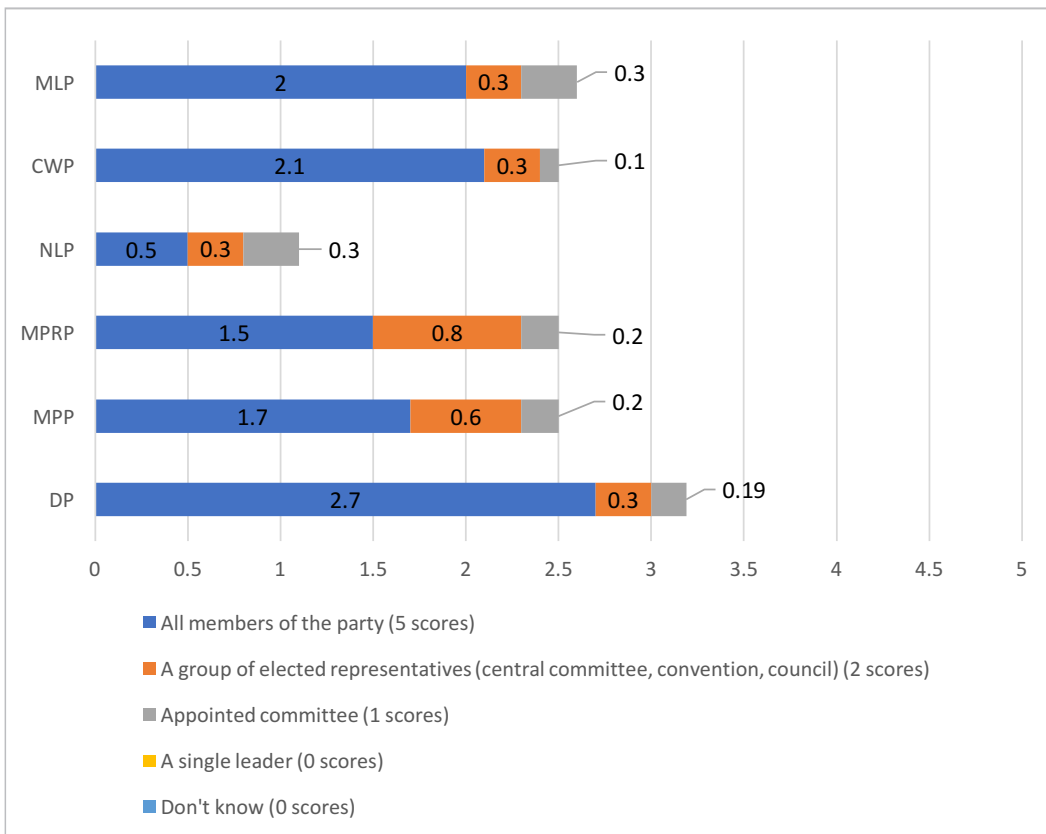


Figure 3.4 Who of the following participates in approving the party platform (2.5 scores)

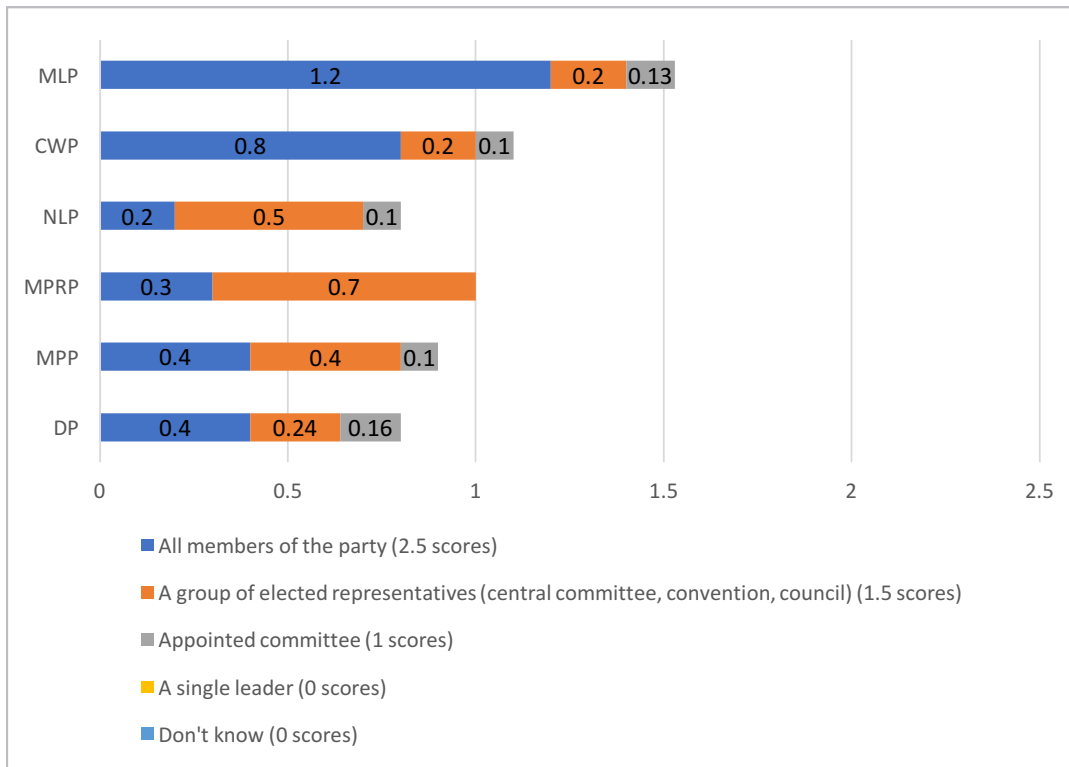
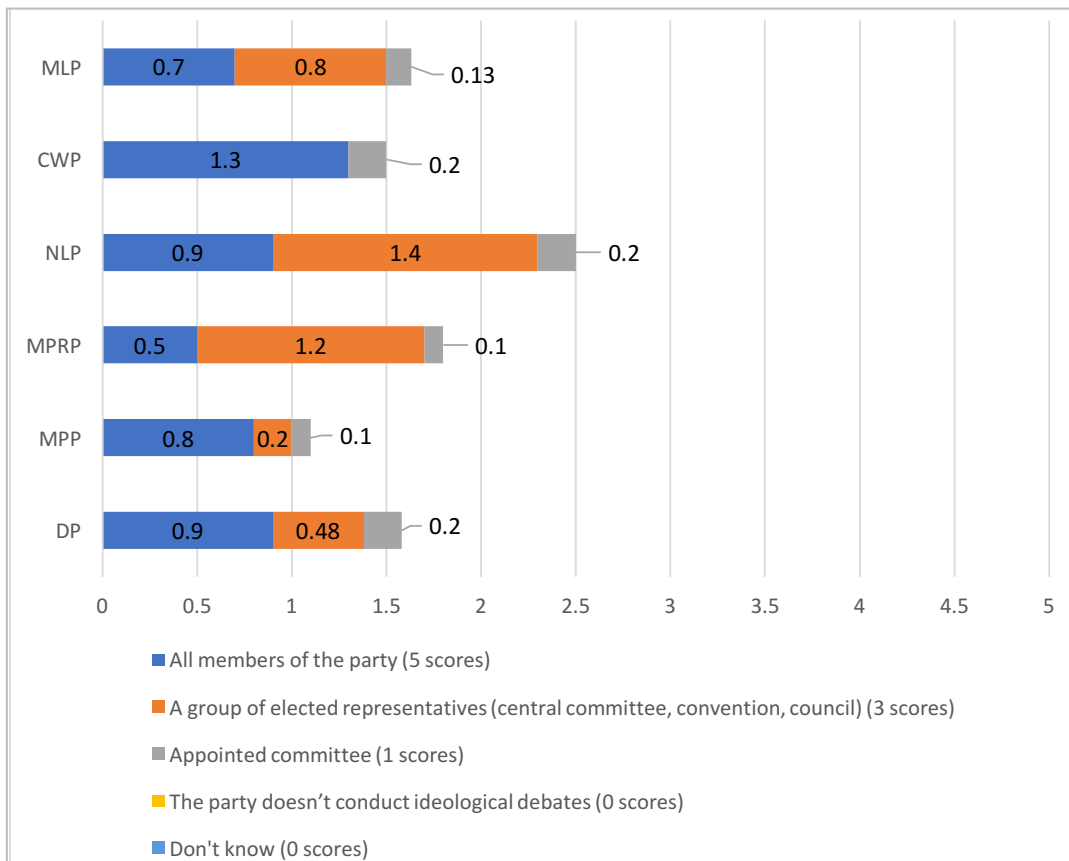


Figure 3.5 Who of the following took part in ideological debates conducted by the party in the last four years (5 scores)



1.4 COMPETITION WITHIN POLITICAL PARTIES

The dimension of Competition has a maximum score of 24. The average score of the 6 political parties who participated in the index is 16.28. Figure 4.1 shows the score of each political party in this dimension. It consists of 6 questions with a score of 4 each.

Figure 4.1 Competition within political parties (24 scores)

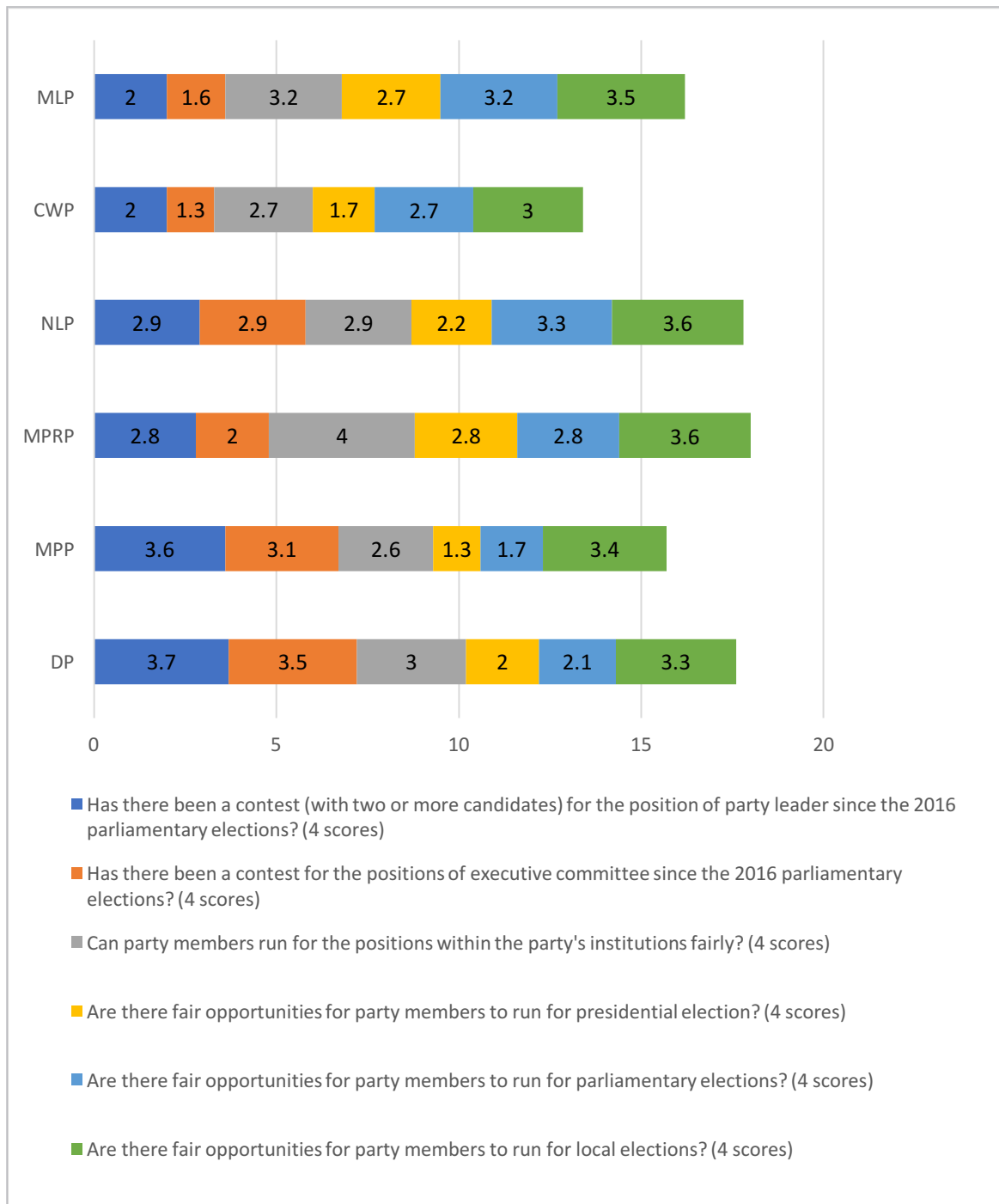


Figure 4.2 Has there been a contest (with two or more candidates) for the position of party leader since the 2016 parliamentary elections (4 scores)

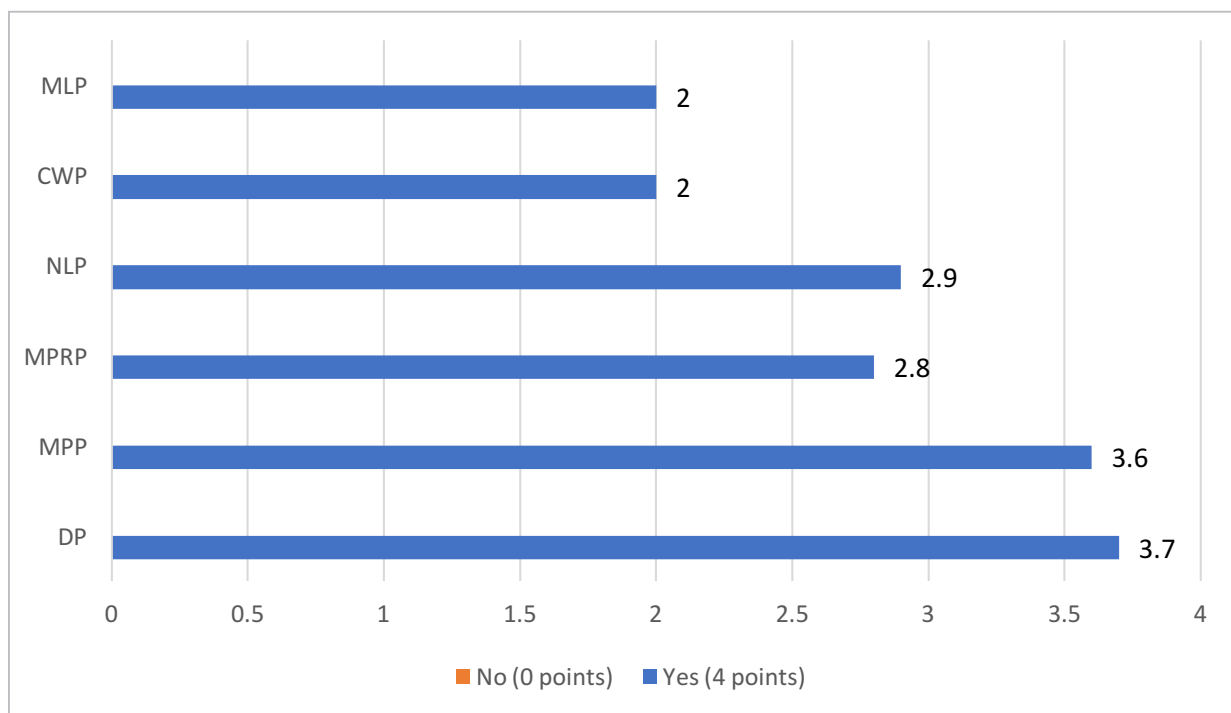


Figure 4.3 Has there been a contest for the position of executive committee since the 2016 parliamentary elections (4 scores)

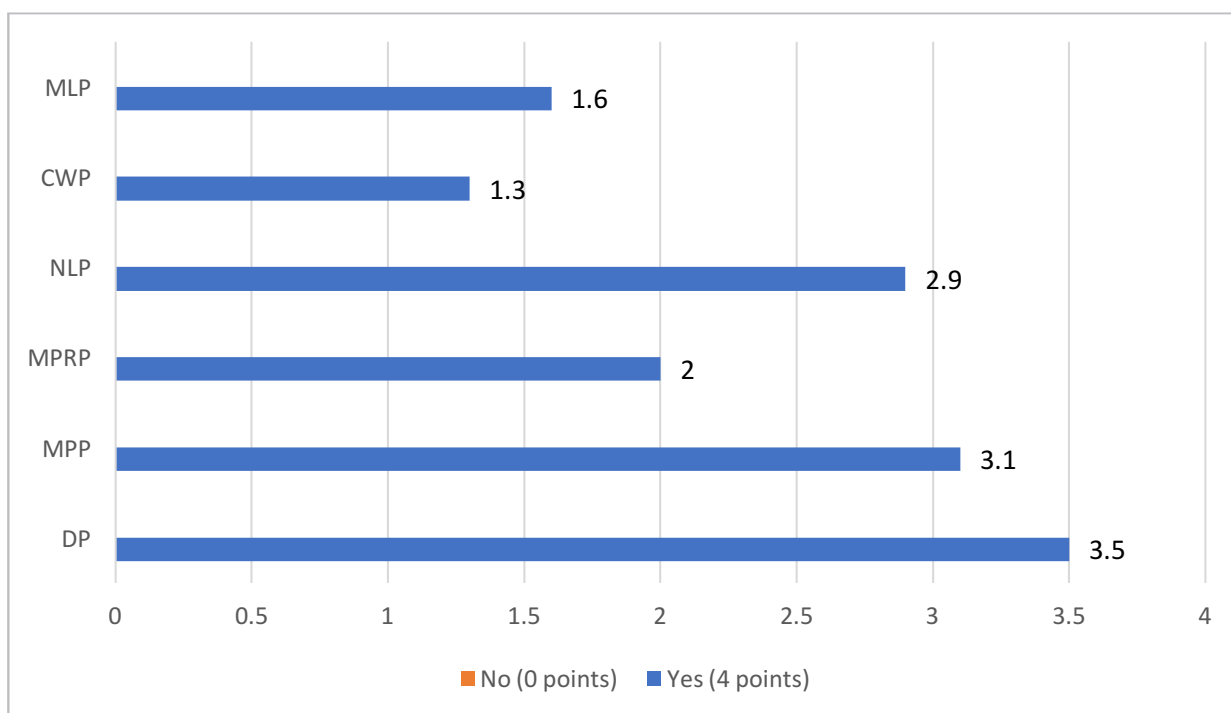


Figure 4.4 Can party members run for positions within the party's institutions fairly (4 scores)

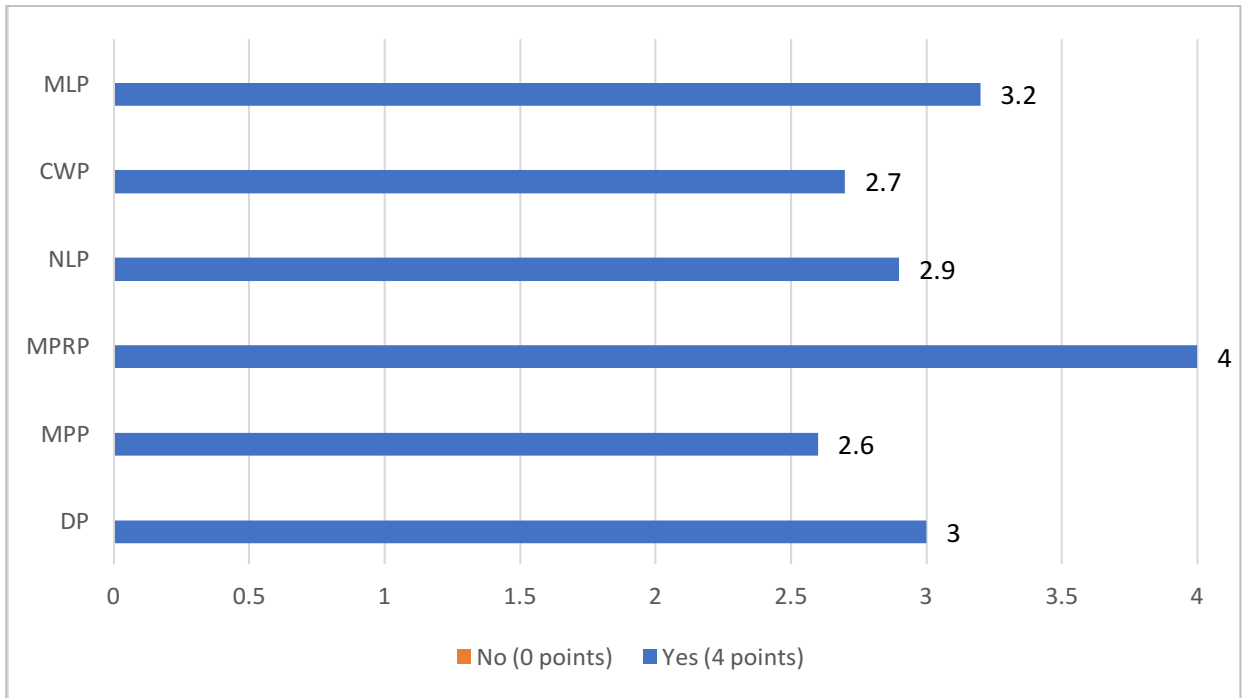


Figure 4.5 Are there fair opportunities for party members to run for presidential election (4 scores)

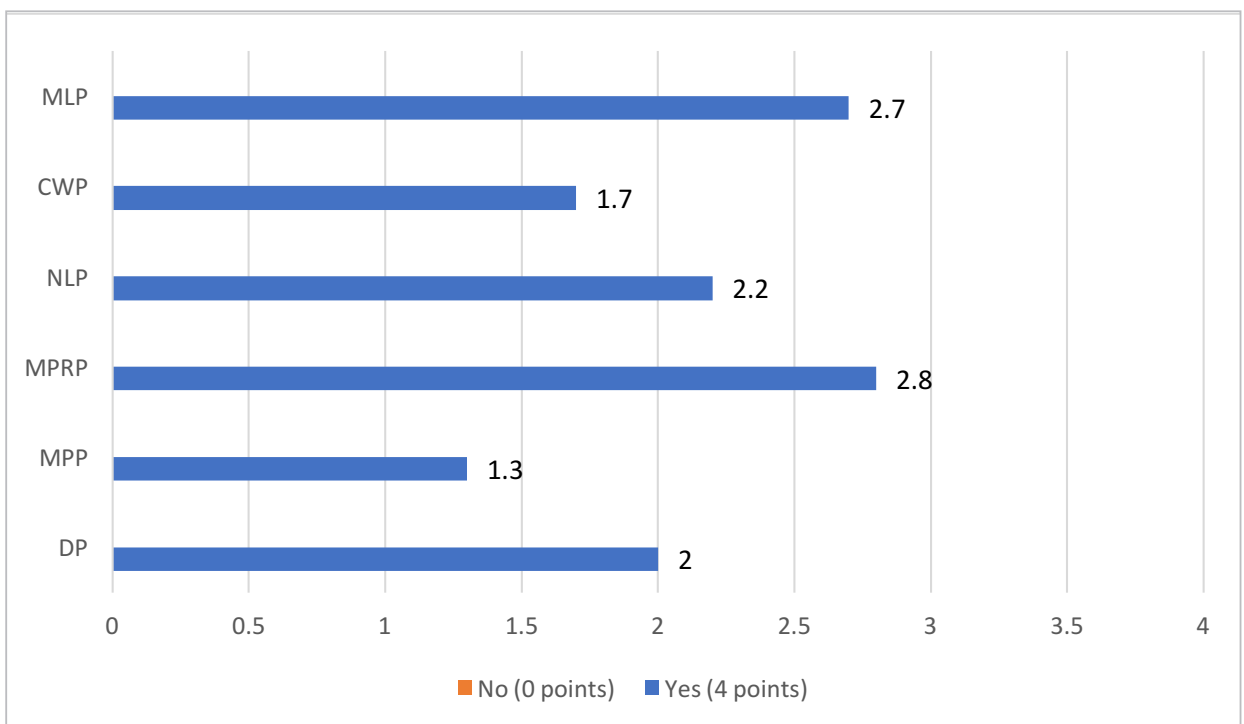


Figure 4.6 Are there fair opportunities for party members to run for parliamentary elections (4 scores)

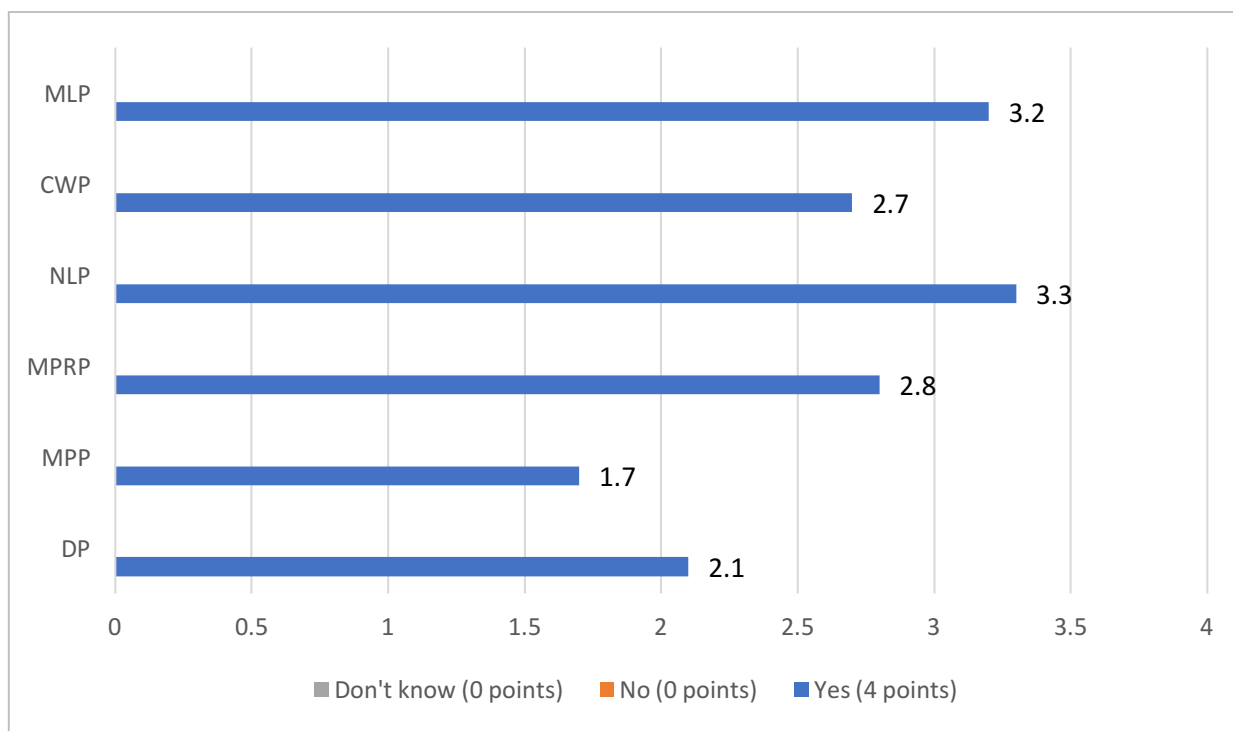
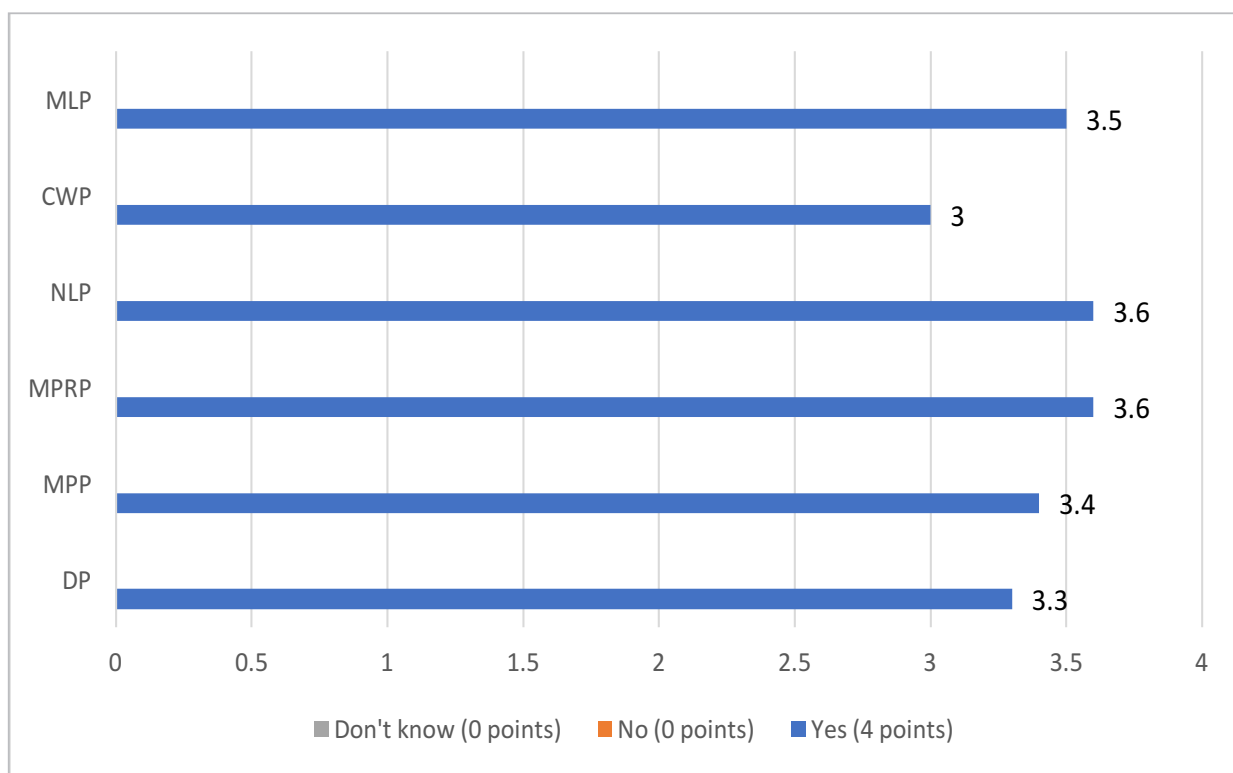


Figure 4.7 Are there fair opportunities for party members to run for local elections (4 scores)



1.5 TRANSPARENCY OF POLITICAL PARTIES

The dimension of Transparency has a maximum score of 20. The average score of the 6 political parties who participated in the index is 9.26. Figure 5.1 shows the score of each political party in this dimension.

Figure 5.1 Transparency of Political Parties (24 scores)

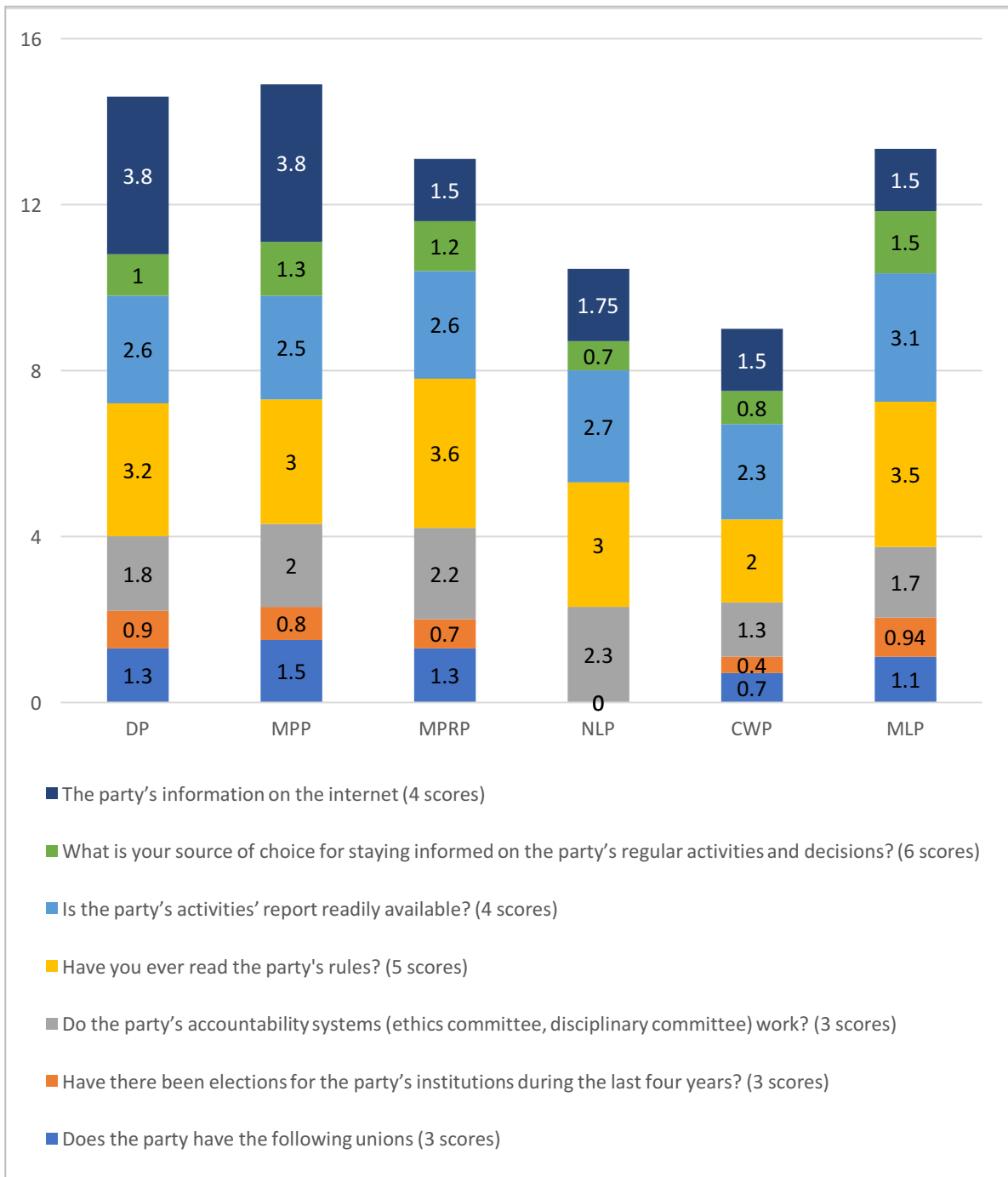


Figure 5.2 Does the party have the following unions... (3 scores)

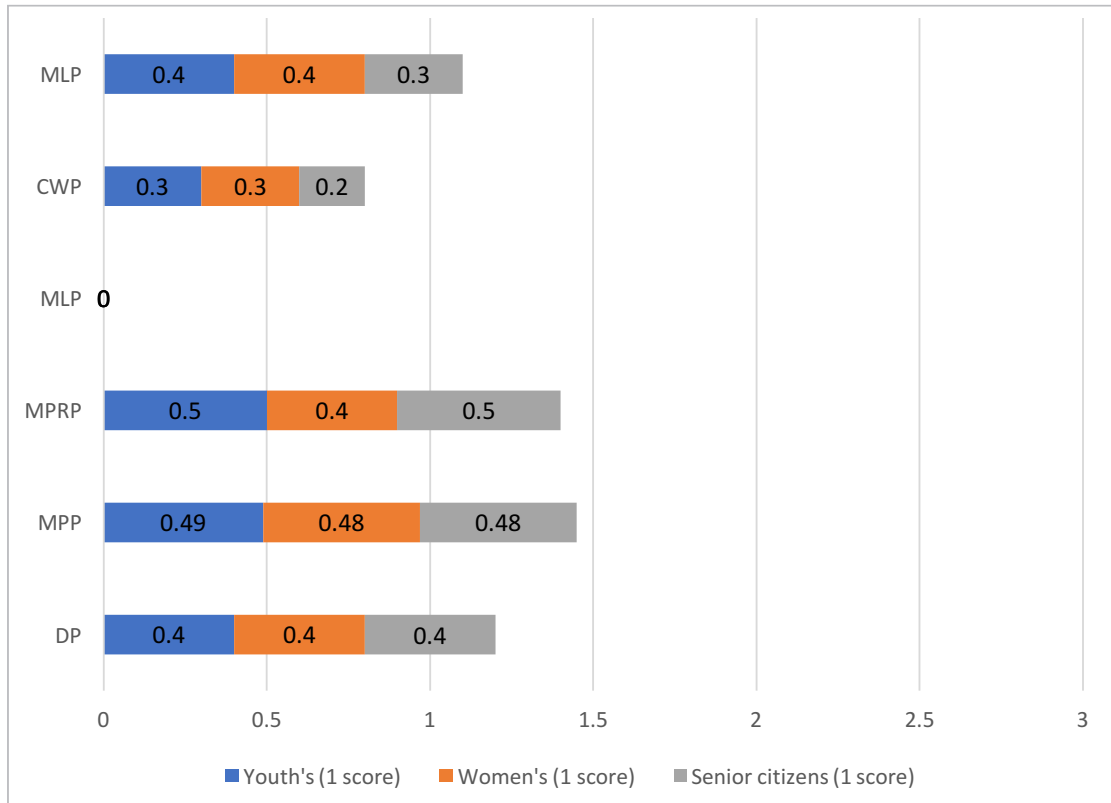


Figure 5.3 Have there been elections for the party's institutions during the last four years (3 scores)

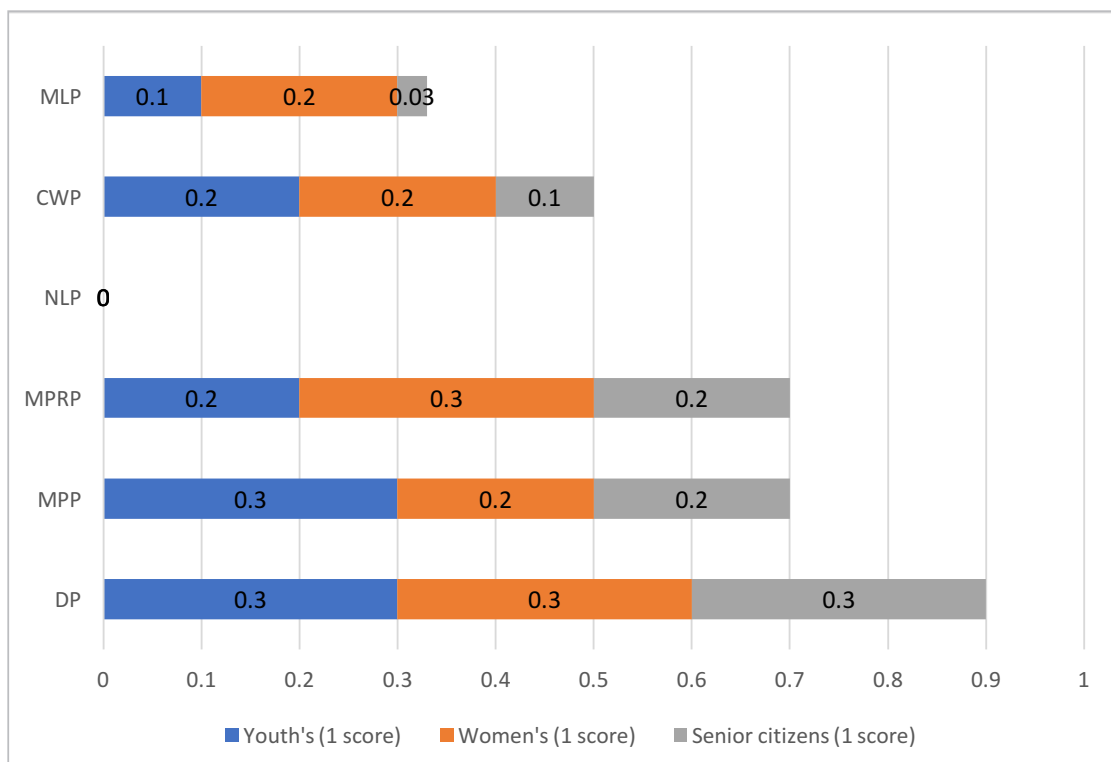


Figure 5.4 Do the party's accountability systems (ethics committee, disciplinary committee) work (3 scores)

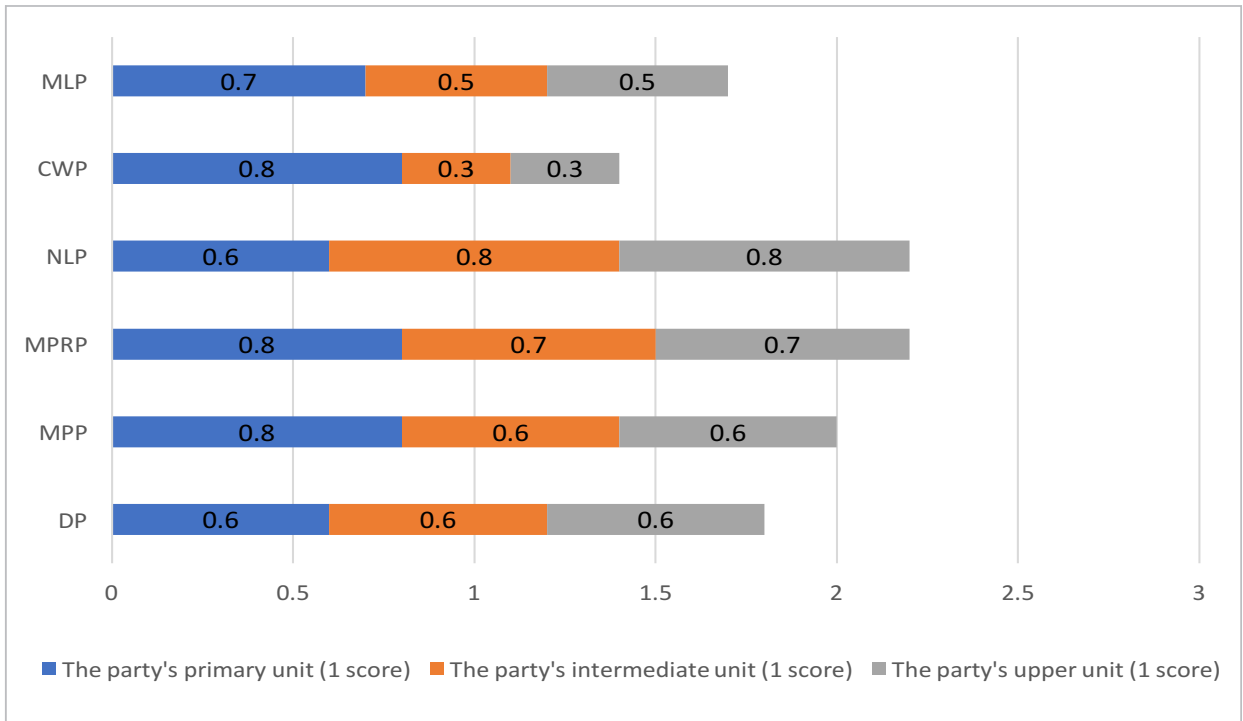


Figure 5.5 Have you ever read the party's rules (5 ошоо)

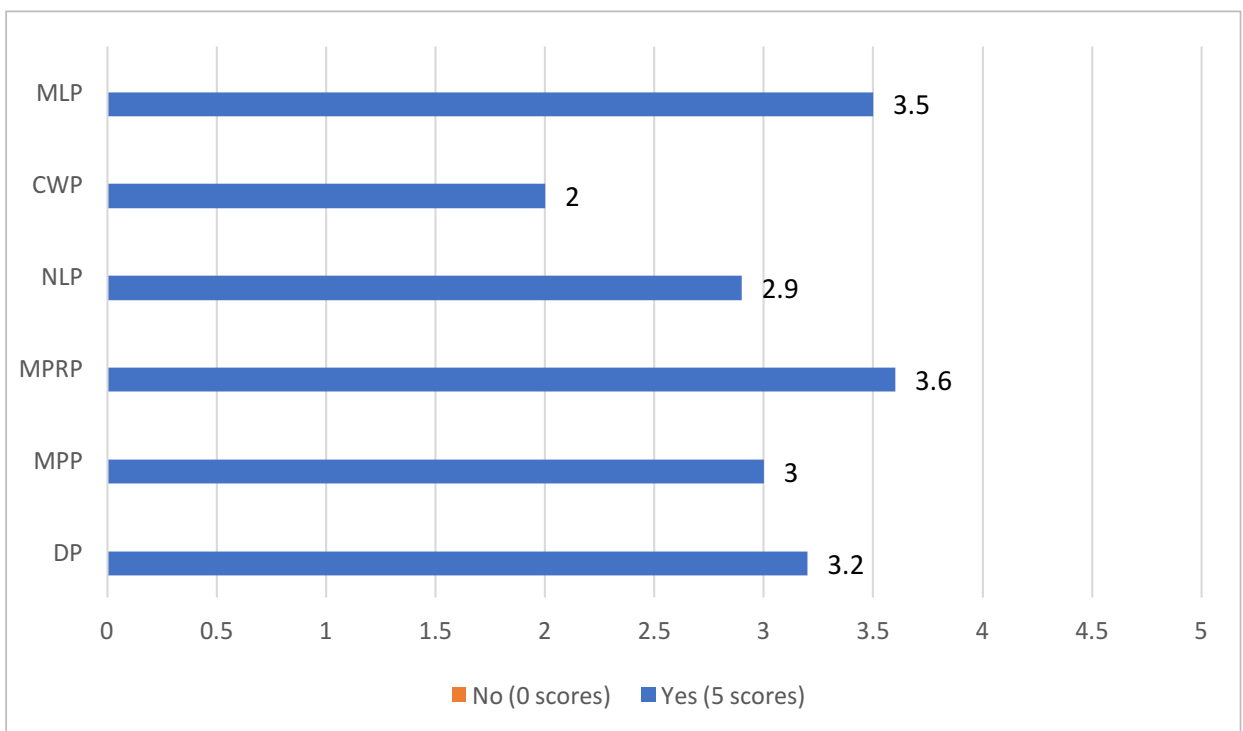


Figure 5.6 Is the party's activities' report readily available (4 scores)

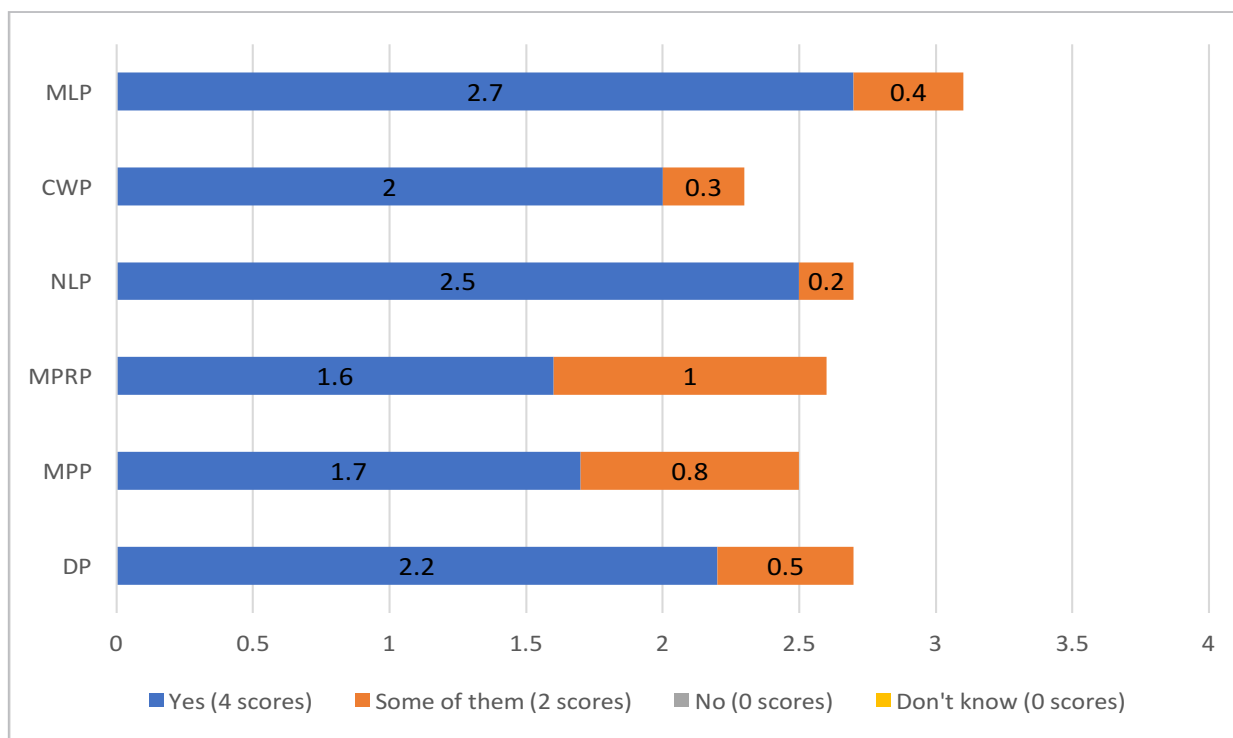


Figure 5.7 The party's information on the internet (4 scores)

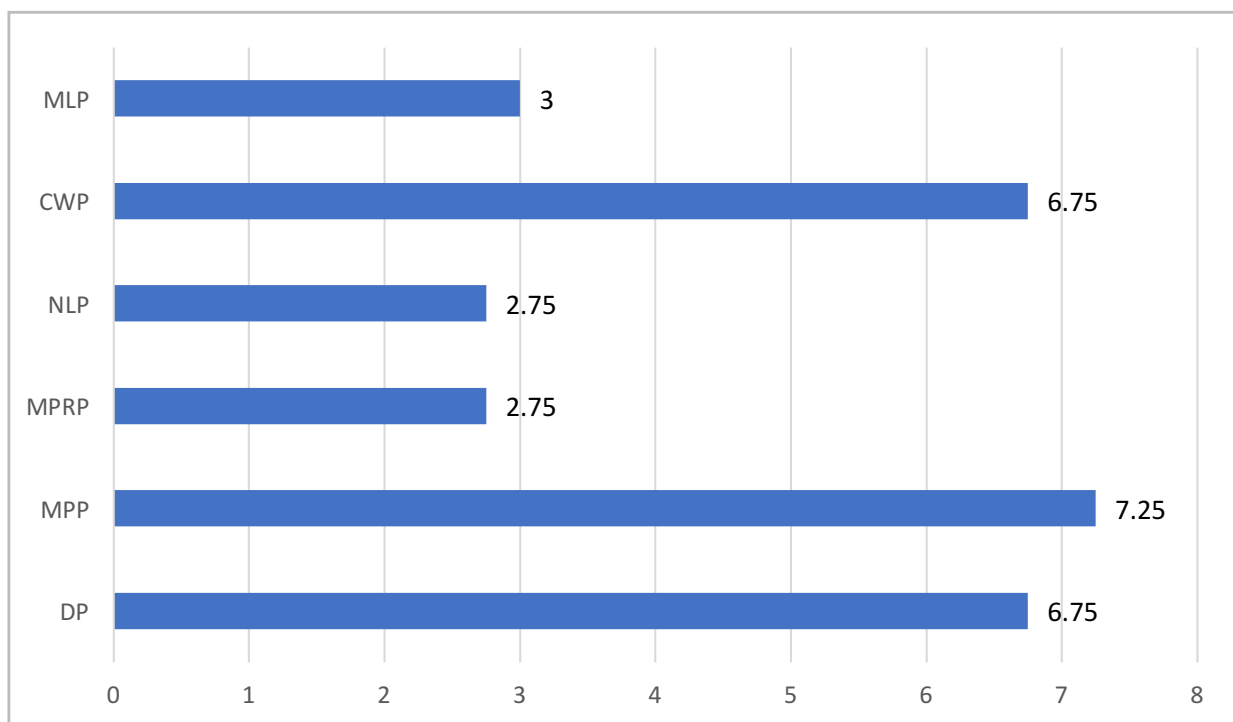
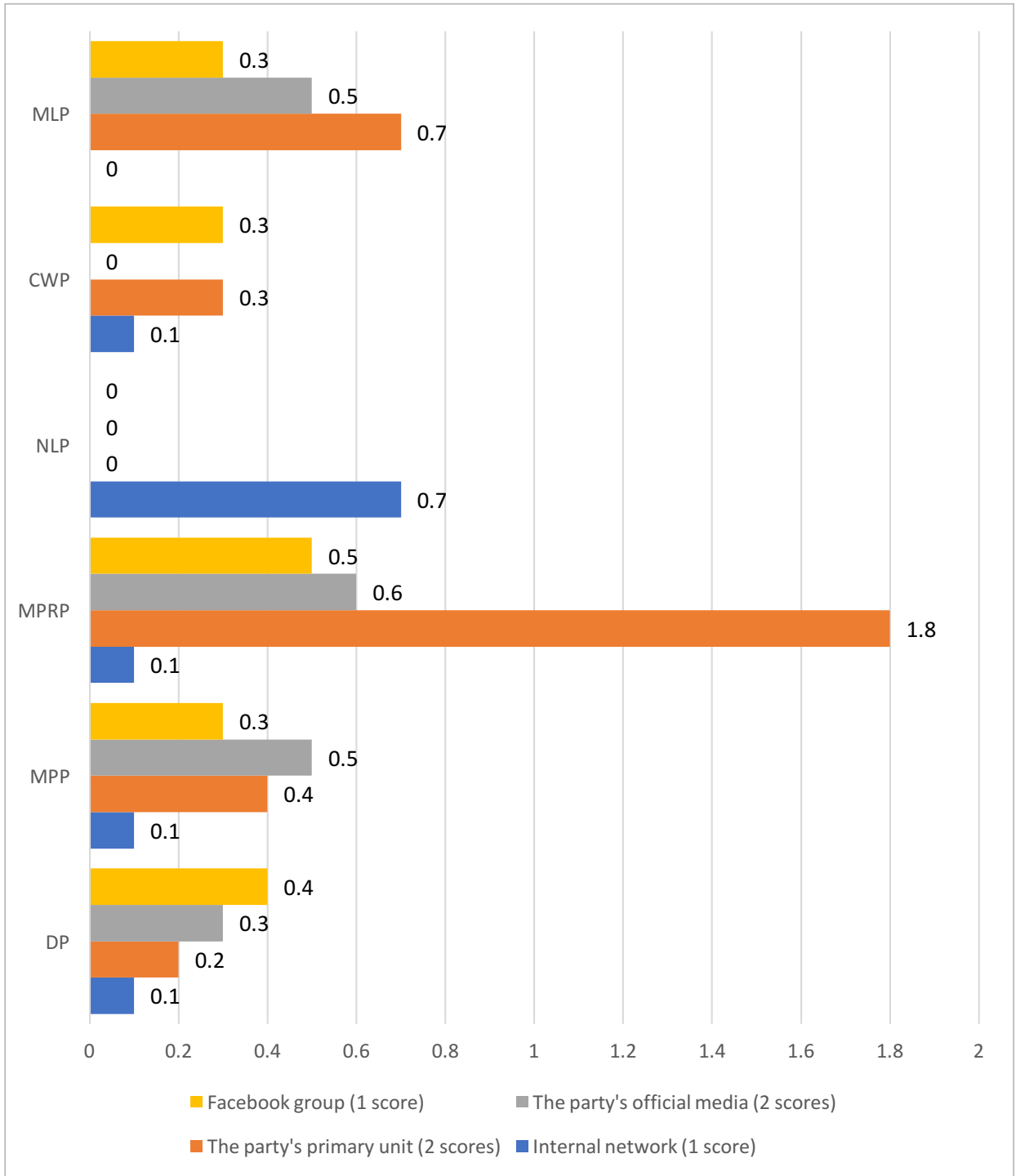


Figure 5.8 What is your source of choice for staying informed on the party's regular activities and decisions (6 scores)



1.6 FINANCING OF POLITICAL PARTIES

The dimension of Financing has a maximum score of 34. This is the highest score in the index. The average score of the 6 political parties who participated in the index is 10.78. Figure 6.1 shows the score of each political party in this dimension. It includes 8 questions with a score of 4 each.

Figure 6.1 Financing of Political Parties (32 scores)

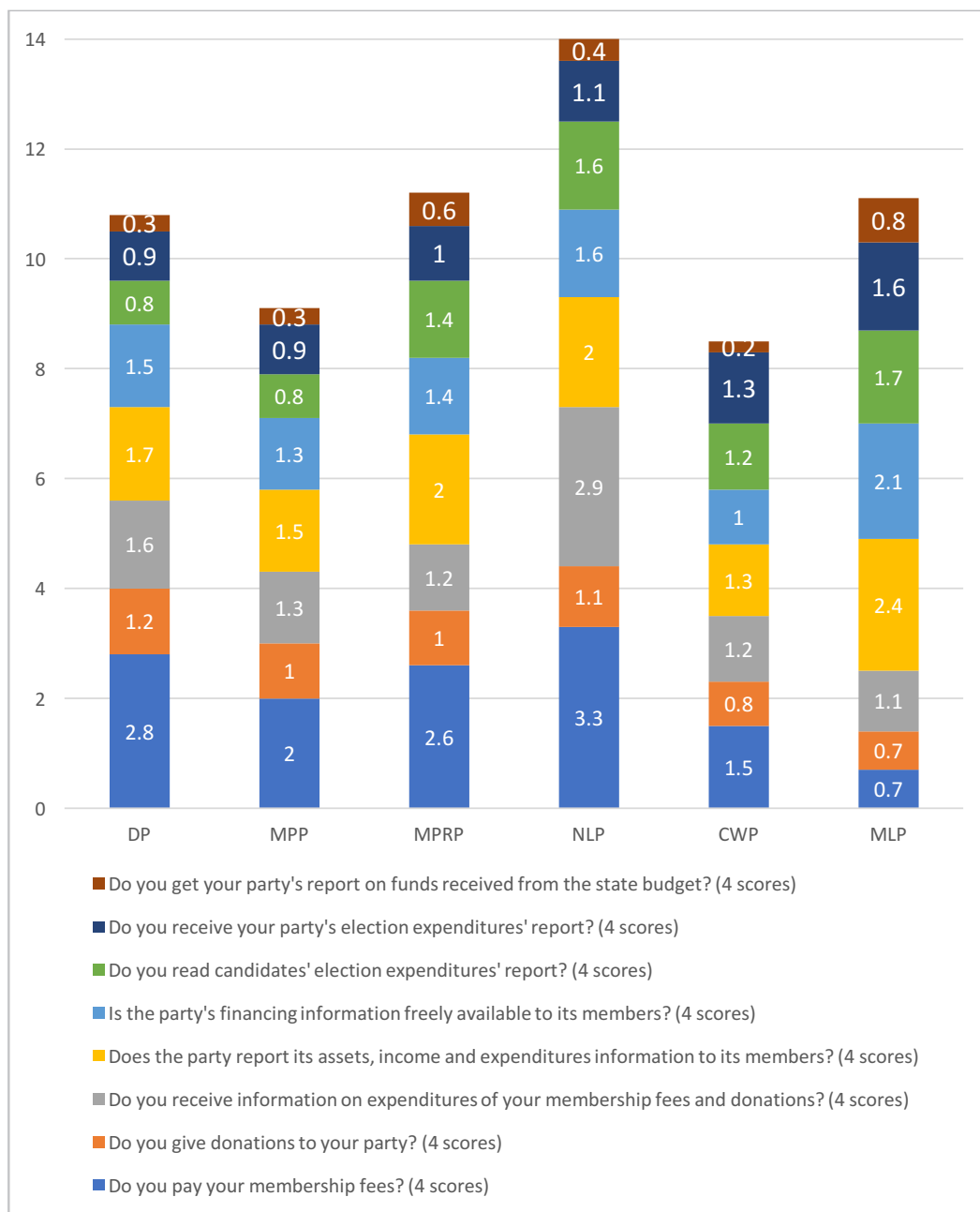


Figure 6.2 Do you pay your membership fees (4 scores)

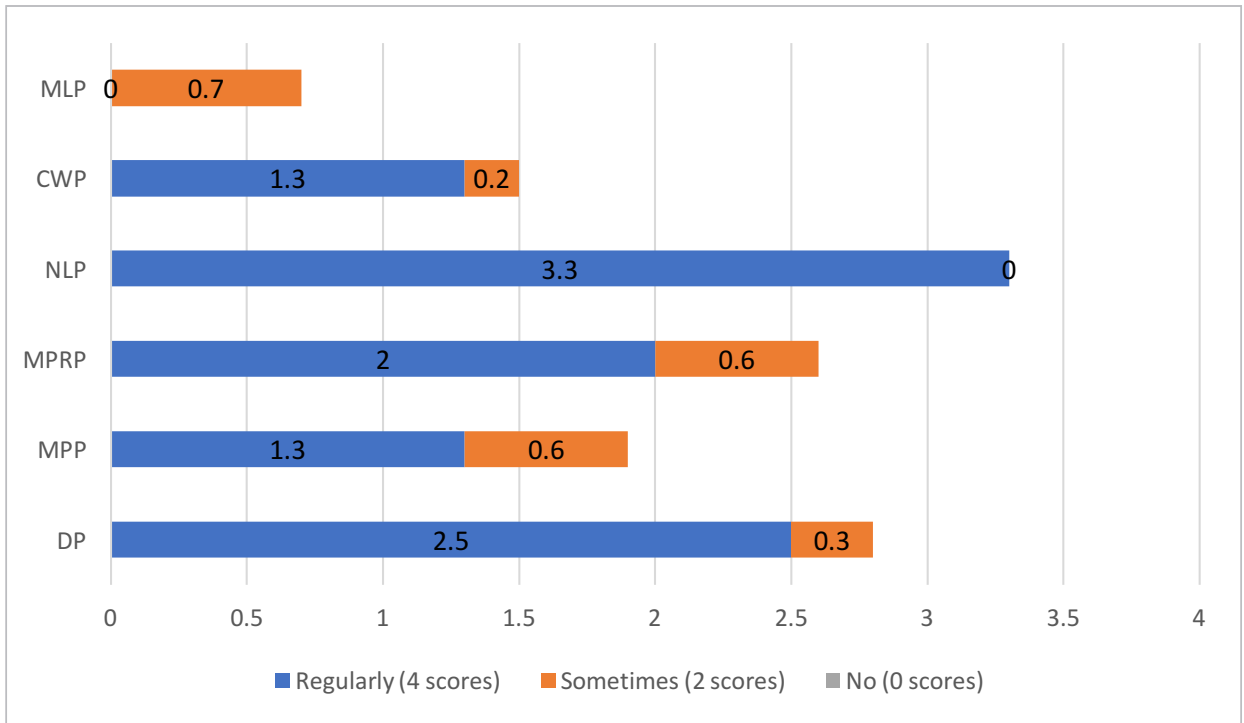


Figure 6.3 Do you give donations to your party (4 scores)

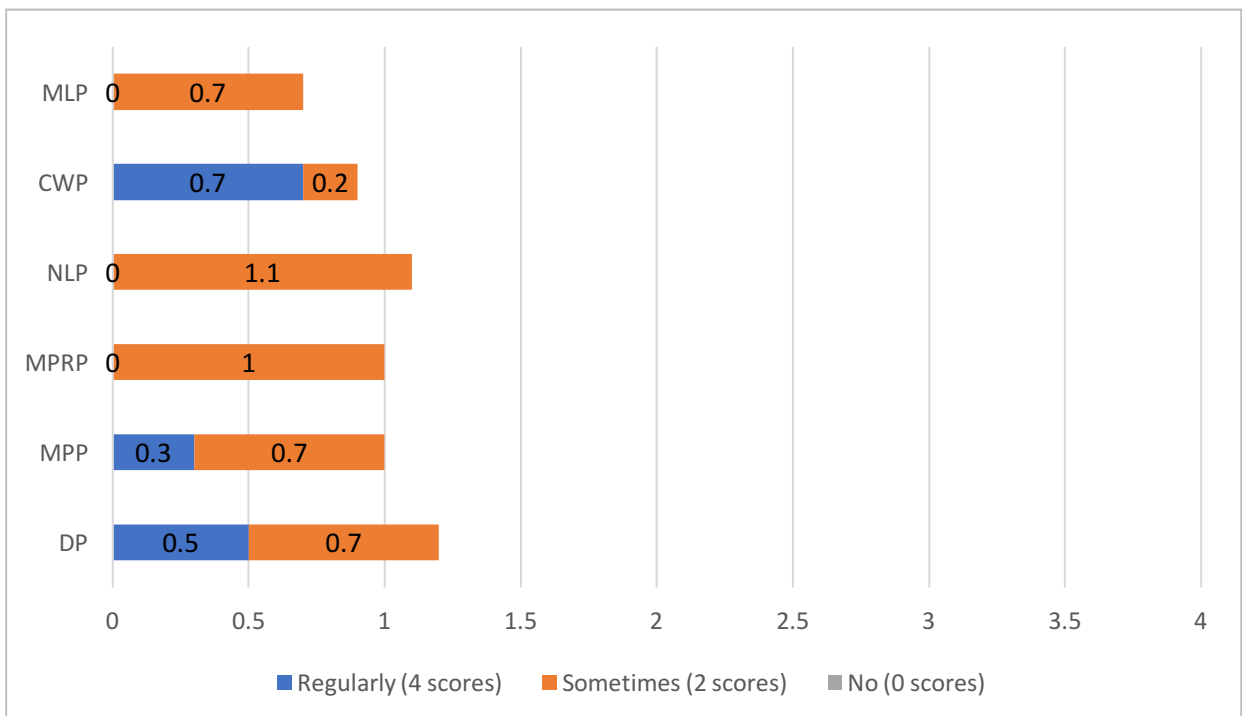


Figure 6.4 Do you receive information on expenditures of your membership fees and donations (4 scores)

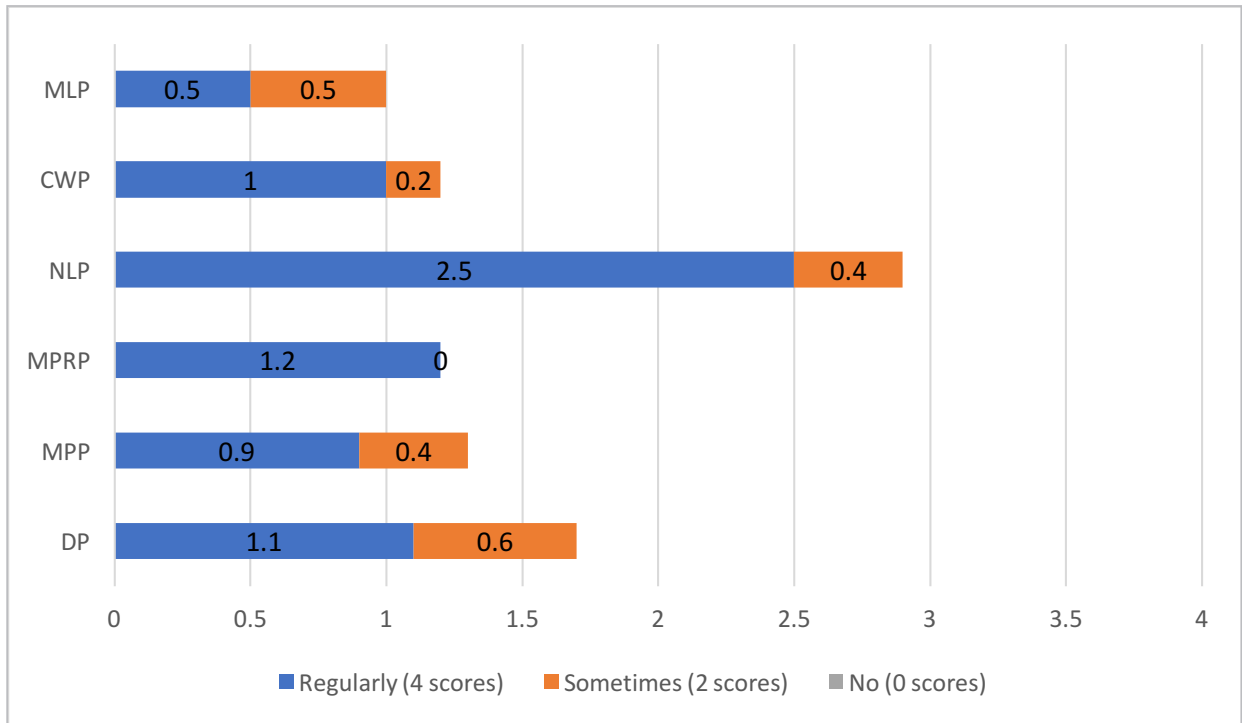


Figure 6.5 Does the party report its assets, income and expenditures' information to its members (4 scores)

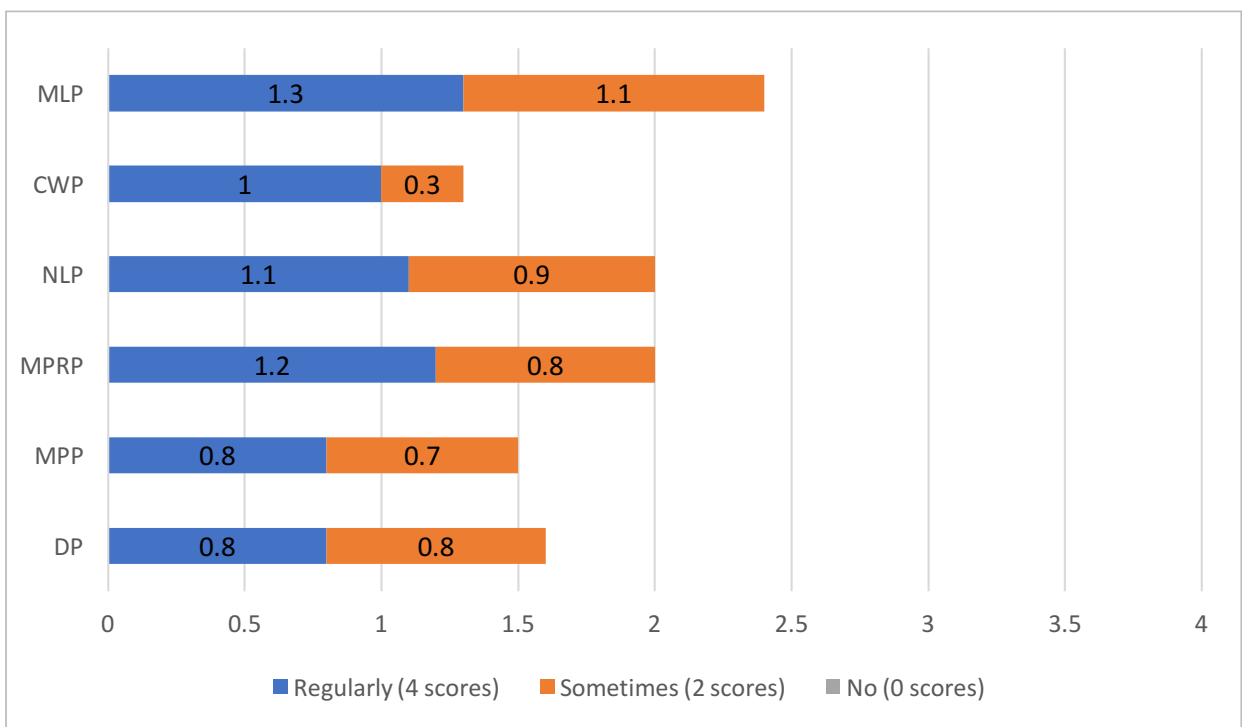


Figure 6.6 *Is the party's financing information freely available to its members (4 scores)*

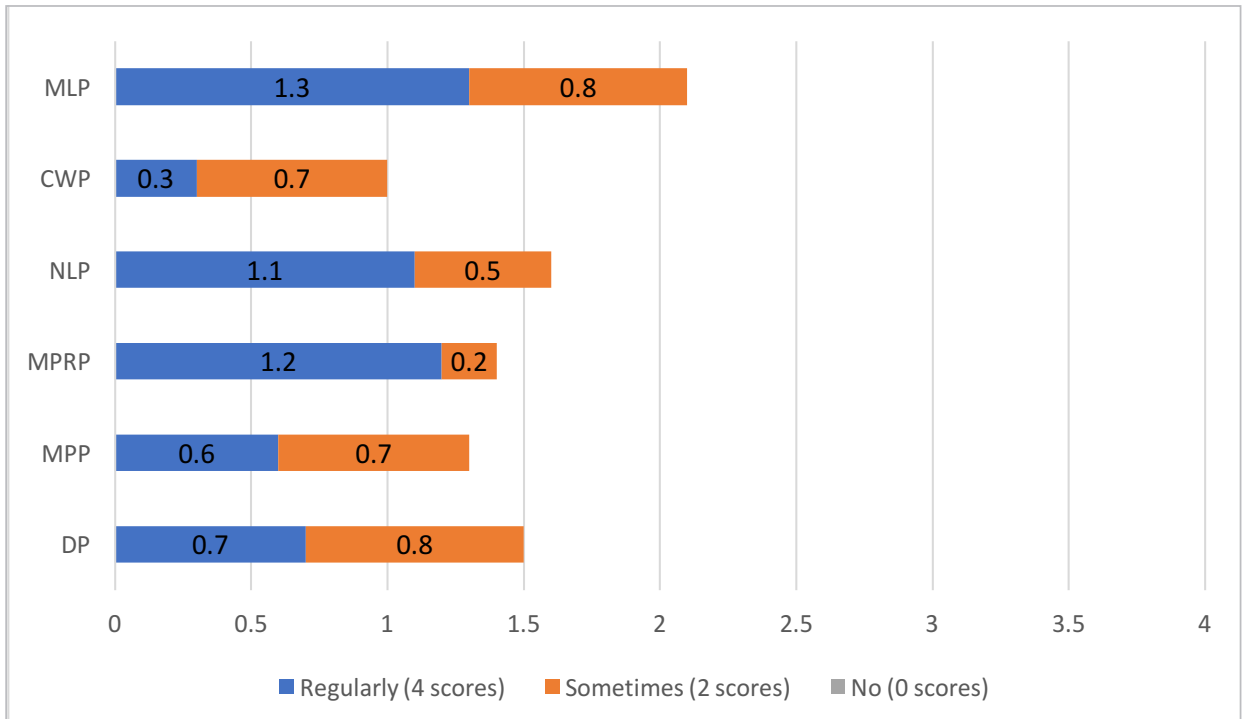


Figure 6.7 *Do you read candidates' election expenditures' report (4 scores)*

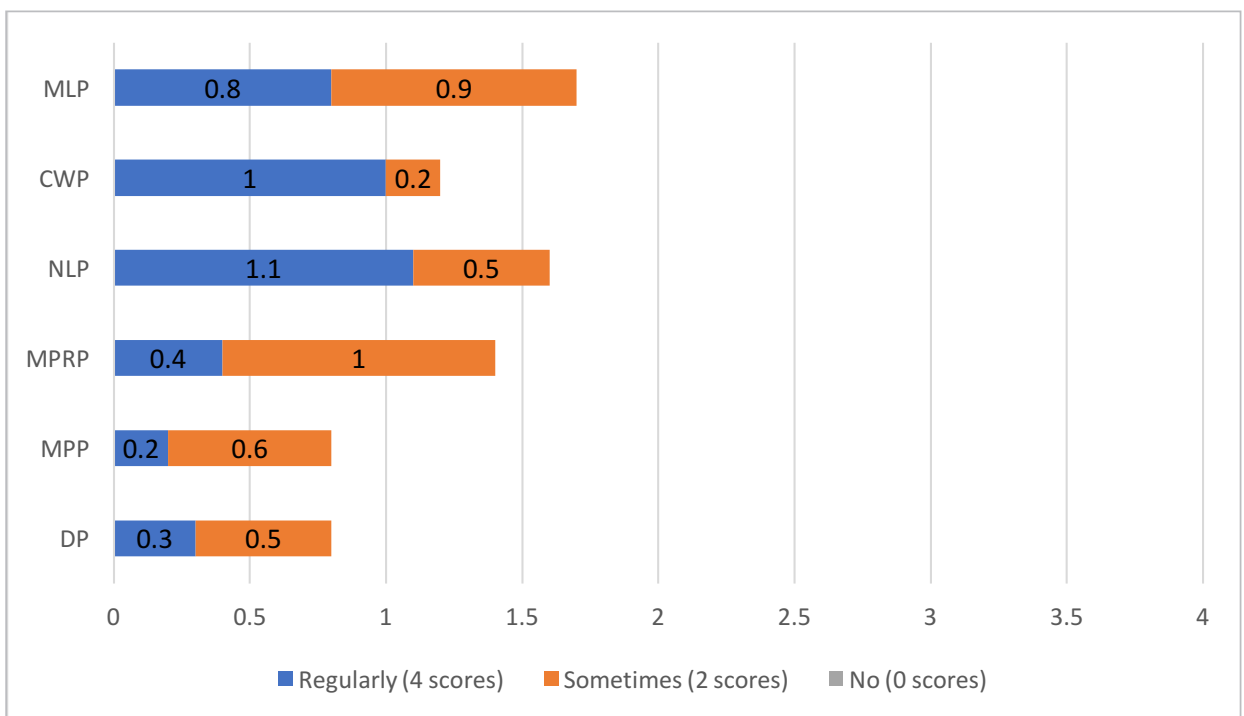


Figure 6.8 Do you receive your party's election expenditures' report (4 scores)

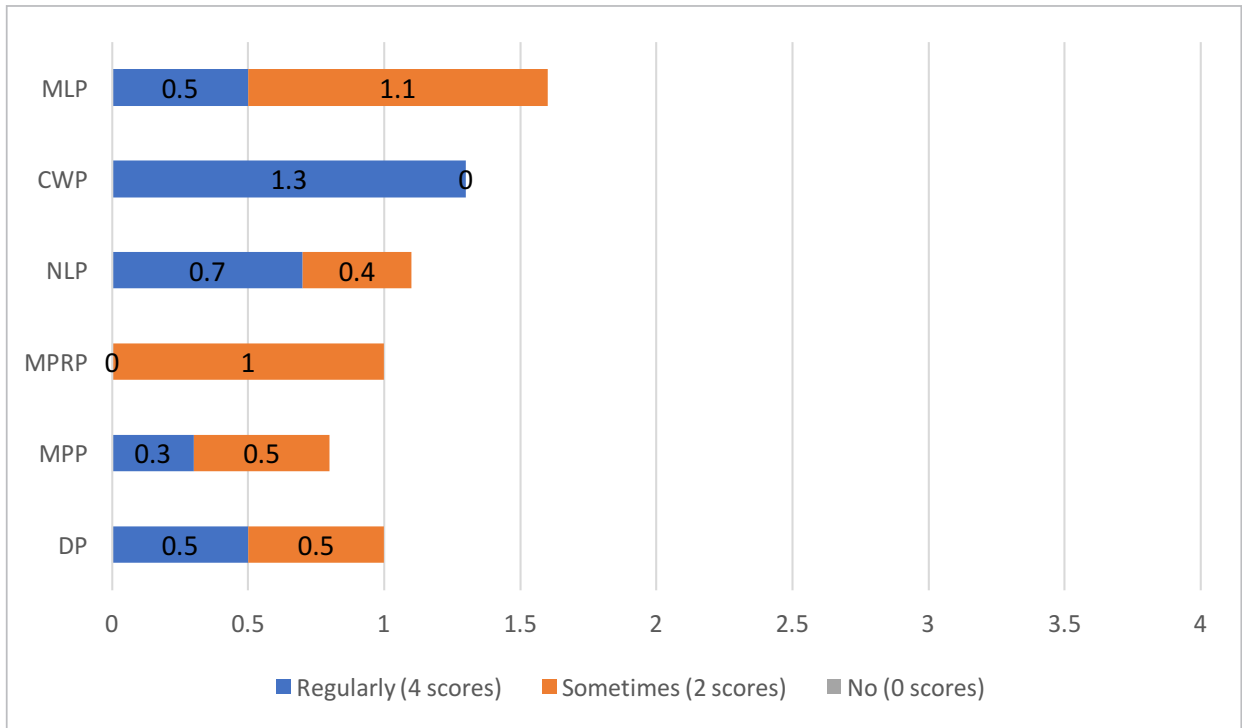
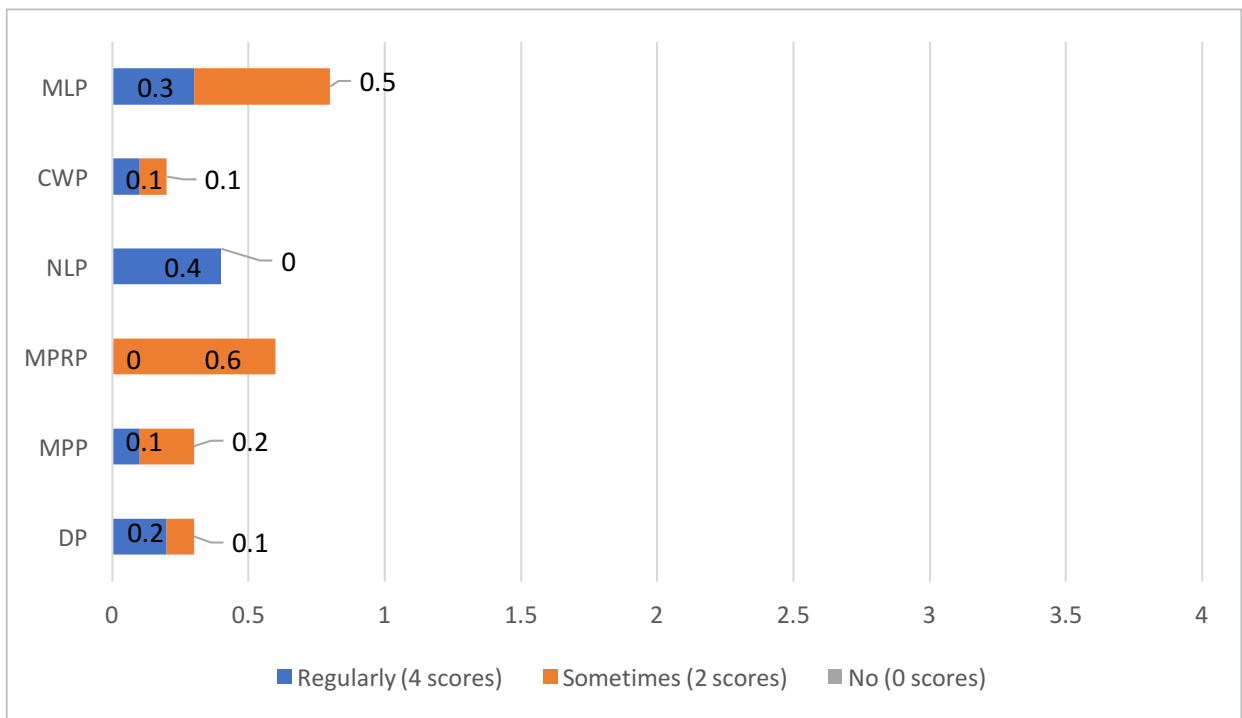


Figure 6.9 Do you get your party's reports on funds received from the state budget (4 scores)



2. EXPERT INTERVIEWS

In this part of the study, we interviewed 10 experts to understand and explain the current state of internal democracy within Mongolian political parties. Conclusions were drawn based on the encoded content of conversations. The main challenge for the expert interview portion of the study was that there were very few specialists studying the internal democracy of political parties. Therefore, experts were selected based on their knowledge of activities of certain political parties and their internal democracy.

POLITICAL PARTY & ITS STRUCTURE

1. For political parties, especially the two dominant political parties, the main factor that determines their internal democracy is the state-like structure or alternative structure of government. This structure remains from the one-party system of the communist regime. Aside from the two dominant political parties, the other smaller political parties have a relatively flexible and compact structure. For instance, expert #10 defined the internal democracy of Mongolian political parties as follows: "The current structure of political parties is the alternative state structure that remains from the one party's system. It is not a modern party structure. This is the system that takes full authority if one wins and rejects all alternatives. What is the structure of the state in Mongolia? For instance, there is the Capital City Party Committee. That means they will take full authority over the capital city."
2. It is fair to conclude that the mentality of party members has not changed since the transition from the previous political system. In other words, party members are not getting enough political education. As expert #2 says, "Lack of collaborative decision-making within the political party means that party members are not participating enough. They are used to looking up to the party leader on what to do. It is difficult to blame this situation on one individual. Therefore, political education is greatly needed. Education is also costly. Parties do not have such funding. Even the regular expenses for the maintenance of a soum's political party office are already strenuous."
3. We can also say that, in general, political parties receive hidden funds due to having huge structures that feed many parasitic groups. They require the political parties to take political power in order to sustain themselves. Experts conclude that political parties hide their financial reports from the public because of the secret sources of funding. For instance, as expert #5 says, "The most difficult problem is that there are so many parasites behind party financing. Media and press are eagerly waiting for the parliamentary general elections. In addition, there are also artists. In other words, many parasites feed off of political parties. You have to raise a lot of money somehow amongst these parasites."

PARTICIPATION & COMPETITION

1. The study shows that competition within political parties reveals the existence of certain elite groups with money who compete for their own interests. These factions greatly influence the competition within the political parties. However, in this competition of achieving political power, candidates are selected based on their monetary and political capital from within the political party. Therefore, experts conclude that competition within political parties is only symbolic in nature. For instance, as expert #1 says, "If we look at the participation of all members, the selection of the Democratic Party leader was conducted with the appearance of ensured participation of all members. But as it turns out, they bought the votes from their own members."

MONITORING & REPORTING

1. The institutional factors play a significant role in political party transparency, including financial and operational reports to the public and party members. But experts conclude that the laws and regulations are inadequate and even nonexistent when it comes to how political parties report their activities. Specifically, as expert #3 says, "In the previous year, The Democratic Party announced that they were making glass accounts. They said their report was posted on the party website. Even though they were posting something, it had no standards of disclosure. This shows that there is no system of disclosure in place and that it was a random act."
2. Activities of the party's internal monitoring office play a major role in the success of internal democracy. But their roles and responsibilities are unclear at the moment, and the monitoring by the regular party members is weak. This is again related to the insufficiency of political education of party members. For instance, as expert #8 states, "The party's internal monitoring body is comprised of 15 individuals and three sub-committees: financial regulation subcommittee, ethics and discipline subcommittee, and the party's mid-level organizations. The party leader nominates these 15 persons from the list of qualified candidates to the party congress, which approves them. So, basically it is the party leader that decides who will enter the party's internal monitoring body. In reality, it is the party's internal monitoring body that is supposed to monitor the party leader."

These conclusions can be made from the interviews with experts who study Mongolian political parties. However, we cannot attribute these conclusions to all political parties because many new or smaller political parties are yet to form and build their structure as institutions. Experts agreed that it is not yet possible to fully evaluate the internal democracy of the newer political parties.

In terms of the two dominant political parties as well as the smaller ones, we can see that their internal democracy generally has a top-down approach. For instance, according to expert #1, "The selection of the previous two leaders of the Mongolian People's Party was made from top down, and not from bottom up. It means that the selection was made after the consensus was reached."

The experts concluded that the competition within political parties is based on the consensus and competition between the factions within the parties.

CONCLUSION

- From March to May 2018, The DeFacto Institute conducted the Survey on Internal Democracy Index of Mongolian Political Parties. The survey covered political party members from rural aimags of Khuvsgul, Bayankhongor, Orkhon, Dornod, Bulgan, and the capital city, Ulaanbaatar. Survey respondents included:
 - 57.6% from Ulaanbaatar and 42.3% from countryside;
 - 16.9% to 33.1% of respondents were from ages between 26-65 years;
 - Respondents' gender distribution was 53% male and 47% female;
 - Total of 86.7% of respondents had higher education;
 - Employment of participants included all sectors.
- Each of the four main indicators, including participation, competition, transparency and financing, were assessed according to the methodology of intra-party democracy index. The IDI's Index broadly classifies political parties into three categories:

- parties with scores ranging from 61 to 100 are defined as 'democratic';
- parties with scores ranging from 30 to 60 points are 'semi-democratic';
- parties with scores ranging from 0 to 30 points are 'non-democratic'.

As we see from the total scores of Mongolian political parties, they fall into the "semi-democratic" category. The total scores of the 6 political parties that participated in the index ranging from 0 to 100 is as follows:

1. Democratic Party - 54,2
2. Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party - 51,7
3. Motherland Party - 51,4
4. National Labour Party - 51,2
5. Mongolian People's Party - 48,2
6. Civil Will Party - 42,7

We conclude that there are no major differences between the overall scores of all these political parties. Their level of internal democracy is close in range and insufficient.

- It is important to note that even though the overall score of political parties that participated in the index are close in range, their scores for each of the four indicators including participation, competition, transparency and financing, differ significantly.

If we look at the combined scores of the political parties in each indicator, the following scores can be noted:

- Competition – 98.4
- Transparency – 75.4
- Financing – 64.7
- Participation – 60.9

• COMPETITION WITHIN THE POLITICAL PARTIES

The Mongolian People's Party and the Democratic Party have a large number of members. So, the opportunities for competition in party selection of candidates for parliamentary general elections are not open to all members. Their threshold for candidate selection is high and depends on the size of donation.

For smaller political parties, the competition in party selection of candidates in parliamentary general elections as well as other positions within the party is relatively open to members and the criteria for candidates are relatively low.

• TRANSPARENCY OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Three of the six political parties that participated in the study have websites that publish their activities and are open (slightly), to a certain extent, to the public. For party members, it appears that the party activities and reports are open to candidates running for public office, which can be exchanged through private networks or closed groups on Facebook. But the survey showed that the information is not always available to all party members.

• PARTY FINANCING

The survey findings show that political party members pay their membership fees and rarely give donations. However, they do not receive reports on the expenditures of their membership payments or other funding sources. It is also unfortunate that party members do not seek to review or demand the spending reports of candidates running for public office from their party.

On the other hand, the survey respondents criticized the fact that only candidates with money are selected to run for elections and disapproved of the party's lack of responsiveness to the questions on reports of party funding by its members.

This shows that it is important for us to address the lack of transparency within political parties as institutions and that we should be more concerned with making the parties more open to their members and voters.

• PARTICIPATION OF PARTY MEMBERS

The findings of the survey showed that the participation of political party members was relatively low at all party levels. Conclusion of the participants in the qualitative analysis confirms that even though the party leadership principle is implemented, there is a "top-down approach to the party structure and the decision-making process in all the operations".

However, taking this survey from party members provides them with a certain understanding of intra-party democracy, thereby increasing the likelihood of avoiding any adverse consequences of members' passivity in participation of party activities in the future.

For instance, after taking the survey, it was likely that respondents would actively partici-

pate in regular activities of the party by demanding financial and operational reports from their party leadership.

- The research team contributed significantly to the political education of party members by conducting the surveys for this study: during the process of running the survey, it was necessary for the research team to explain to the respondents the concept of intra-party democracy, party-financing and the Law on Political Parties.
- We also understood that the intra-party democracy index could not be assessed based on the qualitative analysis or expert interviews alone. Experts were responding to the questions from the position of the political parties such as:
 - Democratic Party, Mongolian People's Party
 - Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, National Labour Party, Civil-Will Party
 - Other parties.

This shows that it is difficult to evaluate smaller parties that do not have any seats in the parliament. As a result of the qualitative study, we concluded that the laws and ethics of the political party environment needs to be reformed urgently.

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APPENDIX 1. LIST OF EXPERTS INTERVIEWED FOR QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Experts	Degree	Employment	Field
Expert 1	MS	NGO	Public Health
Expert 2	MS	Researcher	Political Science
Expert 3	MS	NGO	Public Administration
Expert 4	MS	Researcher	Political Science
Expert 5	Ph.D	Professor, Researcher	Political Science
Expert 6	MS	Lawyer	Law
Expert 7	Ph.D	Professor, Researcher	Political Science
Expert 8	MS	NGO	Public Administration
Expert 9	Ph.D	Professor, Researcher	Sociology
Expert 10	Ph.D	Professor, Researcher	Political Science

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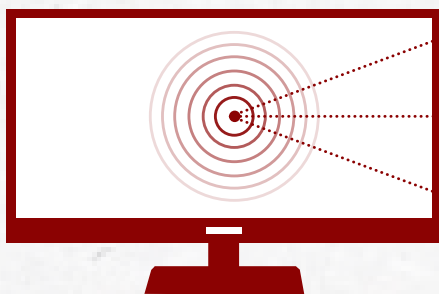


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