

# Political Party and Party System Institutionalization in Albania

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## Abstract

The drastic transition from the communist regime in a liberal democratic system in Albania has caused the process to be harsh and ambiguous, facing a lot of struggles in establishing a healthy democracy. Literature revealed that political parties have a crucial role in building a consolidated democratic system, since there is no modern democracy functioning without including the role of parties. The vitality of the political parties in the process of democratization should be characterized with strong and stable democratic values, with the scope of representing the citizens and providing policies which determine their willingness toward the public goods. This study examines the institutionalization of the political parties and the party system as a necessity for democracy; using the case of Albania it is analyzed the degree of institutionalization of the political parties in the country taking in regard external institutionalization including the electoral system, the electoral volatility, the electoral parties and their effectiveness, and internal institutionalization including intra-party democracy; measuring here the indicators of intra-party democracy, candidate selection, leadership selection, and policy setting. Results of the study emphasize the fragility of Albanian democracy, and the necessity to build solid, functioning and democratic institutionalization within political parties, as well as intra-party democracy which is a very important feature for the consolidation of democracy.

***Keywords: Party Institutionalization, Political Parties, External Party Democracy, Internal Party Democracy, Albania.***

## Introduction

After the collapse of the communist regime in the Eastern Europe, the process of establishing and consolidating democracy has been one of the most crucial issues in the region. The post communist period in these states has been characterized with a lot of difficulties and struggles, especially in the process of transition to consolidating democracy. The main reasons behind the hardship in establishing a healthy democracy in these countries depend on the degree of advancement and the stability of the political parties and the party system. In literature and also in practice the political parties are considered to be the most important agents of democracies

through which a direct link between the citizens and their representatives is established. Thus, political parties have a central role in making democracies work.

In Albania, the swift change from communist system into democracy has begun in the beginning of 1990s, starting with the students' demonstrations. As it has been seen in many of the Eastern Europe countries, in Albania the drastic change of the regime caused the process of transition to be harsh and ambiguous. Following the change in Albanian political system, the birth of the multi-party system was marked. The new system encouraged the expectations of the people believing that the objectives of the variety of political parties will be achievable and beneficial for their interests and for the general public good. However, in the case of this new-democracy with lack of experience and weak development and stability of the political parties the process happened to be not as expected; marking the Civil Unrest in 1997.

This study is focused especially in the issue of the political party and party system institutionalization in Albania because; firstly, Albanian case barely has been studied like the other Eastern European's countries. Secondly, party institutionalization is a very important area of study and not too much focus has been given for Albania political party and party system. Party and party system institutionalization are crucial dimensions for understanding the political system and are considered as essential condition in the well-functioning of democracy. In the case of Albania, this study examines the maturity of the political parties following the emergence of democracy. Specifically, it is measured the level of institutionalization of the political parties in two aspects: the stability of external party institutionalization, analyzing the electoral system, electoral volatility; and, the stability of internal institutionalization in terms of intra-party democracy, analyzing the developments within the parties itself.

This study is composed with three main chapters. The first chapter consists of a theoretical framework providing a comprehensive understanding for the concept of political party and party system institutionalization. The second chapter of this study develops an extensive analysis of the political party and party system institutionalization in the case of Albania. This chapter consists of two main sections; in the first section it is analysed the external party and party system institutionalization. In this regard this section elaborates the Electoral System of the Republic of Albania providing an analysis of the rules and regulations which have defined the conditions during each parliamentary elections held in Albania following the emergence of democracy. Furthermore this section analyzes the extent of electorate stability in terms of electoral volatility. Electoral volatility is calculated using the Pedersen index. The second section of the chapter elaborates the degree of institutionalization in regard with internal party

democracy. In this section is provided an analysis of the Statutes of the two main political parties in Albania, Socialist Party and Democratic Party. The analysis is based upon the indicators of internal party democracy. The third and the last chapter explicate the conclusion drawn from the analysis of this research.

## **Methodology**

This section provides an explanation of the methodology used in this study; including an outline of the research purpose, research approach and strategy, data collection and analysis. Furthermore it is discussed how the data has been processed and which tools are used in the analysis.

The study is mainly based upon explanatory studies since it emphasis studying the situation in the Albanian Party System in order to explain the relationship of external and internal party system with the institutionalization process. The study is also explanatory to some extent because it portrays an accurate description of the party system institutionalization in Albania by providing a clear picture of the process since the establishment of the democracy in the country.

In the study are used both qualitative and quantitative approaches. It seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors which have influenced the institutionalization of the party system in Albania. In this regard the research analyzes the party institutionalization in two extents: External Party Institutionalization including the analysis of electoral system and the electoral volatility and Internal Party Institutionalization including the analysis of intra-party democracy, the application of quotas, membership, candidate and leadership selection.

In order to collect the data this study uses archives as a research strategy. In this regard archival records are used to provide an answer for the research question. The primary sources that are used include; the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, the Electoral Code of the Republic of Albania and the Statutes of the Political Parties, the Socialist Party statute and the Democratic Party Statute. Secondary sources that are used include; reports made by the Organization for Security and Operation/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and Albanian government archives.

This study is based upon case study and the data analysis are made within-case analysis since it seeks to make an in-depth analysis of the political party and party system institutionalization specifically for the case of Albania.

## **Literature Review**

Most of the literature on political parties and party system in Albania brings to attention the ambiguity of the process of democratic consolidation, and shows the difficulties of the political parties to reflect the so called European institutionalization (Islami, 2013).

Although scientific work on the issue of institutionalization in Albanian political parties and party system does not have a significant record, there exists a broad understanding of this connotation for which a lot of columnist have written and expressed their opinions.

According to the columnist Luiza Hoxhaj in her statement in Tirana Observer, she argues that the establishment of the proportional regional law in 2008 for the Albanian electoral system does not bring any improvement to the party system and the quality of democracy, because it blocks the small parties to enter in the parliament and damages the principles of the competition which in the case of the non consolidated democracy as Albania has is very important issue in order to hamper the authoritarianism of the bigger political parties in the country (Hoxhaj, 2011).

Bledar Kajsiu, expresses that Albanian political pluralism has lost its meaning as a result of conceptual monism, and the democratic value is not established (Kajsiu, 2009). On the other hand Zamira Cavo, states that the Albanian political parties provide a risk for the democracy in the country, since they are build and still maintain the centralized organization inherited from the communist regime, and the leaders consider the parties as their own properties, from which they are the only ones who are in the centre of the decision-making process for everything in concern of the party structure, organization, policies, setting agendas, selecting candidates, finances etc (Cavo, 2007).

In regard with internal party democracy, Afrim Krasniqi and Ardian Hackaj argue in their work presented in the conference `Albanians and the Socio-European Model`, that the fragility of a traditional democracy and the misconceptions about a dominant political culture which considers the political parties as the root for power and privileges, increases the expectations of the people to parties, and transferring to the latter the monopoly of decision-making while excluding the participation of the citizens (Afrim Krasniqi and Ardian Hackaj, 2015).

On a recent research made to provide an answer for the question `How Institutionalized are the Post-Communist Party Systems` (Fernando Casal Bertoa and Peter Mair , 2010), for the Albanian case it is determined that the frequency of patterns of alternation in regard with bringing new alternatives for the government formation, the scores for the Albanian political

parties are significantly low. In this regard the alternations in party composition are not frequent and emphasize that in Albania the party system does not provide a healthy competition.

## **1. Political Party and Party System Institutionalization**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter is provided a theoretical framework of the political party and party system institutionalization in order to bring a more comprehensive understanding for the development of the study. The theoretical framework brings in attention and elaborates the main arguments provided in the literature of the political party and party system institutionalization.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In the broad and dynamic literature on democratic transition and the democratic consolidation process is agreed about the vital role of the political parties and their contribution in establishing a healthy democratic system. Although nowadays is argued that the importance of political parties is decreasing due to the declining number of membership, weak internal organization, low electoral performance, internal conflicts and also considering the increasing power of the groups of interest (Vachudova, 2011), political parties still remain a crucial attribute to democracy.

A common definition for the party system institutionalization is provided by Mainwaring and Torcal, and according to them a party system becomes institutionalized when the `actors develop expectations and behaviours based on the premise that the fundamental contours and rules of party competition and behaviour prevail into the foreseeable future` (Scott Mainwaring and Mariano Torcal, 2006, p. 205).

Discussions are evolving in regard with the identification of the main qualities that the political parties should have, and also in regard with what features of systems are more contributory to the democratic governing. In the contemporary literature the following conclusions are broadly agreed; firstly, the role of the political parties is critical in the establishment and consolidation of the democracy, and secondly, the institutionalization of political parties as well as of the party system is increasingly becoming more important (Markowski, 2000) (Sartori, 1976) (Vicky Randall and Lars Svasand, 2002) (Ware, 1996). According to Randall and Svasand party institutionalization is considered as one of the criteria which have encountered the most emphasis in the process of democratization.

The founding father of the concept of institutionalization is Samuel Huntington, whom discusses the term in his work *Political Order in Changing Societies*. Huntington defines institutionalization as 'the process by which organization and procedures acquire value and stability' (Huntington, 1968 , p. 46). He extends the concept in four different dimensions: adaptability in order to survive, complexity while including the number of various units, autonomy in regard with originality, and coherence to form a unified whole (Huntington, 1968 ). However Huntington in his work is not focused particularly on political parties but rather in the broad political institutionalization. The subsequent explication for institutionalization is argued from Angelo Panebianco whose work is concentrated only in political parties and their organization. According to Panebianco, institutionalization is not in its nature a tool because it loses its character during the process and it becomes a value whose objectives are conjoined and indistinguishable (Panebianco, 1988).

In the literature of the party institutionalization exists an inclination in confusing the party institutionalization with party system institutionalization. In this regard, it is crucial to define this two terms; party institutionalization is defined as 'the process by which the party becomes established in terms both of integrated patterns of behaviour and of attitudes, or culture', in the other hand party system institutionalization does not refer to a single agent as political party, it constitutes a system as a whole composed with various agents which function with principles and norms established and agreed by all (Vicky Randall and Lars Svasand, 2002, p. 11).

Party system institutionalization is considered to be much stronger in advanced industrial democracies in contrast with the post-1978 established democracies which are considered to be weakly institutionalized (Richard Katz and William Crotty, 2006, p. 12). According to Mainwaring and Torcal a weak institutionalized political system is characterized with; firstly, weak programmatic and ideological linkage between the political parties and the voters, secondly, the voters tend to build stronger personal linkage with candidates, and last but not least weakly institutionalized party systems hinders electoral accountability (Richard Katz and William Crotty, 2006). Mainwaring, in his book *Rethinking Party System in the Third Wave of Democratization* argues about the what makes a party system institutionalized in four dimensions; (1) stability, in regard with the political parties' stability and the regular structure of the competition; (2) parties should have strong roots in the society, party-people relationship should be established, and reflected in voting behaviors; (3) legitimacy, political parties should be supported by the political actors and should be encouraged to consider democracy as a

necessary pattern; (4) organization, parties should be well structured and widespread (Mainwaring, 1999).

The degree of party institutionalization according to the literature is distinguished among external and internal facets of the process. In the external aspect it is referred to the relationship of the parties with the society and other institutions, and in the internal aspect it refers to the behaviours and the growth within the party. Internal institutionalization in democratic system is characterized with the intra-party democracy, which emphasizes the organization of the party in regard with implications of the intra party democracy in terms of inclusiveness, decentralization or centralization, and institutionalization, candidate selection, leader selection, and policy settings. Returning to external institutionalization, it emphasizes the relations of the party with the external features, in terms of electoral system, and electoral volatility (Panebianco, 1988).

## **Conclusion**

This theoretical framework provided in this study aims to emphasize the crucial role of the political parties in the political system and that the institutionalization is considered as one of the criteria which have encountered the most emphasis in the process of democratization. The chapter shows the way on what makes a political system institutionalized and determines that the main important features which in this regard are the programmatic and ideological linkages between the parties and the voters, the encouragement of electoral accountability. It is also emphasized that the facets of the institutionalization such as external and internal party and party system institutionalization are necessary determinants of comprehending the degree of institutionalization in a country.

This study agrees with the statements provided in this framework, because considering institutionalization as a practice and behaviour rather than a fiction 'have to do approach' the political system would be much more advantageous and would improve the quality of democracy in the countries. Thus, the study is developed in regard with the importance of party and party system and their institutionalization features.

## **Party System Institutionalization in Albania**

### **Introduction**

This chapter provides an analysis of the party system institutionalization in Albania about the external political party and party system institutionalization and internal political party institutionalization. In regard with the external political party and party system institutionalization this chapter develops an analysis of the electoral system and the electoral volatility in Albania. On the other hand, regarding the internal party institutionalization the chapter comprises with the analysis of the application of quotas, party membership, selecting candidates, setting party leadership.

### **External Political Party and Party System**

As revealed in the literature review, party systems are considered more institutionalized when political parties are stable over time, and their actions or inactions are more predictable. The ideologies which reflect their identities and policy settings should be generally stable, and their behaviours should express the consensus in accepting the ‘rule of the game’.

In regard with Albanian party system institutionalization, this chapter is firstly focused on the Albanian electoral system; it analyzes the laws that adjust the party competition and examines the electoral systems` capability to produce the majority in parliament. Furthermore it is examined the extent of electoral volatility in the second section of this chapter.

### **Electoral System Institutionalization in Albania**

Electoral systems are based in electoral regulations, and their consistency provides stable competition for the parties. Frequent changes in electoral system can produce unexpected consequences, and it can also provide uncertainty and weaken the strategies of the political actors.

Albania is a Parliamentary Republic and have unicameral legislature. The parliamentary elections are held every four years, and since after the fall of communism in Albania are held eight national elections. This section analyzes the stability of Albanian electoral system in regard with these elections.

Albania held the first multi-party elections on March 31, 1991 following the collapse of communism in 1990. Although the electoral system remained similar with what was used during the communist regime; if no simple majority was reached the first two candidates having more than 30 per cent of votes competed again in another round. The Albanian Labor Party (Communist Party) won the first elections. Considered to be not legitimate and under the civil and international pressure, one year later on March 22, 1992 other parliamentarian elections were held, and marked the first elections won by the Democratic Party. During this period a



new electoral law was approved which brought two significant changes; firstly, it established the mixed proportional representation system, and secondly, the number of seats in the Assembly changed into 140 from 250 (IRI, 1996).

On May 22, 1996, the next parliamentary elections were held in Albania. These elections were considered to not meet international standards as free and fair. The Democratic Party (PD) won 122 seats and the Socialist Party won 10 seats. In the OSCE report was stated that Albania should consider holding new elections due to the irregularities and manipulations that caused an unfavourable condition during 1996 elections (OSCE, 1996).

Following elections were held on June 29, 1997. A new electoral law was approved by the parliament and was amended by the Constitutional Court. It lowered the electoral threshold from four percent to two percent, and with this change the number of the seats in the Assembly also increased from 140 to 155. This change comprised of 115 mandates with absolute majority from single member districts, and 40 mandates distributed for the proportional list consisting of those parties which in national level had gained not less than two percent of votes (OSCE, 1997).

Before the next parliamentary elections Albania ratified in Article 64 of the new Constitution the mixed proportional system and the allocation of the seats in the Assembly for 140 deputies, divided into 100 seats for single member electoral zones and 40 seats for multi names list of parties or party coalitions in a nationwide constituency (Parliament, 1998). The electoral threshold also changed, parties should obtain 2.5 per cent, while the coalitions four percent of the valid votes.

The following parliamentary elections were held on June 24, 2001. According to international community it was considered that the country had achieved a steady stabilization but however there were certain areas of concern which included: irregularities during the voting process; the unnecessary interference of the police during the process; national media favouring the governing party; the relationship of political parties as enemies rather than legitimate opponents etc (OSCE, 2001). Regardless of these concerns, the Socialist Party of Albania won the elections undisputedly.

In 2005, the sixth round of elections since the establishment of democracy was held in Albania on 3<sup>rd</sup> of July. In this time two main political parties dominated the political system; the Socialist Party (SP), and the Democratic Party (DP). These elections were regulated under the framework of the new Electoral Code which was adopted in June 2003. The main changes in

electoral code consisted of: the administration of elections, the formulation of voting list, the criteria for establishing the constituencies, the formula implemented for the allocation of seats in the parliament, the counting process and the coverage of grievances and claims (OSCE/ODIHR, 2005).

The forthcoming elections were held on June 28, 2009 and were considered to mark a specific progress in regard with registration and the identification of the voters. A new Electoral Code was adopted in 2008 addressing substantial improvement in the system. According to this new code the electoral system changed to regional proportional representation, and the candidates were elected with closed lists (Electoral Code of the Republic of Albania, 2008). An electronic database for voter registration was adopted and priority was given to the ID card issue. The country constituencies changed according to the number of population corresponding to the twelve administrative regions of the country. Additionally, the threshold changed to three percent for parties to enter the parliament, and five percent for coalitions. The results of these elections marked an almost equal portrayal from the two major parties, Democratic Party and Socialist Party. The Democratic Party formed a coalition with the Socialist Movement for Integration led by Ilir Meta in order to form the government.

Subsequently, in 2013 the parliamentary elections were held on 23<sup>rd</sup> of June. Again the Electoral Code was amended in July 2012 with the support of the main parties. The new amendments included the concerns in regard with the commissioners, the formulation of the voters' lists, the process for the registration of the candidates, and more impartial media (OSCE/ODIHR, 2013). The threshold for entering the assembly became three percent for political parties and five percent for coalitions. Even though the electronic database was applied for the voters' registration, Albania still has a passive registration system. In 2013 elections the application of the gender quotas was not effective since the majority of the parties included the women in the end of the candidates list, and this position was fictive just to meet the quotas because it was sure that they could not win.

**Table 1: Showing the major changes in the Electoral System in Albania**

Albanian Electoral System						
Year	System Applied	The size of the Assembly	Allocation of Seats	Electoral Threshold (%)		Application of Quotas (%)
1991		250	250	-	-	-
1992	Mixed	140	100-40	4	4	-
1996	Mixed	140	115-25	4	8	-
1997	Mixed	155	115-40	2	2	-
2001	Mixed	140	100-40	2.5	4	-
2005	Mixed	140	100-40	2.5	4	-
2009	Proportional	140	140	3	5	30
2013	Proportional	140	140	3	5	30

Having provided in this section, the electoral system in Albania has gone through many changes since the establishment of the multi-party system. Before each elections of the Assembly, the system has followed different implication and the Electoral Code has been repealed and amended repeatedly. The electoral system has changed from one single member from constituencies into mixed proportional, and after into regional proportional system with the application of the closed lists for candidates. The formulas for calculating the corresponding number of seats in the Assembly has also been applied differently in accordance with the interests of the major parties. The size of the Assembly has changed frequently, counting 250 seats for the deputies in 1991, after it changed into 140 seats in 1992 until 1997 when it changed into 155. With the establishment of the new constitution came also the stabilization of the allocation of seats in the Assembly counting 140 deputies. On the other hand, electoral threshold has also undergone through different changes, sometimes in favour of the small parties and sometimes of the major parties. In the last election the percentage for entering the parliament market three per cent for political parties and five per cent for coalitions.

### **Electoral Volatility in Albania**

Electoral volatility is considered as a very important determinant which provides the fundamental answer about the party system stability (Eleanor Powell and Joshua Tucker, 2012). Specifically, literature provides that the degree of stability linked with the calculation of the electoral volatility in a party system refers to the institutional variables while explaining the factors of volatility (Ruth Dassonville and Marc Hooghe , 2011). Volatility shows the

differences from one election to the other in terms of preferences of the electorate. It is considered to be an important determinant for the well functioning of democracy (Drummond, 2006).

This research calculates the volatility in Albania using the Pedersen Index:

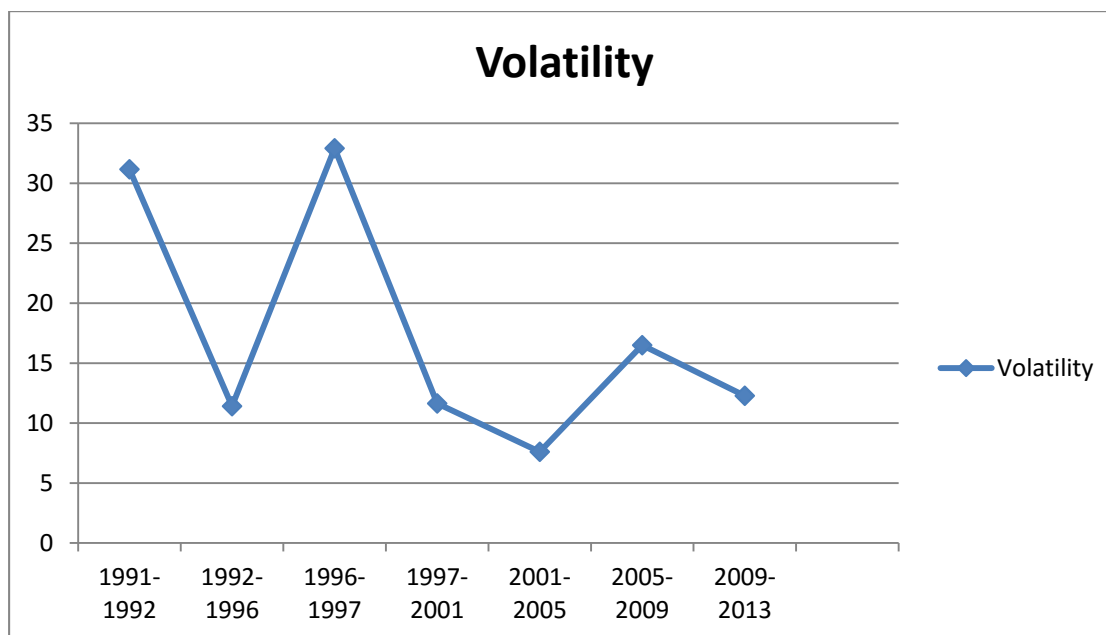
$$\text{Volatility} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n |p_{it} - p_{i(t+1)}|}{2}$$

from which n stands for the number of the competing parties, and  $p_i$  stands for the percentage that the parties have received in t and t+1 period of time (Pedersen, 1979). The results of the volatility are drawn in percentages, the lower the percentage of volatility the greater results the stability of a political system, and higher percentage of volatility, an increase in electoral instability is resulted.

In order to explain the electoral volatility in Albania this research calculates and analyses the volatility of the two major political parties in the country, Socialist Party and Democratic Party using the data recorded from the results of each parliamentary election.

The results show that the highest degrees of volatility in Albanian are scored during the first decade of post-communism. Specifically, during the first multi-party elections, the electoral volatility in Albania reached a score of 31.16 per cent and during the elections held in 1997, volatility scored the peak of 32.92 per cent. In the first decade after the fall of communism the volatility in Albania have had ups and downs, shifting from 31,16 per cent in the elections of 1992 into 11.39 per cent in 1996, increasing again in the elections of 1997, and decreasing into 11.64 in 2001. During the second decade after communism the volatility results to lower passing 20 per cent. The lowest score of electoral volatility in Albania is calculated from the 2005 election, which results show that it is 7.6 per cent.

**Table2: Electoral Volatility**



### Internal Party Institutionalization in Albania

Internal party institutionalization referred as well as Intra-Party Democracy is considered to be a very important feature which broadly describes the process of the inclusion of the party members in the decision making and party deliberation. Considering that the parties themselves do practice internal democratic operations it would result in helping the process of the democratic consolidation, by strengthening also the democratic culture in the electorate (Scarrow, 2005). Literature on internal party democracy gives emphasis to certain indicators which accordingly include; the application of quotas, party membership, leadership and candidate selection, and the party policy setting (Kernell, 2008) (Scarrow, 2005).

This chapter provides an explanation of the situation of Albanian political parties while analyzing the institutionalization of the two major political parties; the Socialist Party (SP) and the Democratic Party (DP). The analysis is based upon the indicators defined in the first paragraph of this chapter. Analyses of this chapter do provide also a comparison between the two major political parties of Albania in regard with the internal-democracy.

### The Application of Quotas

In legal framework, the application of quotas is a very important attribute for the inclusion of the vulnerable groups in the elections of national and regional level, thus providing quotas for the representation in the parliamentary seats. Furthermore, quotas are applied also in the organizational structure of the political parties. In general quotas are applied for different groups, including here the application of quotas on gender equality, for youth and also for minorities. In Albania, the quotas are regulated in the Statutes of the parties, in the Electoral

Law and in Gender Equality Law. The statutes of each political party in Albania provide specific quotas for the women representation in the party organization, there are also parties which include quotas for youth representation. Socialist Movement for Integration applies quotas for youth, but however it is not included in the analysis of this research. The Electoral Code and Gender Equality Law set quotas for woman representation in national level, which includes the quotas for parliamentary candidacy.

### **Application of Quotas in the Party Organizational Structure**

In Albania, political parties provide quotas in their Statutes for participation in the organizational structure and also for executive positions.

According to the Statute of the Democratic Party of Albania, the quota for women to perform in presidency position is provided in Article 21. In the point c` of this Article is stated that:

The number of winning ladies must not to be less than 25 % of the members of the Presidency that emerges from the vote. If this criterion is not met in the enumeration after the vote, then their order is separated from the general (The Statute of the Democratic Party, 2005).`

The quotas set for women as provided in this article are mainly for the presidency positions of the sub-branches of the party. Article 42 of the Statute determines the quota for the branches of the party presidency. The quota set in this article is again 25 % for women.

The Socialist Party, on the other hand, determines in its Statute the criteria of composition of the party structure for the local level. Article 13 point c` of this Statute set the quota for women, in this regard the composition should be 20 % in rural areas and 30 % in urban areas. Article 15 of the Socialist Party Statute which defines the Socialist Assembly of municipalities, the municipality structure and its function, determines the representation of women must constitute 30 % of the member of Socialist Assembly for municipalities and 20 % of the members of the communes. These articles emphasize that the quotas set by the Socialist Party are higher in urban areas since the percentage of their inclusion is higher than in rural areas. Article 26 of the Statute which provides the competences of the party congress states that: ‘the voting process for the women nomination/candidacy is made with different lists. Women constitute not less than 50 % of the list of candidates for being a member of the National Assembly of the Socialist Party’ (The Statute of the Socialist Party, 2011).

As provided in this section, the main group which the two major parties indicate quotas is the women representation. Other groups which include youth and/or minorities are not included in the Statutes of the Socialist and Democratic Party.

**Table 3: Application of Quotas in the party organizational structure**

Application of Quotas	Albanian Political Parties	
	Socialist Party	Democratic Party
No quotas	-	-
Women	20 % (rural areas); 30 % (urban areas)	25%
Man	-	-
Youth	-	-
Minorities	-	-

**Application of Quotas for the National Assembly**

The Electoral Code of the Republic of Albania determines in the article 67 point 6:

For each electoral zone, at least thirty percent of the multi-name list and one of the first three names on the multi-name list shall belong to each gender. The subject that submits the list declares the seats, according to the gender quota, in order to apply the exception... (The Electoral Code of the Republic of Albania , 2012).

Furthermore, point 7 of this article determines that in case the parties do not comply with the obligatory provisions provided above, the Central Election Commission has the right to impose sanctions to the parties. Sanctions related to the gender equality are provided in the Article 175 of the Electoral Code. According to this article, if the political parties fail to comply with the obligation regarding the formulation of the multi-name list, CEC has the right to impose a fine of 1,000,000 Albanian ALL in the case of Assembly elections, also 50,000 Albanian ALL in case of local government elections (The Electoral Code of the Republic of Albania , 2012).

However, in Albanian Electoral Code there are no mandatory gender quotas for setting a percentage for the women representation in the number of seats in the Assembly. Quotas provided are for the candidacy, in other words defining the percentage of women required to be included in the multi-name lists.

In regard with the Albanian political parties, only the Socialist Party applies the Statute quota for women representation in parliamentary candidacy. Article 36 of the Socialist Party Statute determines that women must constitute not less than 30 % of the candidates for deputies in the multi-name list. Democratic Party does not apply quota in this regard.

As provided in this section, Albanian political parties' statutes and election legislations set quotas in order to ensure the inclusion of vulnerable groups in the organizational structure of the parties as well as in ensuring the representation of this group in the national assembly. The types of quota which is mainly applied in the parties that are used in this research are based upon gender equality. Quotas determined for the percentage of women representation in the organizational structure of the parties are subjects to the internal-party rules and regulations of the parties, in this regard the Statutes of the political parties. In the other hand, the quotas determined for the women representation in the multi-name candidacy list are subject to national legislation, in this regard the Electoral Code of the Republic of Albania. However, also the parties itself may provide regulations in order to apply quotas for women representation in the multi-name list. Quotas provided in the statutes of the political parties are very important indicators which demonstrate the internal-party democracy. Nevertheless, the Electoral law is the main legislation which regulates and imposes the application of quotas, and all political parties must comply.

Electoral system as well is a major influencer which increases the chances for women representation in the National Assembly. Since 2008 Albania has applied the proportional electoral system. The proportional electoral system favours gender equality and encourages the women representation. These statements are reflected in the Electoral Code applied, which in this regard it sets the quota for women candidacy up to 30 %. Besides the legislation provided in the electoral law, also the party statutes may apply quotas for women representation in the assembly. In Albania, only the Socialist Party includes in its statute the standard for women candidacy, and applies the quota of 30 %.

Comparing the statutes of the two major political parties in Albania with regard to quota application this analysis provides that there is no significant change between the Socialist Party and the Democratic Party in the quotas set for the organizational structure of the party. However, in regard with the application of quota for the women representation in the assembly there is a significant change, since only Socialist Party applies such quota. Still though, both parties include in their statute only quotas for women, excluding in this regard other vulnerable groups, such as youth and/or minorities.

### **Party Membership**

During recent years political parties across democratic states have given a great importance to the involvement of the individuals in political affairs, by providing different opportunities for



them in order to participate and to be included in decision making as party members (Sandri, 2015). This emphasizes the importance of the party membership in the intra-party democracy. Being a member in a political party usually requires providing financial commitment (annual or monthly payments), and/or being actively involved in the party events.

This section provides an explanation on how the two major political parties in Albania, Socialist Party and Democratic Party, provide in their Statutes the inclusiveness of the members in the political process. Firstly are analyzed the procedures of the acceptance as a member of the party. Secondly, this section shows the right of the members of the political parties. Thirdly, the duties of the members of the parties are provided.

### **The procedure of the Acceptance as a Member of the Party**

According to the literature a highly institutionalized political party involves official bodies in the application procedure which might accept or reject applicants; expelling those applicants who are considered to be harmful for the party interests (Scarrow, 2005). Susan Scarrow provides in her writings that parties which have a high degree of inclusiveness try to build obstacles in the process of membership acceptance in order to undermine the possibility of certain individual whom might harm the party if he/she becomes a member of the party. Paradoxically, in this regard, parties which seek to increase the level of inclusiveness are becoming more centralized by tightening the procedure of acceptance.

Provided in the Article 7 of the Socialist Party Statute eligible to become a party member are all citizens of the Republic of Albania and all Albanian citizens outside the country as well as foreign individuals residing, which have reached age 16 and accept the Program and the Statute of the Socialist Party. Membership is voluntary based and should be provided in a written form. The day which the individual submits the application, is the day of his/her acceptance in the party (The Statute of the Socialist Party, 2011).

The Democratic Party provides in its Statute in the Article 12, that all the Albanian citizens which have reached the age 15, accepts the conditions of the membership and which is not enrolled as a member in another political party or organization which is not declared as a partner with DP, can become a member of the party. The membership in the Democratic Party as provided in the Article 12 (2) (b) is based upon annual fee, which if not paid for two years in a row may cause the loss of the membership in the party. Article 13 of the statute determines that the membership application should be submitted in a written form in: a. the section of the Party near the residence of the applicant; b. in the branch or sub-branch of the Democratic

Party; c. in the headquarters of the Democratic Party. The acceptance of the membership application is made by the branch of the PD or by the headquarters of the party (The Statute of the Democratic Party, 2005).

### **The rights of the Member of the Party**

The rights provided for the members of the party determine the degree of inclusiveness that each party attempt to give to its members. In this regard, this section shows the main rights of the members included in the party statutes accordingly.

The Statute of the Socialist Party determines the rights of the members of the party in the Article 8. According to this article the members of the party have the right to participate in the activities of the party. Article 8 (3) determines that the members of the party have the right to select and be selected in the governing bodies of the party. Point 4 provides the right to nominate and be nominated candidate of the party representation in the executive and legislative governing bodies.

On the other hand, the Democratic Party provides the right of the member in the Article 14 of the Statute. This article gives the right to the members of the party to attend the meetings, elections and all activities of DP. Article 14 (1) (b) defines that only the member can elect and be elected in the organs of the party. Furthermore, it is provided that each member has the right to propose nomination for all legislative and executive bodies which represent the Democratic Party.

### **The Duties of the Member of the Party**

The members of the Socialist Party have their duties provided in the Article 9 of the Statute. Each member is required to be part of one of the organizations of the SP. He/she must be provided with an annual membership card after the payment of the annual quota settled by the party. The member must respect the ethical code; they have the right express their opinions and provide concrete proposals in regard with the party program, statute as well as the electoral programs. The members should collect and submit to the party the opinions and the proposals of the community for the issues of common interest, starting from concrete problems of their everyday life up to legislative initiatives.

According to the Article 14 (2) of the Statute of the Democratic Party, the member has the following duties: he/she should be active participant in the political and electoral activity of the party; must pay the financial contribution to the party; must respect the discipline of the party as provided in the Statute.

### **Party Membership: Conclusion**

The two major political parties in Albania consider the membership as a very important indicator of the internal-party democracy. This importance is reflected in different articles of their statutes. However, it is necessary to emphasize that both parties include the importance of the internal democracy in the party determining that it is a fundamental principle for the way the parties function; Socialist Party provides it in the first Article of the statute, while Democratic Party in the Article 8 of its statute. Both parties give priority to the membership in regard with internal party regulation, although they differ in certain degrees. According to the statutes, both parties use traditional acceptance procedures, which include the submission of the application in the written form and in person. However, the main point provided which lacks the democratic procedure are the membership fees applied for financial support. The two parties take the decisions about the fees from the presidency of the parties, showing in this regard centralization.

In this analysis the Democratic Party results to be more institutionalized than the Socialist Party, but however the Socialist Party provides more inclusive policies for its member than the Democratic Party.

Electoral Code of the Republic of Albania does not provide any rule or regulation with regard to party membership. This issue has been considered to be undermined by internal party procedures.

### **Selecting Candidates**

Selecting candidates is a very crucial duty for all the political parties, because the candidates selected reflect the parties' portrait during the elections and electoral campaigns and also while they are in office implementing the assignments in the name of the party. The candidates are those who determine the success of the parties. On the other hand, the process of selecting the party candidates is an important determinant of the internal party democracy.

In order to provide the standard of internal party democracy in the two major parties in Albania, this research considers analyzing the provisions stated in the Statutes of these parties in regard with: member participation in decision-making; who has the right to nominate and be nominated; who can veto candidates; who determines the eligibility criteria; how is made the voting process; whether the party leaders pre-select the nominees, and if the party leader must approve the choices.

Article 41 of the Statute of the Socialist Party defines that all the members of the party have the right to nominate candidates or to reject the candidates proposed. In the Article 8 (3) of the Statute is provided the right of the party members to be nominated for candidacy. Article 40 provides that the decision-making system approved by the party leadership forums is necessarily applicable to all the levels of the party structure. The decision for the individual candidacy is made by free willing and in a closed voting process. The statute of the Socialist party does not specify whether the party leaders pre-select the nominees, nor if the party leader must approve the choices (The Statute of the Socialist Party, 2011).

In the Statute of the Democratic Party, Article 34 defines that the candidacy for local elections must be discussed and consulted with all the member of the party. The presidency of the sub-branches decides for the local candidacies. For municipalities of first category the list for the candidates for consultants must be approved by the Democratic Party Presidency. With the guidance of the party presidency may be decided about the candidacy for local majors with less than two thousand votes. According to the Article 14 (b) of the statute the members of the party have the right to nominate and to be nominated for candidacy. The Democratic Party Statute gives the right to the party presidency to veto the candidates which are nominated, provided in the Article 43 (2). In the same article it is determined that the presidency proposes to the council the candidatures for the representatives of the legislative and executive positions (The Statute of the Democratic Party, 2005).

Considering the analysis provided for setting the candidates in the two major political parties in Albania, this section concludes that both political parties are characterized with a semi-institutionalized degree, since both of them lack in providing high level of internal party democracy in the process of candidate selection. Although the two parties intend to provide inclusive policies for the nomination of the candidates, they don't provide full right for the party members to select the candidates. However, the Democratic Party results to be more centralized in comparison with the Socialist Party. Both of the parties do not provide who is the responsible body which approves the setting of the party candidates.

### **Setting Party Leadership**

Similar with the process of selecting party candidates, also the process of setting party leadership has a great importance especially for the image and the credibility of the parties. As previously mentioned in the section Selecting Party Candidates, the inclusive policies and the decentralized structure provided in the party statutes define the progress of political party

institutionalization. This section determines and analyses the party inclusiveness and centralization in the same method by using as a guideline the Statutes of the two major political parties in Albania. The procedures defined by the statutes of the political parties provide the functioning of internal democracy and the degree of party institutionalization.

Literature in setting party leadership reveals that the most effective and democratic processes in choosing the leadership are the ones which include the party members, such as party conferences or the membership ballots (Scarrow, 2005). In this regard, this section considers analyzing who has the right to be selected in the leading organs of the parties; and who is the body which appoints the leaders according to the Statutes of the two major political parties in Albania.

The Statute of the Socialist Party in Article 8, point 3 determines that the members have the right to select and to be selected in the leadership bodies of the party. On the other hand, the Statute of the Democratic Party defines in the Article 14(1) (b) that the members have the right to select and be selected in the organs of the party, but it is not specified whether there are included the leadership bodies. However, both parties provide in their statutes that the competence for appointing the leadership is a responsibility given to their respective National Assemblies. The National Assembly is the highest executive and legislative body of the parties. Socialist Party determines this statement in the Article 28 (4) of the Statute, while Democratic Party in the Article 39 (4).

Considering the provision included in this section, conclusions drawn indicate that the process which two major political parties in Albania apply for selecting the party leadership do not comprise fully in reflecting the internal democracy of the parties. Thus, again this research concludes that the parties provide a semi-institutionalized degree. Both parties provide inclusive policies in regard with selecting or being selected in party organs; although the Socialist Party explicitly defines it for the party leadership, while Democratic Party does not; however on the other hand they provide centralized structure since the body responsible for appointing the leadership belong to the highest executive and legislative level of the party, which limits the influence of the party membership.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter concludes that the external political party and party system institutionalization in Albania is rather fragmented. As the analysis of the electoral system determine frequent changes in the electoral law before each parliamentary elections, it shows that the party system

in Albania to be characterized with instability. In the other hand, the high volatility among the political parties also does affect the stability of political system negatively.

Concerning the internal party institutionalization, this study shows the lack of reliability of both major parties in Albania, the Socialist Party and Democratic Party. In regard with the application of quotas there is no significant change from the two parties, and however, even if the parties do not provide quotas in their statutes, both of them are obliged to apply the quotas since it is a requirement of gender equality in the Electoral Code. According to the statutes studied, the parties provide inclusive policies in regard with party membership, somehow also for the process of selecting candidates and setting the party leadership since member have the right to nominate and be nominated, but the process of decision-making is not as inclusive because the responsibility in this regard is given to the highest executives of the parties, and limiting the influence of party member provides a centralized structure of the parties.

## **Conclusion**

This study analyzed the political party and party system in Albania, a young democracy with insufficiently institutionalized political parties. The party system in Albania results to be rather fragmented. The analyses of the study designate the fragility of the degree of institutionalization of the Albanian political parties and party system. In regard with external party and party system institutionalization, this study examined the electoral system and the electoral volatility in Albania. Albania has undergone through too many electoral reforms before each parliamentary election, and these frequent changes in electoral laws determine the instability of the electoral system in the country. Another indicator of the instability in Albanian political system has been drawn by the results of the electoral volatility. Electoral volatility in the country scores high values, which means that the stability among the parties is low, however, reflecting in an unstable party system. Nevertheless, in the first decade of post-communist period the results show that the degree of instability was higher than in the second decade of post-communism, from which the scores of volatility are lower, providing an appearance of stability in the country. In regard with internal party institutionalization this study examined the internal party democracy of the two major political parties in Albania, providing an analysis of the statutes of the parties in concern with the quotas that are applied for the vulnerable groups, the party membership, the selection of candidate and the process of setting the party leadership.

The quotas for the gender equality in Albania are required specifically from the Electoral Law; hence the parties are obliged to comply with the rules. Nevertheless, they also do apply these quotas in their statutes. In practice the situation is not the same, it is worth mentioning that the application of gender quotas has been considered as not effective since the parties include the women in the end of the candidate list, and in this position their role is fictive just to meet the standards and it is for sure that they could not win. The party membership, the process of selecting candidates, the process of setting the party leadership are very important features determining the internal democracy of the parties. According to the statutes of the parties included in this study it is given importance to the party membership since the both statutes consider membership as a necessity for the parties. The parties do provide inclusive policies in terms of giving the right to party member to nominate and be nominated in executive and legislative position, but however, they do not provide full right for the party member to select the candidates. Furthermore, the inclusiveness of party membership is provided also in the rights to select and be selected in the party organs, but still their right are limited because the

body responsible for appointing the party leadership belongs to the highest executive and legislative level of the party restricting the influence of the party members.

In this regard the study concludes that these parties do not function in a healthy internal party democracy and they result in operating as semi-institutionalized political parties, since both suffer in establishing fully inclusive and decentralized policies. The lack of implementing internal party democracy, in many aspects, impacts the quality of democracy in the political system.

Therefore, this study concludes that the political party and party system in Albania experiences an ambiguity in the process of well establishing the democratic values and practices. The political parties in Albania must improve their institutional function in order to improve their role in the political life. The parties need to adopt relevant internal democracy standards that shape their pivotal role in the political system. These changes remain a condition without which there will not be any improvements in the degree of institutionalization and consequently Albania will suffer in consolidating democratic values and practices.



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## **Appendix: Electoral Volatility in Albania**

**Table 1: Electoral Volatility 1992**

Political Parties	1991 Elections Results (%)	1992 Elections Results (%)	Volatility Results (%)
Albanian Labour Party*	56,17	25	
Democratic Party	38,72	62,3	
Other	5,11	12,7	
Total	100	100	31,16

\*Albanian Labour Party later changed its name into Socialist Party

**Table 2: Electoral Volatility 1996**

Political Parties	1992 Elections Results (%)	1996 Elections Results (%)	Volatility Results (%)
Socialist Party	25	20,37	
Democratic Party	62,3	55,53	
Other	12,7	24,1	
Total	100	100	11,41

**Table 3: Electoral Volatility 1997**

Political Parties	1996 Elections Results (%)	1997 Elections Results (%)	Volatility Results (%)
Socialist Party	20,37	50,03	
Democratic Party	55,53	25	
Other	24,1	24,97	
Total	100	100	32,92

**Table 5: Electoral Volatility 2001**

Political Parties	1997 Elections Results (%)	2001 Elections Results (%)	Volatility Results (%)
Socialist Party	50,03	41,4	
Democratic Party	25	36,9	
Other	24,97	22,5	

Total	100	100	11,64
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**Table 6: Electoral Volatility 2005**

Political Parties	2001 Elections Results (%)	2005 Elections Results (%)	Volatility Results (%)
Socialist Party + Alliance	41,4	39,4	
Democratic Party +Alliance	36,9	44,1	
Other	22,5	16,5	
Total	100	100	7,6

**Table 7: Electoral Volatility 2009**

Political Parties	2005 Elections Results (%)	2009 Elections Results (%)	Volatility Results (%)
Socialist Party	39,4	45,34	
Democratic Party	44,1	46,92	
Other	16,5	7,74	
Total	100	100	16,5

**Table 8: Electoral Volatility 2009**

Political Parties	2009 Elections Results (%)	2013 Elections Results (%)	Volatility Results (%)
Socialist Party	45,34	57,63	
Democratic Party	46,92	39,46	
Other	7,74	2,91	

Total

100

100

12,28