

Do electoral laws affect women's representation in parliament? The case of Albania

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Abstract

The importance of women representation in decision-making processes has long been a controversial topic in Albanian politic reality. Although women's participation in parliamentary level is seen by many scholars and studies crucial to improving the representative nature, accountability and quality of Albanian democracy, still Albanian parliament remain a long way from parity between women and men. The aim of this paper is to analyze how the changes of Albanian electoral legislation during 2001-2020 has impacted women's representation in Albanian Parliament. Specifically, it investigates whether the introduction of gender quotas and gender sensitive provisions in electoral law has influenced the increase of women elected representatives.

Comparing the data and results of six electoral processes in parliamentary level and the legal framework under which they are organized we demonstrate that there is a link between problems and gaps identified in Albanian electoral Code and the representation of women in parliament during the same period. Moreover, our analysis reveal that the political forces in Albania have demonstrated insufficient understanding and lack of acceptance of the gender equality concept and its advantages for society. For this reason, we suggest that both the inclusion of ranking orders of candidates in the electoral lists and sanctions of non-compliance for electoral subjects are of great importance in increase of women's representation in Parliament until the political culture and electoral subject's willingness change in favor of promotion of gender equality in political representation and gender balanced parliaments.

Keywords: gender equality, political representation, electoral reforms, gender quotas.

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