



## Equal Voices? Gender dynamics in parliamentary debates

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### ABSTRACT

The increasing participation of women in politics marks a meaningful step toward more inclusive and representative legislative institutions. This paper explores how Members of Parliament (MPs) in Albania engage in and influence legislative debates within parliamentary committees, with a particular focus on gendered experiences. It focuses on the internal dynamics of two key committees: the Committee on Economy and Finance and the Committee on Labour, Social Issues and Health. The paper draws insights from in-depth interviews with MPs from these committees. The participants represent different political parties, with varying positions within their parties and different numbers of terms served in Parliament. Special attention is given to the perspectives of women MPs, who reflect on their roles on how they navigate political debates, seek information, and respond to institutional and political constraints. Moreover, the paper analyses the increased presence of women in Parliament, particularly after the implementation of the gender quota. While some MPs note a shift toward greater attention to social policies following the gender quota, others highlighted ongoing challenges to achieve equal voice. The paper contributes to the limited but growing literature on gender and politics in Albania. The findings also inform broader academic discussions on women in politics and democratic development.

**Keywords:** women in politics, legislative narratives, policymaking, social policy

