

# **Development of Multiparty System in Lithuania, 1991-2011**

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**DECLARATION**

I declare that the dissertation entitled *DEVELPOMENT OF MULTIPARTY SYSTEM IN LITHUANIA, 1991-2011* submitted by me for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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*Dedicated*  
*To*  
*My Amma*

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CDS	Christian Democrats
CDU	Christian Democratic Union
CPJ	Lithuanian Party of Justice
CPSU	Communist Party of Soviet Union
DDVD	Democratic Labour and Unity Party
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
HU-LC	Homeland Union & Lithuanian Conservatives
JP	Justice Party
LCS	Liberal and Centre Union
LCU	Lithuanian Centre Union
LCU	Liberal Centre Union
LCDP	Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party
LDP	Lithuanian Democratic Party
LDLP	Lithuanian Labour Democratic Party
LFL	Lithuanian Federal League
LFU	Lithuanian Freedom Union
LLP	Lithuanian Labour Party
LLU	Lithuanian Liberal Union
LNP-YL	Lithuanian Nationalist Party – “Young Lithuanian”
LNU	Lithuanian National Union
LNSU	Lithuanian National Social Union
LPE	Lithuanian Party of the Economy
LLRA	Lithuanian polish Electoral Action
LPFR	Lithuanian Party of Forefathers Rebirth
LPP	Lithuanian People’s Party
LPPU	Lithuanian Peasant Populist Union
LRP	Lithuanian Reform Party
LRU	Lithuanian Russian Union
LSDP	Lithuanian Social Democratic Party
LSP	Lithuanian Socialist Party
LLU	Lithuanian liberal Union
LNU	Lithuanian Nationalist Union
LWP	Lithuanian Women’s Party
MCD	Modern Christian Democrats
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
ND-WP	New Democracy & Women’s Party

NPP	National Progress Party
NS-SL	New Union/Social liberals
NU	Nationalist Union
SDP	Socialist Democratic Party
SP	Socialist Party
NU-SL	New Union & Social Liberals
UDSM	United Democratic Resistance Movement
UN	United Nations
EP	European Parliament
TS- LKD	Homeland Union- Christian Democrats.
TPP	National Resurrection Party
LCDP	Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party
LNU	Lithuanian National Union
LRLS	Liberal Movement of Republic of Lithuania
TT	Order and Justice Party

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## **Definitions of Key Terms**

### **Christian Democracy**

Christian democracy is a political and ideological movement which advances a moderate and welfarist brand of conservatism. Christian democracy has been an important political movement in many parts of Europe in the post-Second World War period. The origins of Christian democracy lie in Catholic social theory. The chief threats to Christian democracy have come from the declining importance of religion as a source of political motivation (Heywood 2000: 47- 48).

### **Civil Society**

Civil Society is a political community and a society governed by law under the authority of a state. More commonly, civil society is distinguished from the state and is used to describe a realm of autonomous groups and associations, such as businesses, pressure groups, clubs, and families (Heywood 2000: 17).

### **Cleavages**

A Cleavage is defined as a cluster of conflicts, dividing the population. "It designates a division between groups within the society based on some more or less fixed attribute: one can have cleavages along the lines of class, religion, language, race or even conceivable gender. The patterns of social cleavages, their interrelationships, salience, number and nature, used to determine the battle lines of competitive politics and generally influence the stability and functioning of political system" (Shukland 2005:19).

### **Communism**

As a political principle, communism stands for the communal organization of social existence and the common or collective ownership of wealth. In simple meaning communism means abolition of private property and it follows the theory and principles of Marxism. As an ideological movement, communism was one of the most powerful political forces of the twentieth century. From the 1917 to 1991, communism presented the chief alternative to capitalism (Heywood 2000: 48- 50).

### **Conservatism**

Conservatism as a political attitude is defined by the desire to conserve and is reflected in a resistance to change. The central themes of conservative ideology are tradition, human imperfection, organic society, authority and property. Conservative ideas arose as a reaction against the growing pace of economic and social change, which was in many ways symbolized by the French Revolution (Heywood 2000: 52- 54).

### **Decruitment**

The efforts of party officials to discourage an individual from seeking a particular party nomination (Maisel and Brewer 2012: 59).

### **Democracy**

Democracy is an institutionalized system of rule to solve conflicts in society, in which a single constitutional power, a single institution, or a single actor cannot determine or control the results for political decisions (Ulrich 2006: 28).

### **Democratization**

The Concept of democratization is best understood under the wider umbrella concept of regime change. The regime change comprises the dissolution of the old and the establishment of the new regime. Basic structures, functions, legitimacies and patterns of integration of the old regime are replace (Ulrich 2006: 128).

### **Dominant Party System**

Dominant party system is different from one- party system. In this system one dominant party controls the electoral process and restrict the other parties, resulting in no other alternative for the people. Such a system may easily transform into a dictatorship (Sak and John 2009: 112).

### **Elections**

Elections are an important part of the democratic process which allows various political actors to compete over choices and issues (Maisel and Brewer 2012: 209).

### **Election campaign**

It is an orientation effort to persuade voters to choose one candidate over others competing for the same office (Maisel and Brewer 2012: 209).

### **Elite Parties**

Elite based parties are those whose principle organisational structures are minimal and based upon established elites within a specific geographic area. This party is institutionally weak and it is not more than the loose political platform of a group of leaders without a developed nation- wide organization (Diamond and Gunther 2001: 12; Vit and Kopecek 2010: 1).

### **Ethnicity**

Ethnicity is the loyalty towards a distinctive population, cultural group or territorial area. More commonly, ethnicity is understood as a form of cultural identity. An ethnic culture encompasses values, traditions and practices but, crucially, also gives a people a common identity and sense of distinctiveness, usually by focusing upon their origins and decent (Heywood 2000: 2226-227).

### **Ethnic Parties**

Ethnic based parties lack the elaborate organisational structure of mass based political parties. Their goals and strategies are narrow and one-sided largely aiming towards a particular ethnic community. They mobilise and seek votes from ethnic group only (Diamond and Gunther 2001: 22- 23).

**Franchise**

Franchise means right to vote. The 1992 constitution of Lithuania granted right to vote to all citizens who attained the age of eighteen (Constitution of Lithuania 1992).

**Glasnost (openness)**

Glasnost was the Soviet policy permitting open discussion of political and social issues. Under Glasnost, people could criticize the government system and policies without being punished (O'Connor 2003: 146- 148).

**Government**

Government is more commonly understood to refer the formal and institutional processes which operate at the national level o maintain order and facilitate collective action. The essential functions of government are these to make law (legislation), implement law (executive), and interpret law (adjudication) (Heywood 2000: 19).

**Ideology**

An ideology is basically a philosophy or set of principles that underlies a political programme.

**Left and Right**

Left and Right are terms that are used as a short hand method for describing political ideas and beliefs, summarizing the ideological positions of politicians, political parties and movements. Both Left and Right have different attitudes towards the economy and the role of state; Left- wing views support intervention and collectivism, right- wing favour the market economy and individualism (Heywood 2000: 27).

**Legitimacy**

Acceptance of the rights of the public officials to hold office and to promulgate policies because of which they were chosen (Maisel and Brewer 2012: 4).

### **Leninist Parties**

Political parties with Leninist ideology aimed at implementing change through revolutionary means. But decision making in these parties are highly centralised and authoritarian. The significant characteristics of Leninist parties are the selective recruitment process, intensive training of the members and strict internal discipline ( Diamond and Gunther 2001: 18).

### **Majority representation**

It is the system by which one office, contested by two or more candidates is won by the single candidate who collects the most votes (Maisel and Brewer 2012: 197).

### **Mass Parties**

A mass based party concentrates on building strong party institution with a large membership, a territorial- broad organizational structure, a functioning party apparatus and cultivation of long- term voter alignments (Vit and Kopecek 2010: 1).

### **Membership Base of Party**

Membership base is one of the essential characteristic of a political party. Generally parties try to build large and broad- based membership. Membership is vital for the internal functioning of a political party. Parties recruit people who are committed to its ideology and principles and who will be able to participate in party governance, policy foundation and campaigning (Cross 1962: 57).

### **Multiparty System**

A multi- party system is a system in which three or more political parties have the capacity to gain control of government. Multi-party system is one where no party can guarantee an absolute majority. A government must then be formed through coalitions between parties, each of which wants to protect its own interests (Onkvisit and Shaw 2009: 112, Sartori 1976: 164).

### **New Left**

The New Left is a broad term that refers to a collection of thinkers and intellectual movements that sought to revitalize socialist thought by developing a radical critique of advanced industrial society. The New Left rejected both old left alternatives; soviet style state socialism and de-radicalized Western social democracy (Heywood 2000: 67).

### **New Right**

The New Right is an ideological tradition within conservatism that advances a blend of market individualism and social or state authoritarianism (Heywood 2000: 68).

### **Non- patrician Elections**

Elections those are determined without reference to a candidate's party affiliation (Maisel and Brewer 2012: 140).

### **Opposition**

In its political sense opposition means, the political parties outside the government are generally viewed as opposition parties, the largest of them sometimes being designate as the opposition. Opposition is a vital feature of liberal- democratic government. It ensures to strengthen democracy, improving the quality of public policy and protect freedom by serving as a formal check upon the government (Heywood 2000: 213- 214).

### **Organization Structure**

According to the law, political parties require certain organization structure, such as a constitution, offices and a network of local branches. Political parties have different types of organizational structure within the law (Diamond and Gunther 2001: 23).

### **Party in the Electorate**

Party in the electorate means, the political party in the polls seeking public support to win the election (Maisel and Brewer 2012: 11).

### **Party Factions**

Faction means division within the political parties. An ideological difference in the parties leads to the fragmentation. During the 1990s Sajudis fragmented on the issue of independence (Maisel and Brewer 2012: 28).

### **Party in Government**

Representatives of a political party are serving in an official capacity in the government (Maisel and Brewer 2012: 11).

### **Party Manifesto**

It is the statement of policies of a national political party. Political parties are main brokers intermediating between society and politics. In this brokerage process, party manifestos play an important role. When elections are called, parties draft a program, a list of policy preferences and present this list to the electorate. When they got enough support from the electorate they may enter government start implementing their party manifesto (Walgrave and Nuytemans 2009: 191).

### **Party Organization**

The formal structure of a political party's professional and volunteer workers (Maisel and Brewer 2012: 11).

### **Party Reform**

Party reform refers to the attempts to change the rules and principles of the political parties in order to make them more democratic and responsive towards the citizens. Lithuanian Communist Party was changed its name, ideology and came to power in 1992 (Maisel and Brewer 2012: 56).

### **Party Systems**

Electoral arrangements in which two or more parties compete for support of the electorate and control of the government and take each other into account as they set various electoral and governing strategies (Maisel and Brewer 2012: 15).

### **Party System Institutionalization**

It is concerned with the degree of consolidation, regularity, predictability, and 'systemness' of party politics. An institutionalized party system, then, is one

in which actors develop expectations and behavior based on the premise that the fundamental contours and rules of party competition and behavior will prevail into the foreseeable future. In an institutionalized party system, there is stability in which the main parties are and how they behave (Mainwaring and Torcal 2006: 206).

### **Perestroika (restructuring)**

Perestroika was a policy of restructuring or reforming the economic and political system, practiced in the Soviet Union under the leadership of Gorbachev. Its foremost objective was to restructure the soviet economy and bureaucracy. But it eventually led to the end of central planning in the economy (O'Connor 2003: 148- 149).

### **Political Culture**

Political culture being the general pattern of orientations to political objects such as parties, government and the constitution, expressed in beliefs, symbols and values. Political culture differs from public opinion in that it is fashioned out of long- term values rather than simply people's reactions to specific issues and problems (Heywood 2000: 216).

### **Political Modernization**

Political modernization is a manifestation of modernization in the sphere of politics. It is the political change and international competition since the industrial revolution of the eighteenth century. Political modernization is a long- standing historical process, includes the modernization of political behaviour, political development, political transition, international political interaction, and the change of international political status, structure, institutions, concepts and democratization (He 2012: 498).

### **Political Party**

A political party shall be a public legal person that its own name, has been established pursuant to this Law, and whose purpose is to meet the political interests of its members, assist in expressing the political will of the citizens



of the Republic of Lithuania in enforcing State power and the right to self-government (Lithuanian Law on Parties: 2004).

### **Political System**

It is a set of interrelated institutions that links people with governments (Maisel and Brewer 2012: 189).

### **Popular Support**

It is the public approval for the officials running the government (Maisel and Brewer 2012: 7).

### **Pressure Group**

A pressure group or interest group is an organized association which aims to influence the policies or actions of government. Pressure groups differ from political parties in that they seek to exert influence from outside, rather than to win or exercise government power (Heywood 2000: 222- 223).

### **Proportional Representation**

The system by which legislative seats are awarded to a party in proportion to the votes that party wins in an election (Maisel and Brewer 2012: 197).

### **Recruitment**

Party officials will recruit the candidates to run for various positions in the party (Maisel and Brewer 2012: 58).

### **Referendum**

A referendum is a vote in which the electorate can express a view on a particular issue of public policy. It differs from an election. Unlike elections referendums provide the public with a way of expressing their views about specific issues. It strengthens democracy by allowing the public to speak for themselves. They promote political participation, thus helping to create a more engaged and better- educated and informed electorate (Heywood 2000: 227- 228).

### **Sajudis**

Sajudis was a new mass organization called the Lithuanian movement for restructuring, later known simply as Sajudis (1988). At the beginning, Sajudis was a movement that united various strata of Lithuanian society, including nationalists, liberal intellectual and communist reformers. After the declaration of independence Sajudis movement gave birth to several political parties. In fact, multi party system was started with the disintegration of Sajudis (O'Connor 2003: 150).

### **Singing Revolution**

Singing revolution is a term used for the developments between 1987 and 1991 that led to the restoration of the independence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The term was coined by an Estonian activist and artist Heinz Valk. Through the songs the Baltic people opposed and criticized the Soviet dictatorship (O'Connor 2003: 146).

### **Single Party**

In single party system political power is monopolized by single party. There are may be several parties, but one party is so dominant. There is slightest scope for the other political parties to get into power (Onkvisit and Shaw 2009: 112).

### **Third Parties**

Political parties that are enter into electoral competition without having winning chances. Sometimes these parties do affect the outcome of the contest between the two major parties (Maisel and Brewer 2012: 14).

### **Two Party System**

Two party system is a system in which two major political parties compete for control of the government. There can be other parties existing but they have no political importance (Janda, et al 2009: 194; Duverger 1962: 207).

### **Volatility**

The phenomenon of volatility occurs when voters switch their votes between existing parties. This type of volatility is considered o be a healthy component

of representative democracy and essentially reallocates power. The second type of volatility caused by the entry and exists of parties from the political system (Powell and Tucker 2010: 1- 2).

### **Ultranationalist Parties**

Ultranationalist parties are particularly fascist or neo-fascist and are organised under the influence of a personality. Hitler's Nazi party and Mussolini's fascist party are perfect examples of ultranationalist parties (Gunther and Diamond 2001: 20- 21).

## **Chapter One**

### **Role of Multi- Party System and Political Parties in**

#### **Democracy: A Theoretical Framework**

In 1991 Lithuania regained its independence from the former Soviet Union. Immediately after independence Lithuania began its political transition from authoritarianism to parliamentary democracy by incorporating the norms and values of established western democracies. Lithuania has introduced political institutions required for a democracy such as constitution, parliament, regular competitive elections, party system and an organised legal system. It adopted its present constitution on 25 October 1992. Parliamentary form of government has been introduced. A unicameral legislature (*Seimas*) consisting of 141 members of which seventy one are elected from constituencies by majority votes and seventy by proportional representation has been introduced. The president is directly elected for a period of five years and the prime minister and other ministers are appointed by president for a four year term subject to the approval of the parliament (*Seimas*). In the democratization process in Lithuania political parties play a significant role as potential actors in the establishment and consolidation of new democratic regime. The political parties are required to obtain a certain threshold for getting seats to contest elections. Under the electoral law of June 1996, the threshold for obtaining proportional seats was made five per cent (and previous concessions on the threshold rule for minority parties were abolished). According to this law voters became entitled to record a preference for individual candidates on party lists. Hence political parties have a great role in getting elected

legitimate representatives of people. This study analyses the development of multiparty system and political parties in Lithuania from 1991 to 2011 in the broader context of post-communist democratization and democracy consolidation.

In order to examine the development of political parties and multiparty system in Lithuania, the study relies on a broader theoretical framework drawing from various relevant studies on role, functions and performance of political parties in democracies and in the process of contemporary democratization. The theoretical framework of the multi-party system and political parties is attempted on the basis of drawing from scholarly insights contributed by various scholars (Duverger 1954; Downs 1957; Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Epstein 1967; Huntington 1968; Dahl 1971; Sartori 1976; Panebianco 1988; Mair, 1990; Lewis and Gordon 2003; Meleshevich 2007; Janda 2009).

### **Understanding the Concept of Political Party**

The definition of political party or multi-party system encompasses numerous aspects. There is no all agreed definition available on political party. Several authors have studied political parties and multi-party system and conceptualized party in various ways.

By and large, political parties are coalitions of the people organized formally to recruit, nominate, and elect candidates for public office. They are also instrumental in running the government, creating and implementing shared political goals through the election of officials to the executive and legislative branches of government, and being stability to the political system (Maisel and Brewer 2012: 189). Sartori (1976: 64) defined political parties as “organizations that contest political election and seek governmental office”. Diamond and Gunther (2001: 20) defined parties on the basis of their functions. According to the authors, in established democracies political parties perform the function of recruitment of candidates for public office, mobilization of electoral support, the structuring of policy agendas, societal representation, forming and sustaining of government, bring together sectional interests, social integration and stabilize political process (Diamond and

Gunther 2001: 20). As per Downs's view parties are "teams of men" seeking to maximize their electoral support for the purpose of controlling government (Downs 1957: 25). According to Mac Iver "a political party is an association organized to support of some principles of policy, which by constitutional means, it endeavours to make the determinant of government" (quoted in Kumari 2009: 262). Epstein (1967: 9) argues "party means any group, however loosely organized, seeking to elect governmental office holders under a given label. Political party is an organization that sponsors candidates for political office under the organizations name and ideology (Junda. et al 2009: 189). A political party can be defined as an organized group that nominates candidate and contest elections in order to influence the policy and personnel of government (Dyck 2012: 206). According to Lithuanian Law on Political Parties "a political party shall be a public legal person that its own name, has been established pursuant to this Law, and whose purpose is to meet the political interests of its members, assist in expressing the political will of the citizens of the Republic of Lithuania in enforcing State power and the right to self-government" (Republic of Lithuania 2004). From the above definitions it could be understood that political parties are organizations of likeminded people. They contest for elections seeking public office. Political parties organise government and influence policy making. Political party should be a legally accepted and legitimate organization as per the prevailing law. They must have common political objective and programme. In this way the activities of political parties are absolutely essential for proper functioning of a representative democracy. As defined by Downs a democracy is a system that demonstrates the following characteristic features: "(a) Two or more parties compete in periodic elections for control of the governing apparatus; (b) the party (or coalition of parties) winning a majority of votes gains control of the governing apparatus until the next election; (c) losing parties never attempt to prevent winners from taking office, nor do winners use powers to vitiate the ability of losers to compete in the next election and (d) all sane , law abiding adults, who are governed, are citizens, and every citizen has one and only vote in each election" (1957: 1937). In a democratic system political

parties has several important functions and they play very important role in the process of democratization in transition countries.

### **Role and Functions of Political Parties in Democracy**

The emergence of multi-party system and political parties are positive indicators of healthy process of democratic transition. Modern representative democracy cannot operate without political parties. In democratic societies, people who share similar views and goals often join together to form political parties. They form parties to strengthen their ability and also to influence the decision making in the state. The main idea behind founding a political party is to promote a common set of values (ideology) and beliefs and develop a memorandum which influences others on the basis of collective beliefs and values. Founders of parties try to reach out to as many groups as possible. For example, several parties have been established in order to take up the issues related to various groups such as women, labour, farmers, youth and business groups. In order to remain untainted and successful especially during elections parties promote their message, policies and agenda. Parties grow and obtain power when they build alliances with other groups by linking their member's interests in order to widen more universal values. Parties provide ideas, structures, concepts and instruments of liberty, democracy, market economy, social justice, self determination and peaceful co-existence (Thesing 1995: 10).

Parties contribute to democratic government through the functions they perform for the political system. According to Janda, four of the most important party functions are nominating candidates for election of public office, structuring the voting choice in elections, proposing alternative programs and coordinating with the government officials (Janda. et al. 2009: 190). The most essential functions of parties demonstrate are their societal position as an intermediary between the rulers and ruled or the society and the state. According to Gunther and Diamond (2001: 6) parties fulfil seven functions such as candidate nomination, electoral mobilization, issue structuring, represent various social groups, interest aggregation, performing and sustaining governments and social integration role. In this sense parties fulfil crucial functions such as developing policies and programmes, pick up

demands from society and bundle them into packages, recruiting and selecting people for government and legislative office and lastly parties control government depending on whether they are in government or opposition. It is necessary to identify the various functions of political parties; all parties do not perform similar functions. In non-democratic regimes parties control the economy and the lives of individual citizens. Political parties perform a number of functions in any political system. Some functions will be given here to explore their contribution to society. They serve as instruments of political education, interest articulation, political mobilization and political recruitment (Gunther and Diamond 2001: 6-9).

Parties identify the needs and concerns of the people by interacting with the public at different levels of society. They bring people together who have similar political philosophies and empower people through elected representatives (Matteo 2011: 20-21). Parties recruit talented individuals to become party candidates. In this way parties help not only to ensure a minimum level of equality among candidates who run for office but also to raise the quality of these candidates (Janda. et al. 2009: 190). Political parties are not only electoral, they are movements of people with similar values who sought by grouping together to use the political system to bring about social change in line with their values. For example in almost all the third world countries (Indian congress party and Lithuanian Sajudis, etc.) political parties were born and developed from the nationalist movements. Moreover parties provide people with important political information; they educate, inform and influence the republic. Parties' recruit people and train as good politicians (Dyck 2012: 206). They provide various types of political rights to the citizens, such as right to equality, right to vote, right to contest for any public office, right to assembly, right to freedom of speech and expression, and equal protection from the law. Political parties launch certain issues and discourses into civil society, providing the public with the possibility to discuss matters and form opinions. Since the word democracy derives from the word *demos* meaning the people, as it must involve the participation of the people. People should take part in the societal decisions which affect their lives directly or indirectly. There should be a possibility of government by the people and an

idea that the people can collectively manage their societies (Gunther and Diamond 2001: 6- 9). Practically in a large society individuals cannot take part in the decision making. Decision-making lies in the hands of the representatives who are said to decide and act on behalf of the people. If parties are not appropriately connected to society, they will remain distant from voters' concerns (Matteo 2011: 26).

The fundamental role of political parties in almost all democratic states is to motivate people to go to elections and participate in the electoral process. Elections are very important because they provide the people the freedom to actively participate in electing their representatives (Trent and Priedenberg 2000: 73). Political parties also help democratic government by structuring the voting choice. This is ensured by different kinds of mobilization. This includes an active campaigning in order to get votes. Moreover parties try to mobilize citizens by involving them in the campaign and as well as participating in other aspects of the democratic process. The ability of established parties to mobilize their supporters has the effect of discouraging no-party candidates from running for office and discouraging new parties from forming (Janda. et al 2009: 191). In any given election, there may be hundreds of candidates. It is extremely difficult for a voter to judge the individual record and platform of every eligible candidate. Party identification allows a voter to make an informed choice without searching every detail of a campaign. Parties also help voters to choose candidates by proposing alternative programs. Even if voters know nothing about the candidates of the party, they can vote rationally for the favour program (Janda. et al. 2009: 191).

Since democracy is based on free and fair election mechanism, adult franchise, participation of people in decision making, freedom of all parties to take part in election is one of the most important features of democracy. In order to maintain democracy there should be more than one or multiple parties. It reflects public opinion and mass participation in decision making. Elections can occur without democracy, but democracy cannot endure without elections (Thompson 2002: 1). The existence of multi-party and elections broadens the concept of democracy.



Political parties have also been the instruments for inspiring voters. They organize citizens around ideological and policy platforms, establish a basis for voters to choose their representatives, and collectively represent diverse interests of the people. Traditionally, people get involved in public life via political parties. They support candidates and parties that reflect their views and interests. People give various reasons for their support to specific parties. Occasionally they follow family history to support parties; if parents voted for a particular party then the whole family will tend to vote for the same party. In some instances citizens will support a party on the basis of political, economic, and social principles with regard to the public life. Parties organize themselves; determine their own process for membership, collective decision-making, platforms, candidates and collective electoral action. One of the unusual functions of the parties in party democracies is to make politics more accessible for citizens. Voters are provided with valuable information about specific candidates' policy concerns through media. These are the strategies to attract the media attention for campaigning; creating a city or state, negotiating with world leaders, attacking the opponents and calling for change (Trent, and Priedenberg 2000: 100-106). The party labels also provide key information for the electorate. The political culture among voters is also very important for the success of a party system. In short, though spreading their policies and ideology to the public political parties identify and recruit candidates to participate in elections and win the elections. By winning elections, a party policy can be put into practice (Trent and Priedenberg 2000: 100-106).

The final level of analysis involves the role that parties play in managing and structuring the affairs of government. Parties are crucial to the operation of government, once the election is over (Dyck 2012: 206). Parties provide the structure and organization to the government. Political parties play a significant role as the intermediate between citizens and government institutions in the internal political environment of the country. Party organizations also help to coordinate the action of public officials (Janda. et al 2009: 191). A party represents a general view about the relationship between the government and society. Parties are the central intermediate structures

between society and government (Sartori 1976: 170). Parties formulate and develop policies for the governing of the state. They are more effective when they are founded on a set of ideas for governance. In contemporary democracies, it is the responsibility of a single political party or a coalition of parties to organize enough elected representatives to form a government. Political parties are the prime actors in this process, and that the formation of a coalition is a partisan activity. Parties provide the government as well as the opposition. The party or parties, who win a majority of seats in the lower house that is the House of Representatives, form a government. The party or parties which win the second largest number of seats becomes the opposition (Dyck 2012: 206).

Although the political activities of parties are often focused in the legislative and executive branches of government, another important role of parties is to establish and maintain a political presence within the government bureaucracy. A stable party usually accounts for a stable government. Bearing all this into mind the functions that political parties perform contribute to both the democratization process and good governance. Political parties have a responsibility to analyse the laws and further implement it by an elected government body. This process will strengthen a party by attracting public input and support further providing strong leadership (Dyck 2012: 206). Parties are ultimately responsible for the structure of the machinery of government. The organization of the Public Service and statutory authorities lies in the hands of the government of the day. In practice, parties can make appointments to the public sector from the ranks of their members and supporters (Dyck 2012: 206).

When parties fail to be elected to form the government, they form the opposition. Opposition parties keep government accountable. The role of the opposition is to criticise government policy and prevent mismanagement of power. This role is essential for ensuring good governance and protecting the rights of citizens. Such opposition parties ultimately provide an organized alternative for the voters to support in the next election if they are not satisfied with the incumbent government performance (Dyck 2012: 207).

Political parties are very essential for state building and establishment of democratic institutions. In the process of establishment of constitution, electoral institutions and judicial system political parties play a significant role. Parties played a significant role in the post-communist states. After the breakdown of communism and the Soviet Union, majority of the new European democracies had to engage in a process of state and nation building (Ole and Johannsen 1996: 12). In the period of transition, parties are very important to adopt democratic principles and market economy in the new independent states. Without a well-developed institutional capacity as well as with a domestic instability and irregularity, states remain weak and worried with internal problems and unable to pursue efficient international policies (Ole and Johannsen 1996: 12).

### **Characteristics of Political Parties**

Political parties hold several distinctive features. Ideology is a significant feature of the political party. Ideology helps to entice and mobilise the masses. It is the very spirit of the political party which decides its actions. They are model of multifaceted political ideas presented in an understandable structure that inspires individuals to proceed to accomplish certain goals (Gitelson and Dubnick 2001:130). Based on ideology, political parties develop policies on how they believe the country should be governed. Parties can be grouped under a few general labels according to their places on the political and ideological spectrum such as left, right, centrists, radical, conservatives, religious, etc.

Political manifesto is another important aspect of political parties. Since political parties act as agents in connecting citizen's preferences with government policies and the main linkage between the society and politics, party manifestos play a very important role (Nuytemans and Walgrave 2009: 191). The manifesto is a statement of the goals and principles of the party. It is a formal document which puts forward the party's policies, aims, agenda and many more. When elections are called, parties raft a program with a list of policy preferences which will be further presented to the electorate. After gaining a considerable amount of support the party is allowed to enter the

government and begin implementing their party manifesto (Nuytemans and Walgrave 2009: 191). Party promises to implement this manifesto if the party is voted into power. In modern times the term manifesto means an election manifesto (Karl, Marx 1998: 2). The manifesto is also called as the party platforms. It explores the measures which the party proposes to take in order to improve public service such as health, education, transportation, trade, environment and technology. However, a party's ability and the efficiency of its policies can only be fully tested when it forms the government and attempts to implement its policies and programmes effectively. Party programmes are the only authoritative policy statement made on behalf of the whole party (Nuytemans and Walgrave 2009: 193). Party manifestos are implemented because they influence the political agenda and steer policy situation towards certain issues. As circumstances change- new demands, new issues, new popular preferences, and new challenges- party manifestos are expected to follow and change as well (Nuytemans and Walgrave 2009: 191).

Organisational structure forms the foundation of the political party. Political parties are usually required by law to have certain organization structures, such as a constitution, officers and local branches of parties. The legal requirements vary from country to country; and different political parties have different organizational structures. The underlying purpose of the organizational structure of any political party is to enable the party to develop standard policies, broaden its support and campaign efficiently in elections. It is in this background that the political parties require an organizational structure, which can be used by the members to run the parties through choosing their leaders and members. In a broader sense the organisational structure determines the party policies. As such, ethnic political parties have an extremely low level of ideological influence and it leads to lack of highly developed organizational structure (Diamond and Gunther 2001: 23). The elite-based parties are those whose principal organizational structure are minimal and based upon established elites within a specific geographic area (Ibid: 23).

Political parties must have a constitution based on which it functions. The constitution is the party's fundamental law. It sets out the values and operating procedures of the party, specifies the rights and tasks of members and officers and lays down the rules for the internal governance of the party. The constitution should be accurate with regard to the party's leadership structures, the rights and powers of the leaders and members, the nomination and election procedure.

The institutionalization of political parties is considered to be highly important for democratic development and consolidation. (Randal and Svasand 2002: 24). According to Huntington "Institutionalization is the process by which organizations and procedures acquire value and stability (quoted in Randal and Svasand 2002: 10). In contemporary democracies, parties are usually regarded as vital political institutions (Biezen 2003: 4). In order to stabilize democracy and improve the quality of democratic process, it is imperative to institutionalize measures that would effectively develop the functioning of the political parties. Political institutionalization is generally seen as the most important and necessary factor in the consolidation of democracy (Biezen 2003: 4). The degree of party's institutionalization depends significantly on how the party was founded, but also on its genetic model and on the party-building pattern during the institutionalization process.

Institutionalization of political organizations as its progress in four dimensions: roots in society, level of organization, self-sufficiency, and consistency. Consequently party institutionalization is a process in which individual parties that participate in elections experience an increase in organizational stability and value. Political institutions affect party behaviour in two different ways, direct and indirect. In the direct way parties, regardless of their institutional characteristics, face different incentive in accordance with the institutional setting. Indirect influences can be identified through factors such as intra-party democracy, recruitment patterns and leadership accountability. Electoral, legislative and government institutions are the institutions that control political parties. In the institutionalization process political parties have to face distinctive challenges such as political

competition, finance dependency on individual leaders, expensive elections and lastly the absence of strong ideological agendas. Parties are organizations that shall develop into institutions through institutionalization (Strom 1990: 579).

Membership is another indispensable characteristic of political parties. It is the foundation of any political party further determining its existence. Number of members influences the smooth performance as well as the strong base of any political party. Generally political parties try to build large and broad-based membership. Parties make large membership in terms of age, gender, education, occupation, social class, ethnicities, region etc. The larger membership parties are more successful and will have additional chances to win the elections. If the party wishes to control the society to a large extent, it will require a mass membership. All party members must pay a membership fee; keep informed of party activity and attend a party meeting in order to participate in national politics (Cross 1962: 57). Pluralist parties seek to win elections and their vote- mobilization strategy relies heavily on the development and activation of a mass membership base (Diamond and Gunther 2001: 17). In addition, the membership base is vital for the internal functioning of a political party. A political party recruits people who are committed to its ideology and principles and who will be able to participate in party governance, policy formation and campaigning. Among the members of the party leaders are elected. One of the main reasons for the development of mass membership in the party is to have a stable income in the form of the membership subscription (Katz and Mair 1994: 145). Hence, the membership base of a political party is also an important aspect of citizen's participation in national policies and the future of a political party.

Finance is essential factor for the regular activities and electoral campaign expenditure of political parties in modern democracies. It is essentially necessary for any party to stay economically resilient in order to compete in the political forum. There are two major sources of funding for parties: public and private funding. According to Ware (1987: 18) there are seven types of funding facilities to the parties such as candidate expenditure, patron, interest group, and payment of officials from their salaries, party

capital, mass-membership, and state funding of parties. Parties in contemporary democracies need appropriate funding facilities in order to carry out their core functions and activities. Epstein suggested two ways of finance to parties: (1) to obtain large sums from a few wealthy contributors and (2) to collect small sums in the form of regular dues, from the members. The first method followed by business or industrial class parties and second method by socialist working class parties (Epstein 2000: 242).

The most important traditional and private sources for a political party are membership fee, income from property, revenue from the party activities such as sale of newspapers or other party publications. In most non-communist regimes, including liberal democracies, parties are regarded as private organizations. Private donations to parties are very significant sources of money for party activities. Donations from interest groups, organizations and trade unions are crucial for party activities. In Europe, organizational links have been very strong between labour parties and associated trade union movements. But through public laws states can restrict private financing activities (Ware 1987: 19-21).

Public finance for political parties is a recent trend in European democracies. Public subsidies are primary sources for political parties and organizations. The state should provide finance to parties in order to prevent dependence on private finance and also to restrict the flow of illegal money. State should provide finance to free broadcasting and media, elections, campaign and expenditure. Public subsidies create equal competition limiting the role of private money. Federal republic of Germany was among the first democracies in Western Europe to grant public financing to national parties (Ware 1987: 19-21).

### **Typology of Parties**

Sartori's framework of typology parties is helpful to analyse the how a party system functions. Considering political parties are important link between society and the political system, Sartori proposes a typology of parties combining fragmentation (a number of parties) and polarization (with the extent of ideological distance between the parties in a party system). He

divides party systems as two party systems and fragmented. Two party systems are governed by two parties; each is sufficiently strong to govern alone. Fragmented system comprises of more than five parties and is highly polarized parties. In two party systems each side demonstrate its political position in an attempt to win a majority of parliamentary seats in general elections. Therefore, it will result in stable and effective forms of parliamentary government. In polarized system two conditions: the presence of anti-system parties and the existence of a bilateral opposition which are mutually exclusive, determine the polarized pluralist system. Sartori notes that anti-party “undermines the legitimacy of the regime it opposes” (Sartori 1976).

Some parties are organizationally thin while others are large and complex. Some parties are entirely formed by a particular ethnic, religious or socio-economic group, while others are heterogeneous or promiscuously eclectic. On the one hand, few political parties are clearly pragmatic with a strong ideological base whereas, on the other, few parties are unclear and unprincipled with regard to their ideological association. There are parties which are strongly committed towards securing particular social objective while others merely want to win elections (Gunther and Diamond 2001: 9).

Gunther and Diamond identified fifteen types of political parties like elite based parties, mass-based parties, ethnicity based parties, electoralist parties and movement parties. These parties are divided into categories like pluralistic versus proto-hegemonic parties or into sub-categories based on their level of commitment towards an ideology or programme (Gunther and Diamond 2001: 9). The following table shows typology of parties classified by Gunther and Diamond.

**Table: 1**  
**Types of Parties**

	Pluralistic	Proto-hegemony
Elite parties	Local notable Clientelistic	
Mass based parties Ideological/socialist Ideological/nationalist Religious	Class-mass Pluralist nationalist Denominational mass	Leninist Ultranationalist Religious fundamentalist
Ethnic based parties	Ethnic congress	



Electoralist parties	Catch-all Programmatic personalistic	
Movement parties	Left- libertarian Post-industrial extreme right	

Source: (Gunther and Diamond 2001: 9).

Elite based parties are those whose principle organisational structures are minimal and based upon established elites within a specific geographic area (Gunther and Diamond 2001: 12). Elite party is institutionally weak and it is not more than the loose political platform of a group of leaders without a developed nation- wide organization (Vit and Kopecek 2010: 1). A mass based party concentrates on building strong party institution with a large membership, a territorial- broad organizational structure, a functioning party apparatus and cultivation of long- term voter alignments (Vit and Kopecek 2010: 1). Political parties with Leninist ideology aimed at implementing change through revolutionary means. But decision making in these parties are highly centralised and authoritarian (Gunther and Diamond 2001: 18).

Unlike the elite parties the pluralist nationalist parties involved a mass based membership and extensive party organisation. It also associated with the ancillary secondary groups particularly the cultural organisations and trade unions (Gunther and Diamond 2001: 19). Ultrnationalist parties are particularly fascist or neo-fascist and are organised under the influence of a personality (Gunther and Diamond 2001: 20). In some respect they share various organisational and behavioural characteristics like Leninist parties particularly with regard to the selective recruitment process, intensive training of the members and strict internal discipline. Hitler's Nazi party and Mussolini's fascist party are perfect examples of ultrnationalist parties (Richard and Diamond 2001: 20- 21). Ethnic based parties lack the elaborate organisational structure of mass based political parties. Their goals and strategies are narrow and one-sided largely aiming towards a particular ethnic community. They mobilise and seek votes from ethnic group only (Richard and Diamond 2001: 22- 23). Prominent examples of the German Greens and Austrian Freedom movement make it clear that this kind of organisations must

be included in the typology of parties. These movements have been successful in electing members to the parliament. The movement parties comprises of two kinds: left-libertarian parties and post-industrial extreme right parties (Gunther and Diamond 2001: 29).

### **Classification of Party Systems**

Party systems can be classified depending on various factors such as history, size, population, geography, resources, foreign domination, liberation and popular choice. The analysis of party system would require a consideration of the number of parties, their strength, locations the ideological spectrum, the nature of their support, their organization and type of leadership (Mair 1990: 302-310). Party systems are characterized on two different axes. First they are distinguished by the number of parties competing. Second, they are distinguished by the intensity of competition (Meisal and Brewer 2012: 15). Almond classified party system as five types; totalitarian, authoritarian, dominant non- authoritarian, competitive two party and competitive multi-party (Almond 1960: 40).

Instead of party systems Sartori identified seven classes among the parties; these are one party, hegemonic party, predominant party, two parties, limited pluralism and extreme pluralism, and atomized (Sartori 1976: 125-129). Duverger explained party system on the basis of organization and membership. On the basis of organization, he distinguished four kinds of systems; these are cell, militia, caucus and the branch. The caucus is a closed group consisting of a small number of members who do not make an attempt to increase their members, while the branch is extensive tries to enrol members and to increase its total strength (Duverger 1954: 206- 208). Duveger made a further distinction between core and mass parties. The distinction is based on the number of members they have. Cadre parties are grouping of notabilities for the preparation of elections, conducting campaigns and maintain contact with the candidates. Mass parties actively seek dues-paying members so that they can spread the cost of election campaigning more widely. According to Blondel classification of party system is not only by the number of parties, but also by their relative strength and the apparent

dynamics of competition (Blondel 1986: 183). Mainwaring and Torcal (2006: 205) propose three criteria for identifying a party system, a system implies at least two parties, there must be some regularity in the distribution of electoral support, there must be continuity in the main components that form the system (institutionalization of parties) (quoted in Sanchez 2009: 489). Five major party systems can be identified: non-party, one party, two parties, dominant party and multi-party systems.

### **Non- Party System**

Non-party system is conceptualized by Sanchez that “if the identity of the top (two or three or four party vote-getters (regardless of their electoral ordering) is not the same across more than two elections, then that party universe is best described as a ‘non-system’”. According to the author at least three elections required to pass before a party universe can be labelled as ‘non-system’ (Sanchez 2009: 489). In a non-partisan system, no official political parties are allowed to exist in the state politics.

### **Single Party System**

In single party system political power is monopolized by single party. There are may be several parties, but one party is so dominant (Sak and John 2009: 112). Single party system is also known as non-competitive system. One party system produces the autocratic or dictatorial regime. One of the most common features of the one party state is that the position of the ruling party is guaranteed in a constitution and all forms of political opposition are banned by law. The ruling party controls all aspects of life within the state. The old Soviet Union is the best example for a one party state. Egypt has operated under single party rule for several decades (Sak and John 2009: 112). According to Sartori (1976: 18) there are two different ways in one party system. One is Hegemonic Party that permits the survival of other parties only as satellite or secondary parties. Second is Predominant Party system which allows one party to govern the country as long as it continues to win elections. This form of government is often used by countries in the early stages of the development of a true parliamentary system, because the ruling party holds support from the vast majority. The system is not necessarily a poor one,

especially when it can provide the stability and rapid growth. But when serious economic problems persist, citizens' disappointment and frustration may create an unpredictable situation. For example, Mexico was ruled since its revolution by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). Economic problems caused dissatisfaction with the PRI in the 1980s and the National Action Party (PAN), Mexico's main opposition party, began gaining power (Sak and John 2009: 112).

### **Two Party System**

Two party system is a system in which two major political parties compete for control of the government (Janda et al 2009: 194; Maxwell et al 2011: 107). There can be other parties existing (Duverger 1954: 207) but they have no political importance (Sak and John 2009: 112). It is also called as competitive party system. According to Sartori in a two-party system format when even the existence of third party does not prevent the two major parties from governing alone and when ever coalitions are unnecessary. Two- party system is by far the best known category and it's a relatively simple system (1976: 164). In a two party system most voters are so loyal to one or the other of the major parties that independent candidates or candidates from third party have little chance of winning office (Janda. et al. 2009: 194). This system presents the voter with a simple choice. USA, UK and New Zealand are having most obvious two-party political system (Sak and John 2009: 112). America is following two-party system with the Republicans and Democrats dominating the politics. In this system, one of the parties must obtain a sufficient working majority after an election and it must be in a position to be able to govern without the support from the other party. There are not many western nations with two-party competition (Epstein 2000:56).

The two party system have emerged either as the result or the reflection of the will of the electorate. Often the two parties represent key ideological divisions in society over the direction of policies between left and right, small government and activist government, liberalism and authoritarianism (Trapp 2009: 214). In this party system, the two parties generally have different philosophies resulting in a change in government

policies, when one party succeeds the other. In the USA the Republican Party is often viewed as representing business interests, where as Democrats Party is often viewed as representing labour interests as well as the poor and disaffected (Sak and John 2009: 112).

Governments in two- party system are more able to drive their policies through the legislature because they often have a clear majority of representatives. Consequently they can implement changes quickly and without compromise. This system tends to be less volatile and the legislators are very experienced. This results in better and more consistent policy and more effective scrutiny of the executive branch (Trapp 2009: 214).

### **Dominant Party System**

Dominant party system is different from one- party system. A party is quite capable within the political structure of a state, to become dominant to such an extent that victory at elections is considered a formality. In this system one dominant party controls the electoral process and restrict the other parties, resulting in no other alternative for the people (Onkvisit and Shaw 2009: 112). An era of a dominant party is also an era when opposition parties are in total disorder. The dominant party does not allow opposition. Cuba, Libya, North Korea and china are good examples of dominant party system. Such a system may easily transform into a dictatorship. The party is prepared to use force to maintain its power and eliminate the establishment and growth of other parties (Onkvisit and Shaw 2009: 112).

### **Multi - Party System**

A multi - party system is a system in which three or more political parties have the capacity to gain control of government. As the title suggests, this is a system where more than two parties have the possibility to influence the state's politics. The emergence of multiparty system will be a lengthy process (Lewis and Gordon 2003: 151). Multi-party system is also known as competitive and pluralistic party system. Party pluralism simply denotes the existence of more than one party. Multi-party system is one where no party can guarantee an absolute majority. Even though some parties may be large, their elected representatives fall short of a majority (Sak and John 2009: 112;

Sartori 1976: 164). A government must then be formed through coalitions between the various parties, each of which wants to protect its own interests. The longevity of the coalition depends on the cooperation of party partners. Usually, the coalition is continuously challenged by opposing groups (Sak and John 2009: 112; Trapp 2009: 214). Parliamentary majorities in multiparty system can shift suddenly. These systems are far less stable than two-party systems. Multi-party systems are also less fair to the electorate because after the election they tend to ignore campaign promises to voters and form policies that may be against the interests of voters (Trapp 2009: 214).

Compared to the two-party system, a multi-party system is better because it allows for more voices to be heard (Trapp 2009: 214). A two-party system greatly limits the number and diversity of candidates that can run in any given election. In a multi-party system, more viewpoints will be discussed; and will end up with a more well-rounded government. Party formation and the emergence of multiparty system seem to offer the best prospects for political development and progress towards democracy (Pridham and Vanhanen 2003: 151). In a multi-party system, existence of the social cleavages influences the organizational, electoral strategies and legitimacy of parties (Lipset and Rokkan 1967, Mair 2003). As Epstein (2000) explained competition among five or more political parties has earned a bad name because of the instability of governments (Epstein 2000: 72).

### **Political Parties in Post-Soviet States**

After the collapse of the dominant communist party regime, the mass based parties were established in almost all the post-soviet states. After the end of the communist rule in eastern and central Europe, parties played a major role in the change of political and ideological standpoint (Clark and Jovita 2008: 443; Daniel 2010: 807- 809). Although various theoretical approaches to analyse the development of party system in post-soviet states, given the Soviet legacy, a conceptual problem generally emerged is whether these frameworks are adequate to examine post-Soviet and Baltic scenario of party development and multi-party systems. Anatoly Kulik and Susanna Pshizova have addressed this issue to a certain extent. These authors argue “the

multidimensionality of the context that shapes emerging political parties and impacts the development of party politics in post- communist transition is widely recognized. However, a set of meaningful internal and external contextual variables that should be taken into consideration- its values, weighs, and inter- reliance in affecting the development of party politics- varies from country to country even in the same region. Moreover, if at all in the initial phase of transformation such variables as the political will of elites, the personalities of politicians and the procedural characteristics of usually play a leading role, overtime structural factors become more significant. Besides, the qualitative nature of most variables, like the soviet legacy that has dominated informal institutions at the level of both government and mass behaviour in most republics, makes it hard to identify and almost impossible to measure their impact” (Kulik and Pshizova 2005: 8). In order to address this difficulty Kulik and Pshizova suggest looking into what dimensions are silent in a particular national context and how they shape electoral and mobilization activities of parties, their relation with civil society, their transactions in the party system efficiency in the legislature, and in the government as well (ibid). Apart from these, Kulik and Pshizovas framework focused on the following issues as well.

- 1) The impact of the cultural and socio- economic legacy of pre-communist development and that of communist rule on the renaissance and the institutionalization of political parties.
- 2) The way the new regime came to power after the collapse of communist rule and the effect of the constituting elections.
- 3) The constitutional design and legal terms, including the electoral system, in which parties emerge and operate.
- 4) Voter’s attitude towards state institutions, parties and politics, as well as their voting behaviour.
- 5) Socio- economic dynamics, cleavages in the society, and parties’ response to them.
- 6) The base of part competition, campaign techniques and strategies, dynamics of electoral support and output of parties.
- 7) The institutionalization, internal organization and sources of financing of political parties.

- 8) Personalities of top politicians, informal rules of doing politics
- 9) Impact of electronic mass media and electoral technologies on the electoral success of parties
- 10) The impact of external actors in domestic party politics
- 11) The functions of parties perform in post Soviet politics and civil society
- 12) Trend in the development of party politics and prospects for party democracy consolidation in transforming the Newly Independent States (Kulik 2005: 8-9).

According to Klausron three types of party buildings were theoretically viable in Eastern Europe: Redevelopment of old pre- socialist party system, continuity of the old national front system and creation of a new party system (Klausron 1998: 4). Parties were crucial for the transformation of the government from authoritarian regime to democratic regime. In all post-soviet states authoritarian leaders established parties and controlled the party system. Parties are created by groups of ruling elite or business groups to serve as a tool of both electoral mobilization and elite structuring. At present most post- soviet parliaments consist of one party majority or bloc of pro-presidential forces. In almost all post-communist countries various types of party families emerged on the basis of their ideology and principles (Clark and Jovita 2008: 443). According to Paul Lewis, there are seven different types of families existed in eastern European politics i.e. Communist successors, Social democrats, Liberals (and market- oriented communists), Ethnic groups, Agrarians, Christian democrats/ traditional conservatives and Nationalists (Lewis 2008: 56).

In most post-soviet states political parties and political institutions are inefficient. Therefore factors such as civil wars and coloured revolutions have become a means to bring about a change in leadership or political system. Political parties in these states failed to bring any change in the leadership. The level of electoral competition has been low in most of the post-soviet states. The post- soviet party system has not been fully formed yet; they have a long and winding way to go. During the transition period communist parties in post-communist states have developed distinct institutional frame works and they have renamed the parties and ideologies to survive in new democratic nations (Lee 2011: 1701, Clrak and Jovita 2008: 443).



**Table: 2**

**Successor Communist Parties in Post Communist States**

Country	Party
Estonia	Estonian Social Democratic Labour Party (ESDLP)
Latvia	Latvian Socialist Party (LSP)
Lithuania	Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party (LDLP)
Russian Federation	Communist party of the Russian Republic (LPRF)

Sources: (Grzymala-Busse 2002; Lee 2011)

The post-communist parties adopted new manifestos and almost all parties detached their ties with the communist party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party is the best example of communist successor parties (Lee 2011: 1700- 1701). The LDLP government ruled Lithuania from 1992 to 1996 (Clark and Jovita 2008: 443). In all the post-soviet countries, the successor socialist parties have managed to gain support from the old middle class people. Political parties and multiparty system are core institutions for institutionalization and democratization (Meleshevich 2007: 19). They are essential to make distinction between democracy and authoritarianism. Parties and their roles in democratic development have changed significantly from the past two decades in newly democratic nations. Political parties play a significant role as the intermediate actors between citizens and government institutions in internal political environment of the country. The development of political parties and stability of the multiparty system are necessary factors for the consolidation of democracy in Lithuania.

As evident in the relevant literature on political parties, the analysis of party development and multi-party system are based on the context of established western democracies. The post-Soviet transition countries do not have the experience of liberal democracy and competitive party politics. These states which are having high levels of ethnic complexity can provide

different understanding of democratic development and party activity outside the idealized west European and American experience. The scope of the study is limited to cover the period from 1991 to 2011.

### **Lithuanian Political System**

The formation of multiparty system and political parties in Lithuania is based on the country's historical background and legal framework. Political parties emerged as a result of national awakening, political movements for national independence and efforts for creating a democratic parliamentary system. In 1991 several parties formed during the national awakening and short independence period in the inter war period were re-established after regaining independence.

Lithuanian constitution of 1992 introduced the legal framework for functioning of political parties by conceptualizing “a political party shall be a public legal person that its own name, has been established pursuant to this Law, and whose purpose is to meet the political interests of its members, assist in expressing the political will of the citizens of the Republic of Lithuania in enforcing State power and the right to self-government.” Article 35 of the 1992 constitution provides citizens the right to freely unite themselves into communities, political parties and associations. But their goals do not contradict the constitution and laws of the nation (Constitution of Lithuania 1992).

The operation of political parties is regulated by a number other legislations for restricting party financing. In Lithuania, the law on public finance to political parties (1999) introduced public donations to parties from 2000 onwards. State subsidies are the primary sources of finance for political parties and organizations. The parties winning at least five percent votes in parliamentary and municipal elections are eligible for the state subsidies. These Laws further explains that donations from trade unions, government institutions, charity and religious organization. Donations from foreign sources are also restricted under the law of public finance to political parties. From 2005 onwards direct subsidies were decreased and partial reimbursement policy of campaign expenditure was introduced. Every party in

Lithuania is supposed to submit declarations on their campaign accounts and expenditure within the 25 days after the elections. Any party failing to fulfil the criteria will lose the subsidies allocated to that party (Law on Public Finance to Political parties 1999).

The 1992 to 2008 Seimas elections resulted in a conservative victory in 1996, a left-of-centre coalition spearheaded by the LSDP in 2000, a populist centre victory by the Labour Party (Darbopartija) of Viktor Uspaskichin in 2004, and a return to a conservative majority in 2008. In addition to the continuing swing from left to right, another tendency in political development has been the continuous creation of new and short lived formations competing with the traditional parties which were tied primarily to personalities rather than coherent platforms. The constantly shifting coalitions among political alterations have led to considerable instability and fragmentation in Lithuanian politics. The public finance policies are also one of the reasons for political instability in the country. The voting volatility, cleavages among the political parties and ideological conflicts are other factors responsible for the existing instability in the political parties and multiparty system in Lithuania. Moreover, parties are facing legitimate crisis as people do not have trust in parties. This indicates the failure of political parties in inculcating democratic political culture and values among people. Lithuanian democratic institutions have failed to convince the mass. There is a lack of political trust and support to Lithuanian democratic institutions (Ehin 2007: 1- 20).

Lithuanian parliament is one of the least trusted parliaments among the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The most trusted institutions in Lithuania are the presidency and the military. The increasing distrust of the established parties in bringing democracy and in providing better living conditions to the citizens has led to the divergence in the in the voting pattern. In Lithuania voter volatility remains high (Novagrokiene 2001: 151-152). It leads to establishment of new parties and decreases the electoral turnout at national and local level (Ehin 2007: 1- 20).

Most of the political parties in Lithuania are dominated by the elite classes whereas women are the least represented with an exception of the Women Party (Krupavicius 1998: 486- 487). Romaniate says that, there are

political parties that exist for the personal ambitions or business interest of their leaders rather than bringing about any political change (Romanaitė 2006: 76). The Baltic electoral and party system is still in a state of evolution (Lewis 2001: 124).

For the democratic consolidation of transitional states, political parties are very important. In this perspective they are very essential to make distinction between democracy and authoritarianism. The emergence of parties and multi-party are positive indicators of healthy process of democratic transition. The development of political parties and stability of the multiparty system are necessary for the consolidation of democracy in Lithuania.

On the basis of the above theoretical framework the study looks into the following questions on the development of multi-party system and political parties in post-soviet Lithuania during 1991-2011.

1. What are the factors that help the emergence of multiparty system and formation of political parties in Lithuania?
2. How do the behaviour of elites, electoral system and politically and social cleavages affect the development of multiparty system in Lithuania?
3. How do the multi-party system and political parties help the democratization process and consolidation of democracy in Lithuania?
4. Whether the financing provided to the political parties has an impact on the existing political stability in Lithuania?
5. Why do Lithuanian political parties lack people's trust?

### **Hypotheses**

In order to examine the above questions the study developed the following hypotheses:

1. Ethnic cleavage and oligarchy influences the organizational and ideological structure and electoral participation of political parties in Lithuania.
2. Lithuanian party system shows fragmentation and instability due to the disappearance of old parties and rise of new political parties during elections.

3. A low level of trust in political parties and parliament exist in Lithuania as parties are subordinated to the business interests and corporate sector.

### **Methodology**

The study employed various theoretical approaches on party studies for analysing the development of multi-party system and political parties in Lithuania. Scholarly highlights drawing from various studies on political parties in the context of established western democracies and new emerging democracies also used. The study used both primary and the secondary sources. Primary sources include governmental documents, records, laws, policy statements, and newspaper reports, speeches of party leaders, party documents and programmes. Secondary sources include books, periodicals, journals, newspapers, official reports, and internet.

### **Structure of the Study**

The study is structured in five chapters. The first chapter formulates the theoretical background of political parties and multi-party system and it's also explains the concept of political party, institutionalization and organizational structure of parties. This chapter will examine different kinds of parties and party systems and their role in consolidation of democracy. It also looks at the main functions of parties such as mobilizing people, electoral participation, forming of government and their role in transition to multi-party system.

The chapter two discusses the historical background of the political parties and emergence of multiparty system in Lithuania. It will study various political developments that have occurred in the region. In this chapter an effort has been made to explore various factors that helped in the emergence of multi-party system in Lithuania. It also examines the national movement and the role of political organizations. It also studies the parties in the process of political transformation from socialist system to liberal democratic system.

Third chapter examines the working of various political institutions in the Lithuanian republic. It discusses the political parties' participation in the electoral process and campaigning. It will also look into the party policies, financing and their representation in the government, this chapter explains the

legal status to parties from constitution and it discusses the different laws on political parties and law on public finance to the Lithuanian parties.

The chapter four explains the association between political parties and the citizens. It will also explore the role of parties in educating and mobilizing the citizens. In this sense, this chapter discusses about organization, fragmentation, functions and cleavages influencing the public trust on political parties. This chapter will also examine the electoral volatility and emergence of new political parties. It highlights the various challenges to the political parties and multi-party system such as ethnic issue, women participation, economic underdevelopment, finance problems and laws on parties.

The last and fifth chapter states the validity of hypotheses and the conclusions arrived at in the study.

The study proceeds to the next chapter that explains the democratic transition and historical background of emergence of political parties and multiparty system in Lithuania.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Democratic Transition and Emergence of Multiparty**

## **System in Lithuania**

The regaining of national independence of Lithuania due to disintegration of the Soviet Union and thereby democratic transition in 1990s provided opportunity for its citizens to build democracy in which emergence of political parties and multiparty system is crucial. Lithuania had a short period of independence during the interwar period (1918-1940) and had a democratic political system that promoted development of political parties and party systems. However, during the WWII, Lithuania was incorporated into the erstwhile Soviet Union. Democratic system and political parties were abolished and communist rule with a single party system was established. The Communist Party of Soviet Union (CPSU) was the only legally recognized party. No dissent was permitted during Soviet regime. This system continued until 1991. In spite of the retreat of various political parties during the Soviet rule, the ideological association and inclinations stayed very much alive which led to the reinstallation of the Lithuanian political parties during 1988-1991 when Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev tried his liberal reforms of perestroika and glasnost. This chapter analyses various stages of party formation and the emergence and development of political parties and multiparty system in Lithuania.

### **Development of Party System in Pre-Soviet Lithuania**

In order to understand the current democratic transition and development of political parties and emergence of multiparty system in Lithuania it is very important to look into the brief history of various phases of development of political parties in Lithuania. History of party system development from 19<sup>th</sup> century is relevant to understand the contextual background of the re-attainment of independence and re-establishment of multiparty system in 1990s. Various stages of development of political parties and party system could be identified in Lithuania. Krupavicius demarcates six different phases of the development of the Lithuanian political parties as follows.

- The emergence of traditional right and left wing parties from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the declaration of the Lithuanian's independence in 1918, when parties were able to enter the stage of national-state politics as principal actors.

- The period of multi-partyism between 1918 to 1926
- Restricted multi-party system under the supremacy of the Lithuanian Nationalists Union (LNU), 1926-35.
- The one party system of the LNU in the period 1935-1940
- Totalitarian and authoritarian rule by the Communist Party and final collapse of the competitive multi-party system in 1940-1941 and from 1944-1988
- The establishment of *Sajudis* and the gradual revival of competitive party system after 1988 (Krupavicius 1998: 468).

Emergence of political parties and multi-party competition began at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Lithuania was under Tsarist rule of Russian Empire. This was as a result of the national awakening and liberation movements emerged in Lithuania during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The important parties emerged during this period were The Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (LSDP) founded in 1896, the Democratic Party (LDP) formed in 1902 and the Christian Democrats (LChDP) (Krupavicius 1998: 43).

The then newly emerged parties' possessed diverse ideological standpoints. The LSDP, LCDP, National Progress, Democratic and Socialist People's parties represented in the Lithuanian Council. The transformation of one-party system to multi-party system in Lithuania witnessed major complications and also experienced a lack of stability in the political arena. The political arrangement experienced a serious cabinet crisis in the year 1918-1920. A fully functioning parliamentary democracy came into being only after the elections of the Constituent *Seimas* in 1920. The constitutional guarantees and legal provisions provided a space for the smooth working of the parliament (Krupavicius 1998: 465).

With the emergence of new political parties Lithuanian politics witnessed a drastic change in the power control. The external as well as internal instability in Lithuania led to the emergence of *coup d'état* led by the Nationalist Union (NU) after 1926. The democratic structure in the Lithuanian neighbouring countries like Estonia, Latvia, and Weimar Germany proved to be weak and unsuccessful, which invariably contributed to the collapse of democracy in Lithuania. The primary cause which resulted in the end of democracy was domestic impediments. The social and economic structure failed to support the growth of democracy in Lithuania. Lithuanian society was paralysed by problems like illiteracy, low socio-economic development



and was predominantly based on agriculture (O'Connor 2003: 98; Krupavicius 1998: 467).

The main factor which adversely affected democracy was the conservative society which was majorly dominated by the Roman Catholics. The democratic structure itself had a number of limitations in Lithuania. Political democracy was fragmented and unstable in Lithuania. The execution of power by the president was more controlled by the *Seimas*. The right wing Christian Democrats functioned in an unruly manner. It objected to form a single party government in spite of having a majority in the cabinet which further enlarged the political instability in the state. Imbalances between the centres of power, personal clashes between the political parties, and Lithuanian society's non-familiarity towards the democratic system paved a way for the authoritarian regime and resulted in the collapse of the multi-party system (Krupavicius 1998: 467). But one of the major variations was the banning of the Communist Party. The authoritarian regime was led by the LNU and sought the support of the Christian Democratic Party. With the course of time all the political parties were banned except the LNU dictating the state (Ibid: 467-468).

There were four parliamentary elections from 1920 to 1926 prior to the authoritarian rule; specifically it was three parties which dominated the parliamentary elections (Lane 2001: 21 and Krupavicius 1998: 466). The Christian Democratic bloc composed of the Christian Democrats (CDS), the Farmers Union and the Labour Federation further constituting the largest alliance. It was a reformist party, appealing both to rural and urban constituencies including professional individuals, rural labourers and small holders (Lane 2001: 21). The Christian Democrats had fought successfully for compulsory religious education in state schools, for financial support for the church from the state, and for church control over the registration of births, marriages and deaths. During inter-war period Christian Democrats restricted the opposition press, democratic freedom and public meetings (Idinfas, et al. 1999: 52). They strengthened the influence of Catholic Church in education and the countries public life. The party support held up well until 1926. The party experienced a loss of support as a result of the economic

recession and the high level of corruption in the government and administration. It won 59 out of 112 seats in the election of 1920, 30 out of 78 seats in 1922, 40 out of 78 seats in 1923, but only 30 out of 85 seats in 1926 (Lane 2001: 21).

The second major party was the party of rural people, more commonly called the Populists, which was liberal in orientation and on the centre left. The Populist Party merged with the Lithuanian peasants in December 1922 to form the Lithuanian Peasant Populist Union (LVLS) (O'Connor 2003: 92). Its economic and social reform programme was radical and similar to the Christian Democrats (Lane 2001: 22). Small land holders were among the ardent supporters of the Populist Party. The major conflict of the Populist Party with the Christian Democrats was with regard to the relation between church and state. The Populists, being anti-clerical opposed and criticized Christian Democrats on this issue (Lane 2001: 22). These two- blocs issue helped for the establishment of a nationalist dictatorship in Lithuania (O'Connor 2003: 92).

The Social Democratic party (SDP), a Marxist party committed to parliamentarianism and reform, drew its support mainly from the urban workers. It included more radical and economic and social agenda and it rejected the power of the church in politics (Lane 2001: 22; Krupavicius 1998: 465). It remained as a minority party even during the peak of its success in 1926 winning only 17% of the vote. The Social Democrats were supported the idea of strong government and a powerful military. Their opportunity came in 1926 (Lane 2001: 22).

The Nationalist Progress Party (NP) of Antanas Smetona and Augustinas Voldemaras was also one of the growing party during inter- war period (O'Connor 2003: 92 and Krupavicius 1998: 466). In August 1924 the Nationalist Progress Party formed the Lithuanian Nationalist Union; a movement that was open only to ethnic Lithuanians which stressed the need for a strong army and rule by a strong leader (Idinfas, et al. 1999: 51; O'Connor 2003: 92). The Union remained as a small organization without a mass following. The party held a key position in the Lithuanian State Council and claimed credit for having created the foundations of the Lithuanian state.

It remained outside the parliamentary field in 1920- 1926 and failed to win a single seat either in neither the constituent assembly nor the first two parliaments (Idinfas, et al. 1999: 51; Oconnor 2003: 92; Krupavacius 1998: 467). It considered itself as a non- parliamentary opposition to the government, criticizing the entire reforms of the Christian Democrats and the Populists and their draft laws (Idinfas, et al. 1999: 51). The ruling party accused the NP for blackmailing the *Seimas* and to destroy the state.

Lithuania had experienced twenty years of independence but they failed to learn lessons from the past and within a short period of time they turned into authoritarian regimes. After the signing of Molotov-Ribbentrop pact Lithuania was occupied by Soviets and multiparty system was collapsed with emergence of Lithuanian Communist Party dominant single party system.

### **Party System in Lithuania under Soviet Union**

From 1940 to 1990 there was complete absence of active political parties or movements in Soviet Lithuania. During this period Communist Party of Lithuania dominated the politics of the country. After the seizure of Lithuania Soviet Union started the process of demolition of the political, economic, social and cultural institutions established by the independent Lithuanian state in the inter- war period. The elite of the Lithuanian government, political parties and the senior military and police officers, business entrepreneurs and renowned personalities from cultural background were arrested and sentenced to deportation or execution (Lane 2001: 49). Political rights and freedoms were denied in Lithuania during the Soviet rule. Lithuanians were denied the rights to oppose the government policies and the Lithuanian media and culture was entirely crushed by the authoritarian regime of Soviet Union. Sovietisation policies were forcefully imposed on Lithuanian society.

Sovietisation had a huge impact on all three Baltic States including Lithuania. Under the Soviet control Lithuanian citizens suffered from certain form of legal or cultural discrimination. Soviet Union started dominating other ethnic communities in terms of political, cultural and economic aspects. In politics an element of Sovietisation was appointing Russian citizens to leading

administrative positions in national institutions. Russian culture was imposed on other minorities. Lithuanian language in official business or in schools was prohibited or restricted, public meetings were banned, and the names of the Lithuanian historical place were changed or modified (Lane 2001: 2). The heavily centralized economic industrialization was introduced in Lithuania during the Soviet period in order to serve Moscow's desired economic and political ends. A large number of people had been deported to Siberia and undergone various kinds of torture and humiliation. The centralized industrialization was main cause to increase the level of unemployment and underdevelopment in Lithuanian society under Sovietisation. Lithuanians lost their cultural, political and religious rights (O'Connor 2003: 129, 168).

In Lithuania Communist Party operated as a core political party for almost fifty years in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On 15 June 1940 Lithuania was occupied by the Soviet Union Regime under the leadership of Stalin. Under the regime of Stalin and his successors 1940-1985, Soviet Union brought the LCP into power through the establishment of people's government. The LCP became a constituent part of what was then the All-Union Communist Party. Antanas Snieckos was appointed as the first secretary of the LCP and remained in his designation for the next three decades (Saulius 2011: 83). In 1941 LCP's Fifth Party Congress outlined the Lithuanian Sovietisation programme. And the membership of LCP stood at less than 2000. During the spring of 1941 LCP increasingly came under the direct control of NKVD, the Soviet Secret Police. During the German occupation of 1941-1944 LCP suffered great loss as a result of execution of several members in the guerrilla warfare against the Nazis (Saulius 2011: 83).

From 1944 to 1953 the party was deeply involved as an ally of Soviets in the pacification of post-war Lithuania. As a result, thousands of post-war activists were killed by anti-Soviet partisans. During this particular period the LCP was thoroughly Russified and dominated by the outsiders. In 1953 approximately one fourth of its members were ethnic Lithuania. The situation changed after the death of Stalin. As a part of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), the LCP's membership during the reign of Gorbachev the ethnic Lithuanians comprised of about 80%. However, it was a common

practise to appoint an ethnic Russian in the capacity of second supervisor of the party. During the late 1950's number of prominent party members including the rector of the Vilnius University were expelled on the ground of anti-Soviet ideology. This was an attempt to establish a cultural autonomy in the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic. The shift of power from Brezhnev to Gorbachev in 1985 completely changed the structure of the party. The LCP came under severe pressure as a result of the upheaval that seized Lithuania in reaction to the reforms and restructuring policies of Gorbachev. In the initial stage Gorbachev's rule faced a serious resistance from the party members with regard to the policies formulated which were accepted (Saulius 2011: 83). During the Soviet rule (1940- 1985) in Lithuania, all political parties and organizations were banned. According to the soviet constitution (1977) article 6 and 7 the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was the legitimate political party in the union. The party was declared to be the leading and guiding political force of the soviet society and its political system (Krupavicius 2005: 196). Under this circumstances Lithuanian party system had changed from dominant party system to one party system.

During the Sovietisation process large number of Russians migrated from other republics to Baltic States. A Russian could live his or her life in non-Russian republic without ever having to learn Russian but for other communities learning Russian language was compulsory. The Russian orthodox Christianity dominated over the Catholic Christianity in the three Baltic States. Soviet Union started closing churches and schools in the Baltic States. It officially banned the building of the new churches further transferring number of old churches to the Russian orthodox churches.

Baltic States remained intolerant to Sovietisation policies. Lithuanians protested against the Soviet authoritarian rule to restore Lithuanian independence. Lithuanian youth were turned into Guerrilla war fare. Guerrilla war was referred as forest brothers in all Baltic regional languages. By the spring of 1945 almost 30,000 armed men joined together to fight against the soviets (Misiunas and Taagepera 1993: 81). Underground news papers were published and distributed to the people of Lithuania in order to mobilize the citizens. The Lithuanian Environment Protection Association was established

in 1960 to address the issues related to the damage inflicted by the industrialisation during Sovietisation. Similar movement called the Green movement was started in the same year. It has been one of the leading NGO's advocating the cause of environment protection. (Saulius 2011: 107).

In the 1970s and early 1980s Lithuanian human rights group mobilized to protest against human rights abuses in Soviet Lithuania (Saulius 2011 :125). In 1972 Ramas Kalanta, a 19 year old student set fire to himself in a protest against Soviet rule. This resulted in the outbreak of protest and violence by the university students and high school pupils (Lane 2001: 88). The Baltic states, specifically Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia joined together in order to overthrow the Soviet dictatorial rule. Various authors claimed that Sovietisation would bring national movement, political consciousness, cultural awareness and national awakening among the Lithuanian citizens. On the other hand Sovietisation adversely affected the Lithuanian people and society, discrimination in the culture, political domination, and imposition of Russian language in schools, offices and religious domination in Baltic States.

Political organizations for anti- Soviet resistance were also formed in 1940. During the Soviet rule the Lithuanian Activist Front (LAF) organised a set of forum against the Soviet system. After Soviet occupation in June 1940, a number of prominent Lithuanians, officials and leaders of non-communist political parties met in Berlin to establish LAF, whose avowed purpose was to restore the independence of Lithuania. The Soviet deportations of 14- 17 June 1941 seriously disrupted the LAFs underground network within the country. The LAF was divided as Lithuanian front and friends of Lithuanian front (Ibid: 175). Outside the Lithuanian Activist Front seven traditional political organizations were established such as the Christian Democratic Party, the Lithuanian Labour Party, the Social Democratic Party, the Nationalist alliance, the farmers Party, the Farmers Union and the Peasant Populist Union. Four new fighting groups were also established during Soviet occupation: the freedom fighters Union, the Lithuanian Front, the Nationalist Party, and Movement for Unity (Ibid: 175).

### **Origin and Development of Multiparty System in Lithuania**

The origin and development of political parties and multiparty system in Lithuania started from the Gorbachev presidency. Gorbachev reform policies of perestroika, glasnost and democratization changed the entire character of Lithuanian political system. The reforms mainly included the manifesto to save communism rather than a proposal to create an open society. The reforms came up with larger agenda in order to improve the conditions of public life which was positively received by the public (Landsbergis 2000: 374). Gorbachev experimented by de-centralizing the administration and establishing a state ruled by law that is a state in which the constitution had more meaning than party decrees (Idinfas, et al. 1999: 195). These political and economic reforms gave the Lithuanian citizens an opportunity to form political movements and organizations like Sajudis and Lithuanian freedom league in 1988. Through these political organizations Lithuanians opposed the Soviet system and demanded independent statehood. During Gorbachev's presidency, the intelligentsia played a major role in the formation of cultural and political organizations.

After the 1990 independence democracy was reinstated back in Lithuania with parliamentary election of 1990. Lithuania's experience of democracy is limited (Girnius 2002: 52) even though, the basic elements of a democratic state have been introduced in Lithuania. After regaining its independence in 1991, free and fair elections have been the basic foundation of the democratic structure in Lithuania. Constitution and the issues related to human rights have been given paramount importance. Minority rights have been protected without subjecting them to any sort of discrimination. With the decline of the authoritarian regime and the revival of democracy, Lithuania has provided a larger space for the mass media in the country (Ibid: 52).

Lithuania gave up its pre-war constitution and instead created a new constitution that would reflect the experience of democratic countries such as the United States and France (O'Connor 2003: 170). It followed the western democracies in the process of state building, rule of law, civil society, market economy and democratic institutions. Lithuania became a member of UN in 1991 and a member of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe in the same year. The country is now member of the council of Europe and of

the North Atlantic Co-operation Council (Landsbergis 2000: 376). In 2004 Lithuania became member of both EU and NATO. These developments showed a sign of Lithuania's return to the family of western nations (Ibid: 376). In supplementary to all the political and economic changes Lithuania concentrated on social change as well. Non-governmental organizations with regard to the issues related to women, business and environment were established.

With the span of time the collaboration of politics and a negotiated revolution transformed the one-party communist state of Lithuania into a multi-party system (Krupavicius 1998: 465). Lithuania witnessed a process of amalgamation of the political parties which mainly comprised of two phases. The multi-party system was established in the first phase from 1988 to 1992. In the second phase of the consolidation of the political parties the divergence among the political parties had gradually reduced and there was a wave of political dispiritedness along with the electoral volatility (Novagrockiene 2001:142).

Between the initial stages of transition to the restoration of Lithuania's independence i.e. the period from 1988 to 1990 witnessed a series of development. New grass root movements emerged, laterally various political organisations were established and the traditional political parties were restored and revived. Lithuania's independence provided a larger space to the revival of parties like the LCP. As a result of numerous political activities the Lithuanian society mobilised together, actively participating in the politics of the state. The escalating problems in the state gave birth to various other intellectual groups and organisation with serious causes as their agenda. The foremost priority was given to the environmental problems by the Greens movement. (Novagrockiene 2001: 142-143).

The initial movement of the Greens formed in the 1987-1988. Followed by the Greens movement Lithuania witnessed a mass-based reform movement with the emergence of Sajudis. Sajudis aimed at the radical reform of the political and economic system. Similarly a number of traditional parties emerged like the LDP, LNU, LSDP were revived. The LDP, LNU, LSDP



along with the Social Democrats, the Nationalists and Democrats participated in the electoral programme of 1990. Further the Christian Democrats reconstituted their party in 1990. The LCDP declared itself as the successors of the ideas of the Lithuanian Christian Democratic Union in exile. Radical groups like the Lithuanian Freedom League (LFL), the Lithuanian Union of Political Prisoners and Deportees (LUPPD), the Lithuanian Youth National Union “Young Lithuania” (YL) and the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) were established and entered the political sphere in 1988. The LCP entered the political mainstream as the parliamentary party. In December 1989, the twentieth LCP Congress adopted a new agenda that completely rejected the communist ideology. The LCP detached itself from the association with the headquarters of Moscow. The LCP declared that the reestablishment of the independent Lithuanian state was the party’s main agenda. In spite of having 80,000 members the parties membership dropped to 15,000 within two years (Novagrockiene 2001: 143-144). LCP was an outcome of the Communist Party of Soviet Union (CPSU). The differences between the LCP and CPSU with regard to the restoration of the Lithuanian independence led to their division. It was in this background that the concept of political pluralism emerged in Lithuania. It also led to the decentralisation of the power structure among the political parties. The Lithuanian political support was divided into three blocs supporting three different parties, the Sajudis, the LCP and the LCP (CPSU). The Sajudis and the LCP were strong defenders of the restoration of the Lithuanian independence whereas the LCP (CPSU) was against the very idea of independence (Ibid: 144). The Sajudis and the LCP proved to be strong opponents of the LCP (CPSU).

The parliamentary election of 1990 ended the first stage of the development Lithuanian multi-party system. The end of the first stage witnessed shift of political power. The presence of voting volatility among the Lithuanians facilitated the Sajudis to gain more than 50% of votes. The Sajudis succeeded in attaining the majority in the parliament. During this phase the Lithuanian state comprised of two major parties i.e. the LCP (reformist) and the Sajudis. The disassociation of both LCP and the Sajudis from Moscow brought both the political parties to the glare of publicity.

The second stage of the emergence of the Lithuanian multi-party system was during the springs of 1990 to summer 1992. One of the drastic changes in the political structure in Lithuania during the second phase was the fragmentation of the Sajudis. The Sajudis movement was comprised of moderates (Bugajski 2002: 147). The right wing members among the Sajudis viewed the presence of moderates as an attempt to split the Sajudis movement. Emergence of new factions among various parties adversely affected the existence of Sajudis. The movement split into different factions opposing each other in order to include the LLU and IP. By the time of the Third congress in December 1991, Sajudis completely lost their identity. It disassociated itself from the liberal-left and the centrist forces (Ibid: 145).

According to Novagrockiene (2001) the emergence of multi-party system in Lithuania begins with the entering of new parties. Fifteen new political parties were registered from 1995 to Seimas elections of 1996. The Lithuanian Polish Electoral Action (LPEA), which was founded on the basis of Polish Union, the Lithuanian Women's Party (LWP), the Economy Party (EP), the Justice Party (JP), the Socialist Party (SP), the Lithuanian Russian Union (LRU), the Lithuanian Reform Party (LRP) and the Lithuanians People's Party (LPP). Placing the problems of women as it priority in its agenda the LWP actively took part in the policy making of the state in comparison to the other new emerged parties (Bugajski 2002: 148).

The primary factors responsible for the development of multiparty system in Lithuania are:

- The impact of the general logic of post-communist transition on emerging multi-partyism and on particular parties
- The legal and the institutional bases of Lithuania's parties and
- The relation of organisational patterns and party government in the institutionalisation of the parties (Krupavicius 1998: 465). The rebirth of multipartyism in Lithuania was not sudden progress rather it was developed through different phases as explained in the table.

**Table: 3**  
**Phases of Transition for Parties**

	Type of party system	Dominant political actor	Dominant function of parties	Type of Inter-party relations
<p>Fr</p> <p>re</p> <p>-</p> <p>t</p> <p>r</p> <p>a</p> <p>r</p> <p>s</p> <p>i</p> <p>t</p> <p>i</p> <p>c</p> <p>r</p> <p>a</p> <p>l</p> <p>c</p> <p>r</p> <p>i</p> <p>s</p> <p>i</p> <p>s</p> <p>(</p> <p>1</p> <p>9</p> <p>8</p> <p>5</p> <p>-</p> <p>1</p> <p>9</p> <p>8</p> <p>8</p> <p>)</p>	Hegemonic party system	LCP	Mobilization	Domination
C	Political	LCP and	Mobilization	Confrontation

<p>r f r c r t a t i c r ( I S &amp; &amp; I S &amp; S )</p>	<p>pluralit y within one party system</p>	<p>Saju dis</p>	<p>on</p>	<p>on</p>
<p>F e f c r r c f s y s t e r ( I S &amp; S</p>	<p>Mega politica l pluralit y and mega politica l fragme ntation</p>	<p>Inde pen dent LCP and Saju dis, new parti es</p>	<p>Artic ulatio n of macr o- intere sts, mobi lizati on</p>	<p>Limite d compe tition, politic s of non- coope ration</p>

Confrontational multi-party system	Right-left wing parties	Embryo articulation and aggregation of interests	Limited cooperation, non-adversary competition	

S t a b i l i t y ( 1 9 9 6 - 2 0 0 0 )	Consen sual multi- party system	Stab le righ t- left win g parti es and new parti es	Artic ulation and aggre gatio n of intere st	Coope ration and compe tition
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Source: Krupavicius (1998: 472),.

These organizations and movements emerged out of the extremely high understanding in the Baltic States about necessity for a change in the political structure. They showed the utmost desire to escape from the rigors of Soviet control and establish political freedom, independence and national liberation. The Baltic States had experienced national independence during the inter-war period and claim that they were forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1940. The following are some of the important political and social movements in Lithuania emerged during the end of Soviet.

### **Green Movement**

The first movement of the Greens formed in 1987- 1988 (Novagrokiene 2001: 143). The Green Movement took up the environmental problems as their priority. The Green movement along with the environmental issues also considered economic and political problems. They were loyal supporters of Lithuanian independence and democratic movement. Greens were in favour of broad democratic restoration and sovereignty of Lithuania (Ibid: 143).

Following Lithuania's declaration of independence from Soviet Union, the department of environment protection was established in 1990. In 1994 it was further reorganised as the Ministry of Environmental protection (Saulius 2011: 107).

### **Sajudis**

New mass organization called the Lithuanian movement for restructuring, later known as Sajudis (Movement) was established on 3 June 1988 (O'Connor 2003: 150). The Sajudis movement came up with clearly defined nationwide programme of radical reform of the political and economic system (Novagrockiene 2001: 143). Initially Sajudis were called Lietuvos persitvarkymo Sajūdis (i.e., the Lithuanian Perestroika Movement), but later the word "perestroika" was dropped (Furmanavičius 2009). Due to its radical nature it was branded as an illegal organisation by the Soviet legal code. In order to get the legal recognition Sajudis had to register as a social movement (Krupavicius 2005: 196). As a movement Sajudis consisted of various groups, including the Lithuanian Greens, the Citizen's Charter of the Republic of Lithuania, the Union of the Political Prisoners, the Lithuanian Workers Union and the Farmer's Movement of Lithuania (Bugajski 2002: 147).

The representatives of Sajudis were predominantly intellectuals belonging to the field of arts, humanities and sciences and also included few subordinate members of the Communist Party. The movement declared that it would use all constitutional methods to restore Lithuanians sovereignty through peaceful and non-violence means (Landsbergis 2000: 374). During the second congress in 1988 Sajudis were radicalised by the independence activists. The movement began to split into rival factions further adversely affecting the effectiveness and the influence of the organisation (Bugajski 2002: 147). By the end of the third congress in December 1991 the organisation was extremely affected. As a result of factionalism and personal rivalries within the movement, there was a gradual decline in the membership of the organisation. In the October- November parliamentary elections it managed to get only 30 seats. Its disintegration accelerated after the new legislature was convened with the Kaunas wing breaking off to create the

National Progress Faction and Landsbergis subsequently establishing his own political party Homeland Union-Lithuanian Conservatives (HU-LC) (Ibid : 147).

### **Lithuanian Freedom League (LFL)**

Lithuanian Freedom League (LFL) was founded in 1978 and was registered on 11 November 1985. Antanas Terleckas he founder and former member of the Lithuanian Freedom League. In the mi 1950s Treleckas became anti-Soviet political activist rising and then losing everything. During the movement he lost his family, his freedom, his career and his homeland. He survived in the post war era and then he founded underground Lithuanian Freedom League (Senn 1995: 20). LFL has been a voice of dissent during the push for independence. During the nationalist movement it proved more radical compared to the Sajudis (Ibid).

### **The Women's Movement in Lithuania**

It is very much essential to improve Lithuanian women's political and social participation in Lithuania for the development of multiparty system. In Soviet times, more than 35% of all deputies in the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic were women (Taljunaite 2004: 1). Women's representation dropped in the first post- communist multi- party elections. During the transition period the representation of women was considerably very low. The women's representation has continued to go up, with 21% female members of parliament in 2004. The number women's organizations have increased significantly. They have been actively participating as well as been vocal in the policy making. At present more than 63 women organizations are active in Lithuania (Ibid: 5). According to Taljunaite, there are two different types of organizations working for women empowerment in Lithuania. Firstly, there were women's groups within political parties and secondly, the public women's organizations. Five of the largest parties in Lithuania have women's groups. The Lithuanian centre unions women section includes Lithuanian democratic women's group, Lithuanian social democratic women's union, Union of women's conservative, and the women's section of the Lithuanian Christian democratic party (Ibid:5). There is a lack of political participation



among the Lithuanian women community due to the lack of legal, economic and political support. The emerging women's movement, NGO's and educational opportunities have proved to be an alternate for the problems faced by the women communities.

As a result of collective efforts of political groups emerged during the late 1980s independence was granted to all the three Baltic Republics in September 1991. A newly elected Lithuanian government reclaimed its independent status which it had lost during the red army occupation in 1940. Gorbachev announced that the declaration was illegal and imposed economic sanctions on Lithuania. The Lithuanian transformation was peaceful and the intelligentsia played a specific role in the process of transformation (Janusauskiene 2001: 25).

After regaining independence Lithuania adopted new constitution in 1992. Various political parties emerged in Lithuania during the transition period. To attain the status of a democratic state, Lithuania introduced the rule of law, universal suffrage, a free press and business organizations. It enjoys a democratic system of government, presence of political stability, and respect for the rule of law along with the successful implementation of political rights and civil liberties (Goehring 2007: 416). In order to ensure political, economic and national stability in the country Lithuania joined several international organizations like United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic treaty organization (NATO). Major political forces and a strong public opinion of Lithuania supported this integration process. Aspiration for European Union membership drove the countries sweeping political economic and administrative reforms (Ibid: 416). To join the European Union, states had to fulfil the economic, political and administrative conditions known as the Copenhagen criteria (Svensson 2010: 59). According to Svensson Lithuania adopted the democratic institutions, rule of law, protection of human rights and minorities and market economy in order to fulfil the criteria required to join the EU (Ibid : 2). Presently with several political organizations and

parties multiparty system is evolving in Lithuania as part of democratic transition and transformation.

### **Democratic Transition**

Democratic transition is taking place in Lithuania at various dimensions: political, economic and social. Democratic transition refers not only to the transformation of the government from authoritarianism to democracy but also transformation of the economy, political and social ideas including the party system. In simple terms democratic transition means the process which ends the authoritarian regime. It further establishes a democratic regime and consolidated the same (Huntington 1993: 35). There is an absence of a precise theory which explains the nature of democratic transition. Scholars have frequently used several explanatory variables, such as political culture, civil society, political economy, political institutions and rational choice to analyse the process of democratization. Yet they have failed to come up with a single theory that explains the democratic transition (Parajulee 2000: 3). Huntington explained democratic transition through three waves of democratization, the first wave started in 1820 and the second wave started in 1940- 1962 after the second world war, the third wave began between 1970 and 1980. According to him the current era of democratic transitions continues the third wave of democratization in the history of the contemporary world. Huntington suggested several variables that have been contributed to democracy and democratization: High level of economic growth, existence market economy, presence of strong middle class, social polarization in the society, low level of civil violence, low levels of political polarization and extremism, political leaders dedicated to govern the democracy effectively(Huntington 1993: 37). Transformation in Baltic States have been comparatively analysed on three levels such as:

- Transformation from authoritarian socialism to liberal democracy
- Transformation from a centrally planned economy to market economy based on private ownership

- Transformation from to the Soviet empire to an independent statehood and the adaptation of the democratic institutions (Nqrgaard and Johannsen 1999: 4).

In Lithuania the political transition in every county was dominated by three types of political actors: hardliners, soft liners and national radicals, who actually reintroduced competitive politics into the Baltic countries (Kulik and Pshizova 2005: 121). The most important element of the post-communist democratisation is the revival and reinstallation of the political parties and the multi-party system. The emergence of political parties provided a larger space to the citizens in order to express their views ( Krupavicius 1998: 469).

The emergence of democracy in Lithuania has contributed a stable government and has further created a healthy political environment feasible for the citizens. One of the far-reaching developments in the process of liberalisation was the policy of reconstruction and freedom known as perestroika and glasnost initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985. Though there has been a mention of post-communist era which basically showed the collapse of communism, Communist Party operated in its own capacity until the elections. The process of institutional democracy went through a series of phases without an instant change. Political leaders who represented various spheres occupied the core position in the process of transition. Two important theoretical aspects which were responsible for the development of the institutionalised democracy are structural stability and functional autonomy of political players (Krupavacius 1998: 470).

**Table: 4**

**Political Actors in the Transition: Stability and Autonomy**

<b>Phase of transition</b>	<b>Stable and autonomous political actors</b>
Pre-transitional crisis	Embryonic interests groups, Communist party
Confrontati	Interest groups, political

on	parties (megapolitical conglomerates- LCP and Sajidis)
Reform of system	Interest groups, political parties, constituent parliament
Consolidation of democracy	Interest groups, political parties, parliament, executive and states bureaucracy
Stable democracy (polyarchy)	Interest groups, political parties, parliament, executive and states bureaucracy, courts

Source: (Krupavicius 1998: 471)

The transition period was an on-going process wherein political actors gained and attained stability. The five different phases which the transition process included are the pre-transitional crisis confrontation, reform of system, consolidation of democracy, stable democracy or oligarchy. Firstly the pre-transitional crisis confrontation included the Communist Party, interest groups including political parties like LCP and Sajudis. Constituent parliament dominated the phase of the reform of system. The phase consolidation of democracy was controlled by the executive and state's bureaucracy along with a trivial influence of the interest groups, political parties and parliament. Lastly the phase of stable democracy was functioned by executive and state's bureaucracy, interest groups, political parties and parliament. The two significant factors which contributed to the development of the democratic process are:

- Creation of condition which is necessary for party competition and electoral choice.
- Establishment of consultative and decisional mechanism prepared to evade accountability to popularly elected representatives (Krupavacius 1998: 471).

Political parties played a vital role in the process of democratization. According to Paul Lewis political parties did not play a major role in the institutional framework within which the critical changes of the early democratization period took place, nor were they prime movers in the initial phase of political transition (Lewis 2000: 25). Political parties were largely absent in the early stages of changes and political transition in Eastern Europe. Party development in Eastern Europe has generally been slow and the early process of transition was clearly dominated by other forces such as social movements and umbrella organizations (Ibid: 25). Almost all Post-Soviet states lacked enough experience of democracy and party system. In 1985 Gorbachev became the president of Soviet Union and introduced numerous liberal reforms such as Perestroika, Glasnost and New Thinking. The new thinking in the area of regional policy introduced by Gorbachev radically transformed the basis of communist rule in Eastern Europe (Ibid: 12).

### **Emergence of New Parties after Independence**

New parties in Lithuania particularly emerged in two phases (Krupavicius 2005: 190). The Green Party and Sajudis were founded in 1989 along with few other political groups which later disappeared from the political field. The second phase of the new parties started in the late 1992 and has continued to survive. During the last two parliamentary elections of 1992 and 1996, approximately two to five new political parties were registered. With a few parties sustaining, majority of them vanished after the elections.

**Table: 5**

### **Origin of Political Parties in Lithuania**

<b>Types of parties</b>	<b>Process of development</b>	<b>Example</b>
Historical	Rev	LSDP, LDP,

parties	ival	LUHD P
Post-Sajudis parties	Disintegrati on	HU(L C), LUC
Ex-communist parties	Transforma tion	LDLP
New parties	Establishm ent	LLU, LWP, LRP, TPP, DDV D, LRLS, LPP etc

Source: (Krupavicius 2005: 190).

Only a limited number of new parties in Lithuania proved their ability to survive in competition with the historical, post-Sajudis and ex-communist parties. Among them the Liberals, Polish Electoral Action and the Women's Party represented in the Lithuania's Seimas including the local government. There are several factors responsible for the successful performance of the new parties in Lithuania. One of the primary reasons was the poor performance of the ruling party and the lack of coalescent behaviour among the ideologically similar parties on the centre-right flank of the political spectrum. Despite the fact that, the total number of political parties are relatively high, 24 political parties in 1992, 28 in 1996 and 15 in 2000 (Krupavicius 2005: 191; Novagrockiene 200: 148). While the number of political parties in Lithuania's political stage is still quite impressive, in 2001 it was approximately 40 including the unregistered parties. The period between the two parliamentary elections of 1992 and 1996 could be called the initial phase of party system consolidation (ibid: 191).

Since the 1992 parliamentary election new parties are emerging and are playing remarkable role in consolidating the Lithuanian party system.

Recently Lithuanian Ministry of Justice has allowed registering the new parties (15 min. Lt: 13-3- 2012). Four new parties Courage Path Party established by Drasius Kedys, Democratic Labour and Unity Party(DDVD) led by the president Brazauskas widow Kristina Brazauskiene, the Lithuanian Peoples Party initiated by businessman Vladimir Romanov and as well as Emigrants Party submitted their documents to the ministry for registration (15 min. Lt: 13-3- 2012). These parties are eligible to take part in the forthcoming general elections scheduled to be held on 14 October 2012 if they are officially registered at least 65 days before the election date. Out of 40 registered political parties in Lithuania, 28 submitted their members signatures by 1<sup>st</sup> March and will have the right to take part in the general election in the middle of October (15 min. Lt: 13-3- 2012).

### **Major Political Parties**

At present the major political parties participating in the democratic process of the country included the following.

#### **Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party (LDLP)**

The Lithuanian democratic Labour Party (LDLP) was the successor to the reform wing of the communist party, but had discarded soviet style of socialism and was in favour of a parliamentary social democratic system (O'Connor 2003: 171). Though the LDLP was originally derived from the Communist Party with the span of time it transformed into a Neo-communist group. The LDLP reorganised itself further consolidating support from the rural areas and small towns. The party focused on a democratic Lithuanian state (Bugajski 2002: 140). The LDLP won a total number of 73 seats in 1992 elections (Girnius 2002: 52 and O'Connor 2003: 172). The LDLP was successful and went through the most difficult years of transition and held onto power until November 1996. During its defeat in parliamentary elections by the Homeland Union-Lithuanian Conservative in 1996 general elections, the party focused its on economic growth through privatization, an open economy, and increased exports. The LDLP was also in favour of agricultural subsidies. The party wanted Lithuania to take a middle position between Russia and west but it supported the idea of Lithuania's membership in

NATO and EU (Bugajski 2002: 140 and Romanaite 2006: 75- 76). In October 2000 general elections, the LDLP formed a social democratic coalition led by Brazauskas. Although the elections demonstrated a swing to the left among voters, the coalition only gained a total of 51 parliamentary seats- short of the 71 needed to obtain legislative majority. The LDLP and its smaller partners became the major opposition party after the liberal union assembled its centrist coalition government (Bugajski 2002: 140).

### **Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (LSDP)**

The Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (LSDP) was initially established in 1896 and restored back on 17 January 1990. It claimed a membership of around 1,500 people (Bugajski 2002: 140). It waged a constant struggle for survival against the LDLP. Theoretically foundations of the party were based on two main sources, the revived ideas of Lithuanian social democracy and the influence of the Socialist International (Krupavicius 2003: 120). Several members of both the organizations wanted the two parties to align together at some point of time. LSDP was formed from the merger of the LDDP and the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party. The LSDP was more centrist than the LDLP and the Lithuanian socialist party. It increased its representation in the Seimas from 8 to 12 deputies after the October- November 1996 elections. The party had been fairly open about its willingness to join with other centre-left parties in the Seimas, but it won enough seats and enable it to have its own faction (Ibid : 140). On 18 December 1999, a moderate centrist wing of the party, led by deputy parliamentary speaker Rimantas Dagys, broke away to form the social democracy 2000 party. LSDP was part of the Brazauskas Social Democratic coalition. Now in 2008 general election this party won 25 seats with the 11.72% of votes (Central Election Commission 2008).

Several minor socialist and social democratic parties were established in Lithuania during the 1990s. They included the Lithuanian Socialist Party (LSP) which was chaired by Albinas Visockas, registered on 11 September 1995 and Lithuanian Party of the Economy (LPE), chaired by Klemensas Seputis and registered on 22 January 1996, which believed in the restoration



of a Welfare State in Lithuania (Bugajski 2002: 140). The LPE remained a small party.

### **Homeland Union- Lithuanian Christian Democrats (TS- LKD)**

Homeland Union- Lithuanian conservatives (HU-LC) was established on 1 May, 1993. It comprised of 16,000 members. HU-LC is also known as the “Classic Liberal Conservative” party. The party agenda concentrated on the strict monetary and fiscal policies (Bugajski 2002: 141). Market liberalism has always been the final goal of the party and it introduced the bill in the Seimas to reduce the value added tax (Mullett 2010- august- 12, Baltic reports). The party distinguished itself by its anti- communist and anti- Russian rhetoric. It resembles western style of right- wing parties in emphasising values such as nation, family and religion (Romanaite2006: 75). Its defeat against the ex-communist LDLP in the 1992 October- November parliamentary elections left a number of political analysts and observers surprised. In the October- November Seimas elections as one of the strongest parties in Lithuania possessing a full fledged grassroots nationwide, HU-LC staged a decisive victory over the LDLP. The manifesto was loaded with rhetoric of freedom, democracy and human rights. Despite the growing crisis of the national economy, the economic questions were of much less importance. In 1996, however, conservatives made a clear shift from political and cultural concerns to the economic policy and at present it is seen as one of the most liberal parties in Lithuania in terms of economic policy (Romanaite 2006: 75).

In 1995, local elections the HC-LC with its effective campaign almost gained 30% of the total votes. The party occupied 70 seats in 1996 elections. The recovery of the party was propelled by a populist campaigning that focused on strong social welfare programmes, higher pensions for the elders and economic recovery (O’Connor 2003: 172). The party has always been the strongest advocate of Lithuania’s integration into the EU and NATO (Ibid : 75 and O’Connor 2003: 172). The HC-LC has associated itself to a number of alliances and coalition with parties like Lithuanian Democratic Party, the Democratic Party, and the Lithuanian Nations Union. This party absorbed into the Lithuanian Rightist Union in 2003 and in 2004 merged with the Union of

Political Prisoners and Deportees. It obtained associate membership in the European Democratic Union and sought the membership in the organisation. In 2008 elections it merged with the Lithuanian Christian Democrats (LKD) was renamed as TS- LKD. The centre right coalition of the Homeland Union-Christian Democrats Union, National Resurrection Party, Liberal and Centre Union and the Liberal movements presently hold only 70 seats out of 141 in the parliament, but have the temporary support of the three- seats of Peasant Popular Union (Mullett 2010- April- 12 Baltic Reports; Central Election Commission 2008).

### **Liberal and Centre Union (LCS)**

The Liberal and Centre Union (LCS) were formed in 2003 with the coalition of the Liberal Union of Lithuania, the Centre Union of Lithuania and Modern Christian Democratic Union. The Lithuanian Centre Union (LCU) and Liberal Union (LLU) were formed on 27 October 1993. The LCU was chaired by Romualdas Ozolas with membership of 1000. The LCU emerged as a result of internal divisions in the Sajudis movement. The liberal profile of the party attracted the educated youth in the urban areas (Romanaite 2006: 76). While the LCU was not particularly a strong party by in itself, it seemed to be one of the primary choices for the coalition partner for both moderate-left and moderate-right parties (Bugajski 2002: 144). The Liberal Union also has its roots in Sajudis, established by well- known intellectuals (Romanaite 2006: 76). The party was an advocate of liberal ideology but with little public support. Inviting Rolandas Paksas to head the party gave it a chance to gain visibility but generated identity problems. During the general elections of October 2000 the LLU was led by Rolandas Paksas. The LLU gained 33 parliamentary seats with 17 % vote (Bugajski 2002: 141). Soon after the elections in 2000, the difference between Paksas team and the old liberals overstated to an extent that Paksas had to leave the party. Nevertheless, by merging with the Centre Union the party managed to preserve its parliamentary representation. Both LCU and LLU were strongly in favour of Lithuanias EU and NATO integration (Ibid: 141 and Romanaite 2006: 76). Further the LLU reaffirmed its commitment to work with the New Union

(NU) and together they captured 61 legislative seats. In 2008 general elections the LCS obtained 8 seats with 5.34 % votes (Central Election Commission 2008).

### **Liberals Movement of Republic of Lithuania (LRLS)**

Liberals Movement of Republic of Lithuania is a centre- right, liberal and conservative political party in Lithuania. The LRLS is member of the European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party. It was formed in 2006 by a splinter group of the Liberal and Centre Union (LCS). In its first legislative elections of 2008, the LRLS won 11 seats in the Seimas and currently this party participating in the governing coalition (Central Election Commission 2008).

### **New Democracy-Women's Party (ND-WP)**

The ND-WP was founded by the former Prime Minister Kazimiera Prunskiene on 20<sup>th</sup> April 1995. The party was an outcome of the Lithuanian Women's Association formed in 1922. Having a membership of 1000 support, it sought to represent women and their difficulties in the national legislature (Bugajski 2002: 143). Generally the party was centrist and felt the necessity to incorporate diverse views of women in the Lithuanian society. In spite of Kazimiera Prunskiene winning a seat in the Seimas, the party missed its entry into the parliament by slightest number of votes. The party proposed to unite its members to participate and to solve the problems related to the women community. It gave significant importance to the development of women's self-expression, patriotism and responsibility towards the state affairs. The party endeavoured to create conditions encouraging women's participation in politics and in state governance. The ND-WP worked with Lithuanian Centre Union (LCU), the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (LS DP), and the Lithuanian Peasant's Party (LPP) in order to improve the position of Prunskiene as a Seimas representative (Bugajski 2002: 143).

### **Lithuanian Democratic Party (LDP)**

The Lithuanian Democratic Party (LDP) was originally established in 1902 and was restored back on 29 December 1989. With a membership of about

2000 people the LDP initiated a coalition with the Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party (LCDP). In the 1992, October- November parliamentary elections and during the 1995 local elections the LDP established an electoral coalition with the National Union for the Seimas elections. In the October 1996 elections LDP won three seats showing a decline in the number of seats compared to the previous elections. Being politically and economically centrist in its ideology the LDP laid importance on the development of Lithuanian civil society. It also concentrated on the welfare of the state, its national identity further making “intellectual culture” a priority. The LDP promoted the creation of the broad middle class in the country as a foundation of a democratic and capitalist system. On international issues, it believed that Lithuanian security interests were best served by entry into NATO (Bugajski 2002: 143). It also believed that the economic and political condition of the country could be developed by gaining membership of European Union (EU).

#### **New Union –Social Liberals (NU-SL)**

The New Union-Social Liberals (NU-SL) was founded in 1998 by the former presidential candidate Arturas Paulauskas and was seen as by many observers and critics as essentially serving his personal interests (Bugajski 2002: 143). The party styled itself as a “Social Liberal” formation that concentrated on the better economic protection for all the sectors in the Lithuanian society. For example the NU-SL initiated a petition in order to redirect the funds from the defence to education in spite of its strong pro NATO stand and its favour towards the increase in the defence expenditure (Bugajski 2002: 143). In the last 2008 general elections NS- SL won one seat with 3.64% of vote.

#### **National Resurrection Party (TPP)**

National Resurrection Party or (Rising National Party or National Revival Party) is a centre- right party founded in 2008, in the same year parliamentary elections TPP won a total number of 16 seats with 15.09% votes and currently participates in the governing coalition, along with Homeland Union (TS-

LKD) and the Liberal Movement of the republic of Lithuania (Central Election Commission 2008).

### **Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party (LCDP)**

The Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party (LCDP) was originally established in 1904 and restored back on 22<sup>nd</sup> march 1990. After the party was outlawed in 1941, following the Soviet annexation of the Lithuania, the LCDP functioned in exile until its restoration. By 1995 it claimed a membership of around 8,500 people which went up to 10000 by the end of the decade (Bugajski 2002: 145). The identity of the LCDP is based on the longstanding Lithuanian traditions of Christian democratic political thought (Romanaite 2006: 76). The LCDP was centre-rightist much like Christian Democratic Parties in other states. In the 1990's, the party coordinated number of its activities with the Independence Party and with the local catholic church. The party particularly focused on the religious matters of the state. It also believed that the Lithuanian society should move towards transforming the country into a Christian nation state. Number of priests openly supported the LCDP and urged their congregations to vote for the party (Bugajski 2002: 140). The party maintained classical western style Christian democratic profile, embracing value oriented politics, pro- western geopolitical orientation and a socially oriented market economy (Romanaite 2006: 76).

In the 1996 general elections, the LCDP representation almost doubled in parliament from 9 to 6 deputies. The party became one of the five major parties in the Seimas that was able to form a party faction. After losing the 2000 elections, the party merged with the small and populist Christian Democratic Union. Within the party there was a major difference between the traditionalists and pro-clerical conservatives. The other progressive factions favoured clear separation of the church and the state. The latter believed that the Catholic Church in Lithuania was too rigid and dogmatic and supported a lesser role of religious organisations in social and secular issues like abortion or family planning (Bugajski 2002: 145). Suffering from internal conflicts and leadership problems, the Christian Democrats finally lost most of its electorate (Romanaite 2006: 76). Other Christian democratic organizations active during

the Lithuanian transformation period included the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Modern Christian Democrats (MCD).

### **The Lithuanian National Union (LNU)**

The Lithuanian National Union (LNU) was initially established in 1924 and was subsequently restored on 23 February 1990. Around 3000 people were part of the LNU and it was chaired by Rimantas Smentona. The LNU formed the presiding government in 1926 and was in power until 1940 during which the country was annexed by the Soviet Union. LNU was restored back by ten members of LNU who further formed a faction which lasted until the 1992 parliamentary elections (Bugajski 2002: 147). LNU initiated an alliance with the Independence Party. It was centre rightist, fairly nationalist and believed in strong role of the state. Its membership primarily included farmers, businessmen and entrepreneurs (Ibid: 148). In the October-November 1996 parliamentary elections LNU aligned with the Democratic Party in an electoral union but ended up gaining only a single seat, whereas the party had managed to get four deputies in the previous parliamentary elections.

### **Order and Justice (TT)**

Order and justice formerly the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) is a national liberal political party in Lithuania. Formed as the Liberal Democratic Party in 2002, the party achieved almost immediate success with the election of its leader Rolandas Paksas as a president of Lithuania within its first year. Paksas's impeachment led to the party reorganizing itself as Order and Justice (TT) to participate in 2004 elections. In the 2004 European parliament election the party own one seat. In 2008 general elections in Lithuania the party won 15 seats. In the European election 2009 its number of seats increased from one in 2004 to three in 2009 (Central Election Commission of Lithuania 2009).

### **The Labour Party (DP)**

The Labour Party was created in 2003 by the popularity of its Russian- born millionaire Victor Uspaskich. It is a populist party without any ideology (Romanaitė 2006: 76). In its manifesto, it presents itself as a party of centrist

orientation seeking economic prosperity, effective performance of the government and the development of the middle class. In the European elections, it was the most successful party gaining 30.2% votes and returning 5 seats. In its first 2004 parliamentary elections it won 32 seats and played major role in the Seimas. In 2008 general elections Labour Party entered a coalition with Youth Party lost heavily retaining only 10 seats in the Seimas. The party was left in opposition after a new centre- right coalition. Since 2008 this party and its leaders used media attention with their policies. This is how it becoming most popular party in society. Today the Labour Party has enormously big possibilities to win the Seimas election (Bielinis 2011).

### **Lithuania Peasant Popular Union (LPPU)**

The Lithuania Peasant Popular Union (LPPU) is an agrarian centre- left political party in Lithuania. The LPPU previously known as VNDS formed in 2001 by the merger of the New Democracy Party and the Lithuanian Peasants Party. Present name adopted in 2006. In the 2004 European parliament elections the party gained 7.4% of vote and won one seat. In 2004 general elections the party won 10 out of 141 seats. In the legislative elections of 2008, the party experienced heavy losses with gaining only 3 seats. LPPU has signed an agreement with the ruling coalition in the Seimas, bolstering the majority's power by three seats. The party prepared 15 key demands in a statement before they would offer support to the ruling coalition, which requires extra man power (Mullett 2010). Though they have not officially joined the coalition but they have come to a consensus not to vote against any ministers. In an effort to occupy a power of authority in the Seimas, the LPPU has been invites to join the ruling majority. Though the party controls only 3 seats out of 141 in the parliament, the government requires additional support as it only comprises of a single seat (Ibid: 2010).

### **Ethnic Parties in Lithuania**

Apart from the ideological oriented mainstream parties, there exist parties based on ethnic orientation in Lithuania. The Union of the Russians and Electoral Action of Poles are the two major influencing parties in the Lithuanian political system. The Union of the Russians of Lithuania was

founded in 1995. It is a political party in Lithuania which represents the Russian minority in Lithuania (Bugajski 2002: 149).

Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania (AWPL) is a centrist Lithuanian political party founded in 1994. It represents and protects the political and economic rights of the Polish minority in Lithuania. In 1994 the law on social organization was adopted. According to this law social organizations were allowed to transform into political parties or simply remain as social organizations. Till that time the association of Poles in Lithuania (APL) was a public political organization. APL was transformed into the political party. It was registered as the Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania (Bugajski 2002: 149 and Romanaite 2006: 78).

Lithuania had experienced various types of party systems from 1919 to 2011. After the First World War Lithuania declared her independence, during this period Lithuania had experienced two party system with the bloc politics of Social Democrats, Christian Democrats and Nationalists until 1926. In 1926 multiparty system was established in Lithuania with the emergence of new political organizations. In the end of 1930s Lithuania was turned into the dominant party system. After the soviet occupation Lithuania experienced single party system rule from 1940 to 1985. Gorbachev reforms gave opportunity to re-build multiparty system in Lithuania. In the initial period independence Lithuanian political elites were tried to build two party system on the basis of ideological differences, but the attempt was failed. After the establishment of traditional parties, new movements and new parties Lithuania adopted the multiparty system to govern the state.

### **Legal Basis of Lithuania's Parties**

The most important factor necessary for the analysis of party structure and the performance is the legal regulations of the party's activities. The laws with regard to the regulation of the political parties are introduced and formulated by political parties itself (Lane 2001: 132). The formulation of laws by the political parties reflected the interests of few groups. In new democracies the process of party institutionalisation can be described on the basis of two criteria



- Formal or legal institutional reputations of party development, including the legal basis of party formation.
- The electoral system conditions the electoral performance (Krupavicius 2005: 195).

Political parties started to reemerge on Lithuanian political stage in 1988 and 1989, even though their existence lacked a certain degree of constitutional legitimacy. After the constituent elections of 1990, along with major economic, political and social reforms, several political parties also acquired required legitimacy (Krupavicius 2003: 102). Between 1990 and 1992, the Supreme Council (Lithuanian parliament) was one of the institutions that could legalize parties in law, but it became the cradle of party politics (Ibid: 102).

Constitution is the only legal document in Lithuania which allows and regulates party activities. The constitution provides certain guarantees collective and individual political self-expression such as freedom of thought, right to privacy, the principles of equal treatment before law, right to vote, right to representation, right to criticise government (Krupavicius 2005: 196). The constitution offered a reasonable platform for discussing government and politics in post- communist Lithuania (Lane 2001: 132). Lithuanian constitution of 1992 has mentioned about the formation of the political parties. Article 35 of the of the 1992 constitution states that citizens have the right to form and associate together within a community, political parties and associations only if their aims and ambitions are not contradicting the Lithuanian constitution and laws. But Article 35 also states that the formation and activities of political parties are regulated by certain laws which in itself are contradictory (Krupavicius 1998: 475). Article 83 of the constitution refers political parties on a negative line stating that “the person, who is elected President of Republic, must cancel his activities in political parties and political organizations until a new electoral campaign for President of the Republic” (Ibid: 475- 476).

Despite the contradictions within the constitution with regard to the political parties, it has provided certain rights and guarantees to the citizens. It includes freedom of thought, right to privacy, the principle of equal treatment

before the law, the right to vote and to representation, the right to criticize the government and government officials etc. The political parties are bound by the constitutional law with regard to their political activities. Constitution is the only legal documents to which the political parties are abide by. Accordingly the Soviet legal code was branded as an illegal organization due to its mass opposition movement. To legalize the Sajudis the organization had to be registered as a social movement. According to the Article 6 and 7 of the Lithuanian constitution LCP was an integral part of the CPSU. It was the only legal political party which is playing a constructive role in the society. These particular articles were removed from the constitution in December 1989 (Krupavicius 1998: 476).

However, it was the Sajudis who initiated the reconstruction of the multiparty system. In the late 80s and 90s few historical organizations formed their first groups stating that they were the heirs of their inter-war predecessors. These organizations included the Democratic, the Christian Democratic, the Social Democratic parties, Nationalists Union and the Young Lithuanian. In April 1989 Sajudis voted for a proposal which will transform the LCP into an autonomous political party. The motions also anticipated that all the other parties should be legalized and receive equal treatment under the law. The formation of these political parties was in a great speed. Major changes with regard to the regulation of the political parties were made by the Constituent parliament in September 1990 by adopting 'Law on political parties and political organizations. These laws explained the process of party formation and activities pertaining to the political parties. It also provided the citizens of Lithuania with the right to form and participate in the political parties. The right to membership was not provided to the military and police serviceman, staff of national security agencies and judicial official during their period of service (Ibid: 476). The five basic components required for party formation and registration includes:

- To have, at least, 400 founding members
- To pass a party statute and basic programme
- To elect leadership

- To form party institutions at a conference or congress of the founding members or their delegates
- To register the political party with the Ministry of Justice (Ibid: 476).

Lithuania party registration process was considered to be stringent. Before registering every political party has to present the list of founders with names and signatures. It also has to provide the address proofs of the citizens, personal codes, professions, confirmation of the citizens as to he/she is not a member of any other party. The registration process also requires the submission of a protocol of the founding conference, party statute and even designs of party symbols (Krupavicius 2005: 197). These laws also provided strict rules regarding the financial sources of the political parties. Membership fees, profits from publishing and private donations were the legal financial sources of the political parties. Except for few parliamentary parties the use of public funds were prohibited. These laws entirely ignored the allocation of material and financial resources for electoral campaigns. Separate laws were created in order regulate the finances provided to the campaigns. According to these laws the political parties have to open special accounts for electoral campaigns. Maximum levels of electoral expenses have been set up in order to maintain the equal opportunities in competition for votes. These laws have not been effectively implemented due to the difficulties in regulating the finances of the political parties (Krupavicius 1998: 477).

The picture of the parties' legal bases would be incomplete without mentioning their status and influence in the Seimas, especially in forming factions. The first parliamentary factions were established in the supreme council in the early 1990s. On the eve of the 1992 elections, there were nine parliamentary factions. Among them, seven were established on the basis of Sajudis and the other two represented the polish union and the LDLP (Krupavicius 2005: 199). The majority of these factions could hardly be characterized as parliamentary parties because of their lack of connections to the extra- parliamentary organizations, low level internal discipline and ideological differences among members of the same faction (Ibid : 199).

According to the statue of the Lithuania's Seimas, parliamentary factions perform the following formal functions:

- Prepare the agenda for the Seimas plenary sittings and Seimas sessions.
- Propose candidates for membership in parliamentary committees, commissions and the Board of Seimas.
- Submit draft of decisions.
- May declare themselves as the parliamentary opposition and announce an alternative to the governments program (Law on Elections to Seimas 1992; Krupavicius 2005: 200).

The next chapter will discuss the participation of political parties in the electoral process and government formation.

### **Chapter Three**

## **Political Parties and Electoral Process**

The post-Soviet era in Lithuania has been distinguished by a relatively stable party system and participation of parties in the electoral competition. As political parties remain as a linkage between the state and society, participation of political parties in the electoral process is very important in the evolving democratic system in Lithuania. Political parties motivate people to go to elections and participate in the electoral process. Political parties help democratic government by structuring the voting choice by different kinds of mobilization. Parties involve people in active campaigning in order to get votes. Parties help to inform government the interests of various sections of population while making policies. The ability of established parties to mobilize their supporters has the effect of discouraging no-party candidates from running for office and discouraging new parties from forming. Therefore, parties are one of the important pillars of a democratic political system. This chapter examines the functioning of electoral system and participation of political parties in Lithuania.

### **The Lithuanian Electoral System**

Lithuania adopted mixed electoral system in 1992 under the new constitution. The electoral law was adopted in 1992. The Lithuanian electoral system comprises of elections to the parliament, the office of the president, the councils of local governments and the European Parliament. The mixed electoral system is the result of a consensus achieved in 1992 between two major political blocs (Martinaitis 2012: 10 and Romanaite 2006: 71). With regard to the electoral system, the principle of universal suffrage was accepted and despite strong nationalist sentiments in certain quarters Lithuania included ethnic minorities in the political process. Unlike Estonia, Latvia which produced tough citizenship laws for post-war immigrants. Lithuania adopted an inclusive policy of offering citizenship to all residents of the state in 1989 (Lane 2001: 136).

The Lithuanian parliament also known as the Seimas consists of 141 parliamentarians. The Seimas are elected for a four-year term. The initial name of the Lithuanian parliament was Supreme Council of Lithuania and later renamed as the Constitutive Assembly (Seimas) in 1996. Seventy one

candidates out of 141 were to be elected in single-member constituencies and the remaining candidates were to be elected under proportional representation. The representatives are elected for a term of four years. A permanent resident of Lithuania who has attained the age of twenty five can contest in the parliamentary elections. A candidate in the single mandate constituencies receiving at least 50% votes in the first round cast is considered elected, provided there is at least a turnout of 40% voters. If the turnout is less than 40% the candidate who receives a majority of votes and the votes of at least one-fifth of all registered voters is declared the winner. Under certain circumstances wherein no winner emerges the first two contenders will have to contest in the second round. In the second round a simple majority is sufficient to declare the frontrunner.

The electoral pattern was changed for the for the 2000 Seimas election (Martinaitis 2012: 7; Clark and Prekevicius 2003: 552). Amendments were implemented with regard to the single member constituencies. In the case of a tie among the candidates the older candidate becomes the parliamentarian. The October 2004 elections witnessed the return of the two-round format, which required more than 50 per cent of the votes for a single-member candidate to be elected. The percentage of turnouts varies with respect to the multi-member constituencies. A multi-member constituency requires more than 25 per cent turnout for the elections to be valid. In order to gain the seat distribution in the state elections the political parties and political movement should pass the beginning stage of threshold. Initially it was set at 4 per cent (Lane 2001: 132), but was later raised to 5 per cent for individual parties and 7 per cent for joint lists in 1996 (Martinaitis 2012: 5). The national minority party was exempted from the set standard and was abolished before the 1996 general elections.

### **Lithuanian Parties and Elections since Inter- war period**

Lithuania political system is not familiar with the multi- party system. The first political parties emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (LSDP) was founded in 1896, the Democratic Party (LDP) in 1902 and he Christian Democrat (LChDP) in 1905

(Krupavicius 1998: 465). Most of these parties emerged from various ideological streams within the national liberation movement started at the end of the 1880s. The Lithuanian Council, the political institution that declared independence in 1918, was dominated by the party politicians from the moment of its establishment in September of 1917. The LSDP, LChDP, National Progress, Democratic and Socialist People's Parties were represented in the Council. The early development of multi-party competition failed to stabilise the political system. From 1918 to 1920 Lithuania experienced five cabinet crises. It was only after the elections of the Constituent Seimas in 1920 that a fully functioning multi-party democracy came into existence and granted legitimacy to political parties (ibid : 465).

**Table 6**  
**Parties in the Seimas during the Interwar Period, 1919-1926**

Parties	Constituent Seimas 1920	1 <sup>st</sup> Seimas 1922	2 <sup>nd</sup> Seimas 1923	3 <sup>rd</sup> Seimas 1926
Christian Democratic Bloc				
LChDP	24	15	14	14
Labour Federation	15	11	12	5
Farmers Union	20	12	14	11
Peasants Popular Alliance				
LSPDP	9	5	16	22
LPU*	20	14	–	–
LSDP	13	11	8	15
LNPP* *	–	–	–	3
LFP	–	–	–	2
Others ***	11	5	14	13
Total	112	78	78	85

\*Source: Algis Krupavicius 1998: 466.

\*LSPDP and LPU founded Lithuanian Peasants Peoples Party in 1922.

\*\*After 1924 Lithuanian Nationalist Union.

\*\*\*Ethnic parties and pro- communist parties.

The period 1919 - 1926 was considered as one of the relatively stable and a concluding phase between the two party blocs. The right wing was dominated by the Christian Democratic coalition; the left wing was led by the Peasant Peoples and Social Democratic parties (Krupavicius 1998: 466 and Lane 2001: 21). During the inter- war period major parties such as the Christian Democrats, Social Democrats and Peasant Peoples parties developed broad rank and file membership. In the inter-war period, the strongest political force was clearly the Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party together with its satellite organizations, the Labour Federation and the Farmers Union. This bloc held a majority of seats in all parliaments in the period, with the exemption of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Seimas, elected in 1926. The major competitor to the LChDP was the People's Coalition. Initially, it included the Lithuanian Socialist Peoples and Lithuanian Peasants parties. A third major political group was represented by the LSDP, which prevail over communism in 1919. Later LSDP joined the Left wing coalition led by the social liberal Peasants Peoples Party (Krupavicius 1998: 466). In the 1920 elections the NPP was unable to get into the constituent parliament. The NPP was renamed as the Lithuanian Nationalist Union (LNU) and played a minor role in the remaining inter- war parliamentary democracy (Krupavicius 1998: 467; O'Connor 2003: 92).

The growth and stabilization of the parties and the multi- party system was dramatically reversed after the 1926 *coup d'état*, led by the Nationalist Union (ibid: 467). Both external and internal conditions were traced as main causes for the *coup*. The political behaviour of the parties, especially of the Christian Democrats, was in many ways absolutely negligent. The LChDP was inclined towards a policy of hardly manageable coalitions. Until 1924 it refused to form a single party government and to take complete responsibility of the cabinet's performance despite of its majority stance in the parliament.



Imbalances between centres of power, permanent clashes among political parties, along with the society's inexperience with democracy pushed Lithuania's political set up into the clutches of authoritarian rule (Krupavicius 1998: 467 and Girnius 2002: 52).

There have been five parliamentary elections in Lithuania since independence in 1991. The parliamentary elections were held in 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004, and 2008. Presidential elections were held in 1993, 1998, 2003, 2004, 2009 and European Parliament elections were held in 2004 and 2009 (Girnius 2002: 52). Sixth parliamentary election is scheduled to be held on 14 October 2012. Elections in Lithuania are considered to be free and fair (Goehring 2007: 430; Girnius 2002: 52).

### **1990 Election to Supreme Council (First Seimas)**

The first election after independence was the election to the Supreme Council of Lithuania held in 1990. The first name of the Lithuanian parliament was the Supreme Council of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Aukščiausioji Taryba* or *Auksčiausioji Taryba*). It was renamed as the Constitutive Assembly (*Atkuriamasis Seimas*) in 1996. Since then parliament is known as Seimas. The following table shows the position of various political parties won seats in the parliament.

**Table 7**

#### **Political Parties in 1990 Supreme Council Elections**

Party March 1990	No. of Members of Parliament
Sjudis*	96
Green Party	4
LSDP	9
LDP	3
LChDP	2
Independent LCP*	46

CPSU	6
Total	140

\*Part of the ILCP members supported by the Sajudis.

\*Source: Krupavicius (1998: 479).

The first free elections to the Supreme Soviet of Lithuania in 1990 were dominated by Sajudis and the Lithuanian Communist Party (Romanaitis 2006: 70). The main division between two political forces was regarding the question of the speed at which economic political reforms should be introduced and relations with Russia. The Lithuanian Communist Party advocated a step by step reform policy and neutrality in foreign policy. On the political right the Sajudis movement publicly supported rapid privatization and maintained a political and economic distance between Lithuania and Russia (Romanaitis 2006: 69, Clark and Prekevicius 2003: 549-550). In 1990s all parties advocated similar macro-strategic, objectives-independence, democracy, and market economy (Duvold and Jurkynas 2004: 136). In the 1990 election Sajudis' candidates won the absolute majority and formed the government (Clark and Prekevicius 2003: 550, Romanaitis 2006: 71). The initial Post-Soviet independence administration of Sajudis was led by Gediminas Vagnorius, with Vytautas Landsbergis as chairman of the Supreme Soviet. The government took a strong line on the restoration of private property, general programme of rapid privatization and the de-Sovietisation of politics (Lane 2001: 140). The Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party (LDLP) opposed the governments' rapid privatization program, particularly the intense pace of property restoration and privatisation in the agricultural sector (Lane 2001: 141). While Sajudis were intent on destroying every vestige of collectivization and restoring farms to their former owners, the LDLP wanted a slower pace and a more judicious re-organization which would leave room for larger and more efficient farms and the retention of some collectives (Lane 2001: 141).

As early as March 1990, the informal Sajudis opposition established in the constituent parliament what might be described as a proto parliamentary

faction of Sajudis. Due to the internal ideological differences (regarding the strategy for achieving independence) within the Sajudis, the process of factionalisation continued until the first multi-party elections in 1992 (Krupavicius 2003: 102, Clark and Prekevicius 2003: 550). Finally seven factions, most of them loosely connected with extra parliamentary political organizations, were founded on the basis of their elected representatives in parliament. By October 1992 as many as seven parliamentary factions with their origin from Sajudis were registered in the constituent parliament that is, the Centre Faction, the United Sajudis Faction, the Faction of the Nationalist, the Faction of Moderated, the Liberal Faction, the Faction of National Progress and the Sajudis Concord Faction. Two remaining factions were representing the Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party and Lithuanian Polish Union (Krupavicius 2003: 102).

The LDDP was the first in the former Soviet Union to break away from the control of Moscow (Ibid: 107). Strong reformist and national tendencies appeared within the ranks of the Lithuanian Communist Party after the foundation of the Sajudis movement in June 1988. The appointment of Brazauskas as first secretary of the central committee of the LCP in autumn 1988 ultimately led to a split from the CPSU announced at the 20<sup>th</sup> congress and declared the re-establishment of Lithuanian independence as a primary goal and adopted a new program rejecting communism as an ideology and calling for a re-orientation toward social democratic principles (Krupavicius 2003: 107 and Romanaite 2006: 75- 76). The scale of transformation, may be is best indicated by changes in the LCP membership over 55,000 of the former LCPs 220,000 members registered as fully fledged members of the new independent Lithuanian Communist Party (Krupavicius 2003: 108). Orthodox communists established a separate Lithuanian Communist Party on the platform of the CPSU, headed by the Bolshevik-style theoretician M. Burokevicius. The LCP won one-third of the seats in the parliamentary elections of February 1990 and Brazauskas, the LCP leader became deputy prime minister in the Sajudis government (Ibid : 108). Throughout 1990 three ideological orientations competed within the ILCP: Social Democratic, Liberal and National Communists. However these groupings lacked clear

leaders and none of them became dominant. From the middle of 1991 the LDLP served in the parliamentary opposition to the radical right government (Ibid: 108).

There was no space for new political parties in Lithuanian politics in the early 1990s. In the 1990s two dominant political blocs sought to prevent competition from the smaller parties by reducing the proportionality of the mixed electoral system (Martinaitis 2012: 2). The Labour Democrats and the HU- inherited from respectively Lithuanian Communist Party and Sajudis played an important role in preventing the emergence of new parties (Duroid and Jurkynas 2004: 137). Soon after the declaration of independence, the economic crisis in the country and internal political disagreements disrupted the unity of the Sajudis and Supreme Soviet. This invoked the second wave for creating political parties mainly on the basis of parliamentary groups (Romanaitė 2006: 71).

### **Second Seimas, 1992 Parliamentary Elections**

The parliamentary for second Seimas was held on 25 October 1992. In the 1992 Lithuanian general elections, the first since independence in 1991 were held under the terms of the new electoral law adopted in July 1992. The 1992 elections represented a substantial change in the sense that political parties for the first time became the main vehicles of electoral choice (Duroid and Jurkynas 2004: 136). Main challenge to the ruling Sajudis nationalist movement (Richard and Crampton 1996: 254 and Landsbergis 2000: 374), was led by the outgoing president of the republic Vytautas Landsbergis was the (ex- communist) Democratic Labour Party (LDLP) headed by Algirdas Brazauskas. Sajudis have controlled parliament since 1990 and spearheaded the move to independence. Sajudis lost its leading position largely due to internal fragmentation and also due to its focus on value- laden issues and its confrontational approach on political opponents. Before the early parliamentary elections of 1992, Sajudis began disintegrating as some of its activists created their own parties. The bigger party led Vytautas Landsbergis, the main architect of Lithuanian independence, continued to exist under the label of Sajudis and later transformed into Homeland Union (Romanaitė 2006:

70). It also experienced difficulties in transforming itself from a mass movement into a political party (Duroid and Jurkynas 2004: 136). Sajudis adopted the technique of anti- communism and the necessity for de-Sovietization was designed to win votes for a strong new government with an executive presidency to cut the opposition. These methods did not appeal the mass of rural voters or the urban working class (Lane 2001: 141). Sajudis were criticized for the country's economic woes, while the LDLP called for a slowdown in the pace of change to a free- market system and improved relations with Russian federation. The LDDP also projected itself not simply as the defender of living standards but also as a reformist party, which would pursue Lithuania's national interests if necessary in opposition to Russia (Lane 2001: 142). People also demanded a greater emphasis on social welfare, employment, minimum wages, support for depressed industries and subsidies for agriculture (Lane 2001: 142). During the era of Sajudis fragmented, the Communist Party was able to recover from the shock of its electoral defeat and consolidated its forces and position itself as a party of moderation and technical competence (Clark and Prekevicius 2003: 550).

In total twenty movements and nine political organizations have been registered for the 1992 elections (Nqrgaard 1999: 88). The parliament election of 1992 was successful for the ex- communist LDLP. LDLP won the absolute majority and could form a single party government (Romanaite 2006: 71). The Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party in coalition with the Lithuanian Future Forum and the Agricultural Union emerged victorious in the Seimas (Krupavicius 2003: 107). Final voting results gave an un-expectedly large victory to the LDLP. The LDLP were astounded by the leading outcome. In the first round of voting the Democratic Labour Party won 35 seats, Sajudis won 18, after the second round of voting on 15 November the LDLP had 73 Seats and Sajudis Gained 31 Seats (Richard 1996: 254). The liberals failed to secure any seats, the centre union only managed to win two single- seat constituencies for their prominent leaders (Nqrgaard 1999: 88). Electoral Action of Lithuanian Poles managed to secure one of the single-seat constituency mandates (ibid: 89). The defeat of Sajudis was due to energy shortages and loss of traditional export markets as to its economic policy and

its perceived incompetence (Lane 2001: 141). Between 1992- 1995 the LDLP even dominated the institutional political scene, having an absolute majority in the parliament and relative majority in local government (Krupavicius 2003: 101). At that time the LDLP was considered almost an exclusive representative of the left- wing of the political spectrum (Ibid: 101). The party was supported by the Russian and Polish minorities as well as farmers. The great voting strength of the LDLP was in the rural areas where they won 31 of the 44 seats. The right won three of the five largest but performed low in the cities like Vilnius and Siauliai (Lane 2001: 142). The party gained support from popular anger about the economic crisis, in particular the fuel shortage since Russia had cut off imports. On December 1, Bronislavas Luybs was appointed as Prime Minister of the Seimas. On 14 February 1993, Brrauskas was elected as the president of the Lithuanian republic. With the surprising victory in 1992 elections the construction of a political pyramid with the LDLP at the top was completed (Ibid: 107).

The issue of privatization had a big impact on the Seimas election in 1996. There was considerable progress in the sphere of privatization. Following a temporary suspension of privatization in late 1992, under the initiative of the Social Democratic Party, 774 state enterprises were transformed into private hands between June 1993 and March 1994. As of march 1994 the total value of privatized enterprises was 474.7 million Litas or 44 percent of all state assets (Ibid: 113). Private enterprises accounted for 83 percent of capital in consumer service, 75 percent in construction and 71 percent in trade. During the first nine months of 1993 jobs in the private sector accounted for 53.3 percent of total employment (Ibid : 113). Another real success of the LDLP economic policy was the reduction of inflation rates in 1993 and in the following years (Ibid: 113). LDLP government was successful in economic and making of foreign policy (Lane 2001: 134).

Although the LDLP had offered a broad social democratic platform in 1992, its failure in office to implement many of its electoral promises undermined its socialist credentials with the electorate in 1996. By the end of its term in 1996, the SDP launched a bitter attack on the LDLP as the betrayer of working class interests and the supporter of capitalism and capitalists (Lane

2001: 142). The government failed to alleviate poverty and resolve social problems. LDLP was accused of corruption by its leading politicians and for the rapid decline in the living standards of the people (Ibid: 134). By November 1995 the Lithuanian press had reported 43 corruption scandals in the government (ibid: 143). The LDLP had intensive cooperative relations with the largest Lithuanian Trade Union the Centre of Lithuanian Trade Unions with about 140,000 members. Close relations were established between the LDLP and union of Lithuanian Trade Unions. Since 1996 parliamentary elections, leaders of Lithuanian Trade Unions were on the party list of candidates for parliament (Krupavicius 2003: 120).

Nevertheless the LDLPs political standing suffered setbacks. The LDLP subsequently re-entered the Lithuanian political scene in 1992 and enjoyed the support of more than one- third of Lithuanian voters- between 36.4 and 41.6 percent from November 1992 through June 1993. In the autumn 1993 the LDLP ratings began to decline and public opinion polls indicated only 17.2 percent support for the party in May 1994 and 12.9 percent in June 1995 (Ibid : 114). Declining electoral support for the LDLP was confirmed during municipal elections in March 1995. The Conservative Party gained one-third of local government seats, while the LDLP won only around one-fifth seats. Moreover by joining with forces like Christian Democrats and smaller right-wing parties, the conservatives gained control of a majority of municipalities (Krupavicius 2003: 114). Three months earlier the leader of the Centre Union, Romuadas Ozolas began an aggressive anti-corruption campaign in which he made a series allegations against members of the government including the prime minister (Lane 2001: 143). However during the elections the party boasted of its success, exports up, improved quality of production and stable currency. Even more damaging is the re- election hopes than its economic record was the widespread perception that the government was corrupt, too close to business and favoured the former *nomenklatura* in its privatization policy, with the result that many ex- communist managers were able to take control of their newly privatized firms (Lane 2001: 143).

The 1992 elections returned a majority party system (Clark and Prekevicius 2003: 549, Martinaitis 2001: 29). In the period 1992- 1996 there

was a political competition between LDLP and HU. The dominant role of the both parties in Seimas did not allow any new political party to enter into the political system of Lithuania. The party system during the 1992 was dominated by the LDLP.

### **Third Seimas, 1996 Parliamentary Elections**

On 9<sup>th</sup> April 1996, a decree issued by president of the republic Algirdas Brazauskas set the election date for 20<sup>th</sup> October and the second round if necessary for 10<sup>th</sup> November. The 1996 election also saw a new wave of emerging political parties in Lithuania (Nqrgaard 1999: 89). Until the 1996 parliamentary elections the party political spectrum was dominated by two major forces. On the right was Sajudis which, after lose of the 1992 elections converted itself from a movement into a right of centre party called Homeland Union or Lithuanian Conservatives. This was recognition of the fragmentation of Sajudis and the defection of some members to the other parties (Lane 2001: 134, Clark and Prekevicius 2003: 550). On the left was LSDP which held power between the elections of 1992 and 1996 (Lane 2001: 134). The legislative stalemate in the summer of 1992 resulting from the split in Sajudis led to the emergence of a Centre Union to offer an alternative to the two major parties (Lane 2001: 134).

Two parties which had existed in the inter-war period, the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats were re-founded in December 1989. Other minor parties offering candidates in the 1996 parliamentary elections included the Lithuanian Peasant Party, Union of Political Prisoners and Deportees, the Lithuanian National Party and the ethnically based Polish Electoral Action (Ibid: 134). The Lithuania's Women's Party was formed by Kazimira Danute Prunskiene, a former minister in the early days of declaring independence and Aruras Paulauskas, who narrowly lost to valdas Adamkus in the 1998 formed the New Union (Nqrgaard 1999: 89).

Three main dominant groups participated in the 1996 general elections. The ruling Democratic Labour Party (LDLP), the Social- Democratic successor of the Communist Party of Lithuania led by Jursenas: the Conservative Party (HU) founded in 1993 from elements of Sajudis chaired



by V. Landsbergis, considered the hero of Lithuanian independence force in 1991: and the conservative allies the Christian Democratic Party and the Centre Union (Central Election Commission of Lithuania 1996).

The LDLP was criticized for the country's economic stagnation and financial scandals. The continued economic crisis contributed to several party splits, most notably within the two ruling parties. Elements of the HU loyal to former Prime Minister Vagnorius and troubled by parliamentary chairman Vytautas Landsbergis reassertion of control formed their own party, the Modern Conservative Union. The Christian Democrats also suffered the divide. Modernisers upset with the election of a traditionalist to lead that party decided to form the Modern Christian Democratic Union. There was a split in the political left, a rivalry between two factions leads to form the Social Democrats 2000 (Clark and Prekevicius 2003: 552).

In the 1996 elections threshold increased to 5 percent in all parties including those of ethnic parties (Lane 2001: 133). Altogether 1352 candidates contested for the 141 Seimas seats. In the October- November 1996 elections Lithuanian voters turned from the left to the centre. Some thirty (30) parties took part in Lithuania's 1996 parliamentary elections, but only five candidates won more than 5 percent which is necessary to take part in parliament (Walter 2001: 70). The unexpected fact of the 1996 election result was the strong comeback made by the Sajudis new reorganized HU/ Conservatives of Lithuania (Nqrgaard 1999: 89). The HU returned to power with 70 seats in the Seimas and the LDLP was pushed to the fourth place with 11 seats (Girnius 2002: 53). The HU remained as the largest party in the parliament (Romanaite 2006: 71). The HU formed a government with its political allies, the Christian Democrats (younger sister of HU), who won 16 seats, the second largest number; the moderate Centre Union also won 14 seats, it received one ministerial post in return for parliamentary support, but did not officially join the coalition (Walter 2001: 70 and Romanaite 2006: 71). The two main leftist parties, the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (10 seats) and LSDLP (11 Seats) were in opposition (Romanaite 2006: 71 and Walter 2001: 70). The Women's Party Gained 1 seat and the Electoral Action of Lithuanian Poles won 2 seats down from 4 in 1992 (Walter 2001: 70).

In two single- mandate districts the voter turnout was too low to validate the election results. Polling day was marked by a relatively low turnout. On 25 November the newly elected parliament held its first session and elected Landsbergis as speaker. The new council of ministers, headed by Prime Minister Gediminas Vagnorius was formed on 4<sup>th</sup> December (Central Election Commission of Lithuania 1996).

The 1996 parliamentary elections returned to a majority party system. Between 1992- 1996 Lithuanian party system was dominated by two blocs, the LDLP and Homeland Union. There was no scope for new parties. During the 1992 LDLP was dominated in the Lithuanian party system and in 1996 Homeland Union was dominating. During this period Lithuania followed the two- party system with the power change between the LSDP and HU (Clark and Prekevicius 2003: 549, Martinaitis 2012: 9).

#### **Fourth Seimas, 2000 Parliamentary Elections**

Elections to the fourth Saeimas was held on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2000. More than 58 percent of the 2.6 million eligible voters turned out in the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2000 elections to choose among the 1,180 candidates contesting the seats allocated via proportion representation lists and around 700 candidates competing for the single- member constituency seats. The parliamentary elections of 2000 were a turning point in the development of Lithuania's party system. The number of seats of HU and LDDP decreased, while the new comers the New Union and the Liberal Union received almost 45 percent of the seats in the parliament. Moreover the Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party and the Centre Union failed to cross the threshold and gained seats in the multi-member districts (Romanaitis 2006: 71).

In this election new parties emerged, old parties dropped out and significant merges have either taken place (Duvold and Jurkynas 2004: 141). The Social Democrats and the Labour Democrats merge under the name of the Social Democratic Party (Krupavicius 2003: 130, Duvold and Jurkynas 2004: 140). Between 1996- 2000 both LDLP and SDP were working in opposition to the majority government of the HU/LC and Christian Democratic Party. In this particular period common grounds were founded between the LSDP and

LDLP on a wide range of policy issues such as welfare, privatization, and education and so on (Ibid : 130). The Christian Democratic Union and the Christian Democratic Party became the Christian Democrats, and the Peasants' Party and New Democracy formed the Peasants Party & New Democratic Union (Krupavacius 2003: 130). The parliamentary elections of 2000, however destroyed that apparent stability as two new players- the New Union (Social Liberals) and Lithuanian Liberal Union emerged on the political scene, expelling the Christian Democrats and the Centre Union from the political game (Romanaite 2006: 70, Duvold and Jurkynas 2004: 140).

The main issue in the electoral campaign was the economy. The social democratic coalition promised higher social expenditure and less taxes, while the ruling Homeland Union continued its announced anti-people policies. The result showed that the parliament had swung to the left with a crushing defeat for the ruling conservative Homeland Union. The economic crisis and the scandals over the oil privatization deal, it came as no surprise that the 2000 elections were a disaster to the political right (Clark and Prekevicius 2003: 552). The HU won just 8.62 percentage of popular vote and 8 seats, far less than the 40 percent which it had won in 1996 (Durold and Jurkynas 2004: 140). It performed poorly in the single-member constituencies winning only a single seat. Including the Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius several other cabinet ministers lost their constituencies.

Lithuania's parliamentary elections in October 2000 witnessed more than twenty parties which generated a paradoxical outcome (Walter 2001: 71). The most notable change about the 2000 election was that for the first time since 1990, Lithuanian election did not produce a majority party. Neither the HU nor the Democratic Labour Party won anywhere near 71 seats. The conservatives and their allies, the Christian Democrats were well short of a majority with only 11 seats between them. The Democratic Labour Party together with its allies commanded only 51 seats (Krupavicius 2003: 131). Even more striking was that neither the conservatives nor the Democratic Labour Party entered the governing coalitions (Clark and Prekevicius 2003: 552). Four parties comprising the New Union (Social Liberals), Liberal Union, Centre Union and Christian Democratic Union won 66 seats. They

were short of 5 seats to absolute majority, the coalition achieved an effective legislative majority by gaining the support of the Peasants Party (4 seats) and the Lithuanian Poles Electoral Action (2 seats) (Walter 2001: 71, Clark and Prekevicius 2003: 552). It could also count on at least the passive support of two of the three independent deputies as well as three other deputies elected by small parties- the Moderate Conservative Union, the Christian Democratic Union and the Lithuanian Freedom League (Central Election Commission of Lithuania 2000; Clark and Prekevicius 2003: 552).

The party system between 2000 and 2004 has four major parties; the new Social Democratic Party, the Social Liberals, the Liberal Union and the HU. Although the Lithuanian party system at this juncture appears to be a four party system, it is a far more fragmented party system. Lithuanian party system has shifted from majority party system to a multi-party system (Martinaitis 2012: 1, Clark and Prekevicius 2003: 552). In the 2000 Seimas, no party dominated as the LDLP did in 1992 and the Conservatives did in 1996 (Clark and Prekevicius 2003: 552). Following a NU/SL and LLU government crisis in June 2001, the parliamentary majority collapsed. This time the long predicted coalition of the NU/SL and the newly united LSDP became a reality. Brazauskas was appointed as prime minister and other positions in the government were divided almost equally between the two parties. However the LSDP secured most of the strategic positions such as the ministers of finance, economy and interior affairs (Krupavicius 2003: 131). Overall, the election resulted in greater voter volatility and rise of new political actors. Electoral volatility reached high levels as the voters drastically shifted their preferences. It should also be pointed out that the coalition potential increases significantly. More than 70 percent votes went for cooperation minded parties (Duroid and Jurkynas 2004: 1140).

### **Fifth Seimas, 2004 Parliamentary Elections**

Elections to the fifth Seimas were held in two phases in October 2004 (Central Election Commission of Lithuania 2004). The first round of elections were held on 10 October and the second on 24<sup>th</sup> October. This was the country's first parliamentary election since it joined NATO and EU in May 2004. The

parliamentary elections held in October 2004 drastically changed the composition of the Seimas (Romanaitė 2006: 74). Three new comers the Labour Party, the Liberal Democratic Party and the Union of Peasants- New Democracy won 46 percent of votes and 42 percent of seats in parliament (Ibid). Public opinion polls indicated that the Labour Party founded in 2003 and headed by wealthy Russian born businessmen Viktor Uspaskich was likely to emerge as the largest group in parliament (Central Election Commission of Lithuania 2004).

During the electoral campaign Uspaskich promised higher living standards and campaign against political corruption. His party's message was welcomed in rural areas where people felt they had been left behind by surging prosperity in the cities and among many urban voters who declared corruption to be their number one concern. The ruling coalition campaigned using the results of the three and a half years they had spent in power. They promised a number of social measures such as an increase in the average salary and retirement pensions over the next four years. Both coalition parties also promised to lower the unemployment rate and increase in GDP. On the conservative side the HU emphasized the need for a strong state the only way in its opinion to protect Lithuania from any possible threat from Russia (Romanaitė 2006: 75).

Among the 20 political parties contested the elections around 1193 candidates stood in the 70 constituencies where the vote was proportional while some 607 stood in the 71 remaining single- member constituencies. The results of the first round of elections showed that the Labour Party had polled about 29 percent of votes obtaining 22 of the 70 seats by proportional election and one seat from a single-seat constituency. The Social Democrats formed an electoral coalition with the new union and together they received 31 seats in parliament (Ibid). The performance of the conservative HU was rather successful as it increased the number of seats from 9 in 2000 to 25 in 2004 (Romanaitė 2006: 75). But the turnout was low with only 46.08 percentages.

After the negotiations between left and right wing parties broke down, a ruling centre- left coalition emerged in November, consisting of the Labour Party, VNDS, LSDP and New Union. Following the withdrawal of the Labour

Party and New Union from the government in 2006, a new ruling coalition was organized in July consisting of LSDP, LCS, National Farmers Union and the New Civic democracy Party, which had formed following the split from the Labour Party. The four partners together held fewer than 60 seats in the parliament, making the first time since independence that the country had a minority government. The New Union (social Liberals) rejoined the ruling coalition in February 2008, the expanded coalition held a slim 72 seats majority in the 141 seat legislature. Defence minister Gediminas Kirkilas of the LSDP was chosen as the new Prime minister. The conservative HU stayed in opposition together with the Liberal and Centre Union, which received only 18 seats (Romanaitė 2006: 75).

Police investigation initiated into the DP's finances in May 2006 sparked a crisis that led its leader Uspaskich to leave the country moving to Russia, where he stayed until May 2008. DP ministers also resigned from the government in protest against the criticism by President Valdas Adamkus. Following the subsequent resignation of PM Brazauskas (LSDP) and his entire cabinet, a new caretaker PM was appointed in the person of the outgoing minister of finance Zigmantas Balciytis (LSDP). His appointment was rejected by parliament after some members sought clarification about his activities as the head of Communist Youth Union during the Soviet era and an alleged attempt to join the KGB. In early July former defence minister Gediminas Kirkilas (LSDP) became the country's eleventh Prime Minister from 1991 independence. This election shows that the Lithuanian party system is undergoing a dramatic structural change, as ex-communist and ex-Sajudis parties have lost their dominant positions, party system fragmentation is increasing and electoral volatility is growing with every election (Romanaitė 2006: 70).

### **Sixth Seimas, 2008 Parliamentary Elections**

The parliamentary elections to form the sixth Seimas held on 12 October and 26 October 2008. In the run-up to the October 2008 parliamentary elections also saw the formation of two new parties further fragmented the country's political scene. Homeland Union- Lithuanian Christian Democrats (TS-LKD)

an alliance of right- wing parties was formed in May under the leadership of former Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius. The Rising National Party (RNP) formed by TV show host and lawyer Arunas Valinskas but did not espouse any particular ideology (Central Election Commission of Lithuania, 2008).

Prime Minister Kirkilas pledged to introduce progressive taxation. He also argued that the country should introduce the Euro in 2011. He vowed to leave the LSDP if it lost the elections. TS-LKD leader Kubilius pledged to continue to negotiate with the European Commission (EC) to extend the Ignolia nuclear plants deadline for closure. The party also promised to introduce the Euro without specifying any date. It promised to cut income tax by introducing a land tax. The Order and Justice Party (Liberal Democratic Party) led by former president Rolandas Paksas, who had been impeached in April 2004 for accepting bribe advocated maintaining programmatic ties with Moscow. Paksas promised to hold a referendum on the adoption of the Euro. Order and Justice Party stopped participating actually in the Seimas activities or lost the desire to be noticeable in the public space (Lithuanian Tribune: 2012, 23<sup>rd</sup> February). The DP was led by Uspaskich, who was barred from leaving Lithuania until the investigation into party finances was completed. The DP which has its strong hold in small towns campaigned for pro- market policies with more security for small and medium sized businesses. It formed a coalition with the Youth Party under the name of Labour Party + Youth Coalition.

Among the 1,583 candidates (including 456 women) from 20 parties contested in the 2008 elections. The final results gave 45 seats to the TS-LKD and 25 to the LSDP. The RNP took 16 seats. 25 women were elected in the 2008. The “for the Order and Justice” coalition headed by the recently deposed president Rolandas Paksas and formed by the Liberal Democratic Party and the Lithuanian Peoples Union for the “fair Lithuania” gained 11 percent of vote with 9 seats. The Liberal and Centre Union gained 7 seats with 9 percent of vote. Union of Farmers Party and New Democracy party coalition polled nearly 7 percent of vote and obtained 5 seats (Central Election Commission of Lithuania 2008; Mullet: 2010).

A four party centre- right majority coalition was formed in December consisting of the TS-LKD, TPP, LRLS and LCS. The new elected parliament held its first session on 18<sup>th</sup> November and elected Arunas Valinskas (RNP) as its new speaker and Kubilius became the prime minister. Division in TPP in mid 2009 resulted in some members of the party withdrawing from the ruling coalition. The Lithuanian Peasant Popular Union has signed an agreement with the ruling coalition in the Seimas with 3 seats. The party made fifteen key demands in a statement before they offered support to the ruling coalition, which required extra man power. Though they have not officially joined the coalition, they agreed not to vote against any ministers. In an effort to shore up the coalition's stability in the Seimas, the Lithuanian Peasant Popular Union has been invited to join the ruling majority. Though the party only controlled their seats out of 141 in the parliament, the government needs extra support because it only holds a one-seat majority (Mullet: 2010).

As the country's economy continued to worsen with rising unemployment and marked slanders in GDP growth, the ruling coalition came under growing public pressure over its economic austerity measures. Approximately 7000 people gathered in Vilnius to protest tax increase and cuts in social spending. The peaceful demonstrations turned violent when a small group began throwing bales and stones and tried to storm the parliament building. Nearly 40 people were injured and 150 arrested in riots (Freedom House 2010).

### **Presidential Elections**

According to the Article 77 of the Lithuanian constitution, the president of the Republic of Lithuania is the head of state. The president shall represent the state of Lithuania and shall perform all the duties, which he or she is charged with by the constitution and laws. Under the 1992 constitution the president is directly elected for a term of five years. Any candidate who obtains 50% of the votes in the first round is eligible to be a forerunner provided that there is a turnout of 50% of eligible voters. If the turnout is less than 50%, the candidate who receives a majority of votes and the votes of at least one-fifth of all registered voters is declared the winner. Under certain circumstances



wherein no winner emerges the first two contenders will have to contest in the second round which is held within a span of two weeks. With no regard to the turnout the candidate who receives the majority in the second round is considered to be the winner. In a situation wherein there are just two candidates and fail to get an absolute majority with a turnout less than 50% results in a new election. In order to enter the race all candidates will have to gather 20,000 signatures each. The president is elected for a term of 5 years and maximum for 2 years. The president-elect must immediately suspend his or her party membership. The 1992-96 elections held for electing the members for the local representative bodies were elected for a term of two years, which was later extended to a term of three-year in December 1996. Finally it was extended to five years (Republic of Lithuania 1992).

### **1993 Presidential Elections**

Presidential election held in Lithuania on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1993. This was the first presidential election under the new constitution of Lithuania. A decree issued by the previous parliament requiring that presidential elections be held within two to four months of the Seimas elections, while adopted on the initiative of the right, turned out to be to the advantage of the LDDP after its victory in the general elections (Krupavicius 2003: 107). Only two candidates were competed in the first presidential elections of independent Lithuania, the Labour Democratic Party leader Algridas Brazauskas and the Sajudis nominee Stasys Lozoraitis. Vytautas Landsbergis, the leader of the Sajudis movement, withdrew his candidacy in support of Lozoraitis. No other candidates came forward as other parties, except for the Polish minority in Lithuania who declared their support to Lozaraitis as they became alarmed by the dominance of Brazauskas and his party. Algridas Brazauskas, the former first secretary of the Communist Party of Lithuania and the then leader of the DLPL, won with 60 percent of votes. The runner up was Lozoraitis, an independent candidate endorsed by the Sajudis movement and other political parties. The DLPL won 73 out of 141 seats in the 1992 Seimas elections. Based on the earlier success of LDLP, Brazauskas was considered a preferred candidate in the presidential elections. The presidential elections of 1993 were successful for the ex-

communist LDDP (Romanaitė 2006: 71) and the elections strengthened the position of the LDDP again (Krupavicius 2003: 107). The election campaign confirmed the same old division line between “communists” and anti-communists. The centre- right parties supported Lozoraitis in order to prevent communists from winning the presidential election. Leftist Social Democrats also supported Lozoraitis due to their perennial rivalry with the Labour Democrats (Durold and Jurkynas 2004: 137).

Under the Presidentship of Brazauskas, the Lithuanian economy stabilized and the country made considerable progress on reorientation of its foreign relations towards European and transatlantic structures. He refused to contest for a second term and instead supported Arturas Paulauskas, who lost to Valdas Adamkus in 1998. (Central Election Commission 1993).

### **1998 Presidential Elections**

Presidential elections were held in Lithuania in 21 December 1997 and 4 January 1998. The total voter turnout was 73.66%. In the first round on 21<sup>st</sup> December the independent candidate Arturas Paulauskas led the former US civil servant Valdas Adamkus. However in the second round on 4 January 1998, Adamkus led Paulauskas and won a majority vote (Central Election Commission 1998).

### **2003 Presidential Elections**

The Presidential held on 22 December 2003 and 5 January 2004. The voter turnout was 52.65%. The winner Rolandas Paksas, fought an aggressive campaign. Whereas outgoing president Valdas Adamkus campaigned on a ticket of handsome foreign policy achievements. Paksas on the other hand stressed on domestic issues like law and order (Durold and Jurkynas 2004: 152).

In 2004 president Paksas was impeached and removed from power after the Lithuanian constitutional court found him guilty of misusing his position by granting Lithuanian citizenship to his supporter Yuri Borisov. He was also accused of leaking state secrets to him. After the impeachment of the Paksas, the electoral law was amended that the politicians who have violated

the constitution do not have the right to stand for election (Martinaitis 2012 10).

### **2004 Presidential Elections**

Presidential election held on 13 and 27 June 2004. This election held because of the impeachment of former president. Total voter turnout was 54.46%. In April 2004, President Rolandas Paksas was impeached on charges of corruption and for violating his oath of office and the constitution. Paksas was accused of collaborating with the Russian mafia and was impeached and consequently removed from the office (Romanaite 2006: 74). The speaker of the parliament Arturas Paulaskas took over as acting president until elections were held in June (Freedom House 2010). New presidential elections held in 2004 at the same time as the elections to the EP. This time the winner of the presidential election was Valdas Adamkus supported by the right-wing parties. In the 2004 presidential elections Valdas Adamkus defeated Kazimiera, the leader of the Union of Farmers and New Democracy (VNDS) in a tight runoff contest and was sworn in as president in July 2004 (Romanaite 2006: 74)..

Adamkus first term in office began on February 26<sup>th</sup> 1998 and ended on February 28<sup>th</sup> 2003, following his defeat by Rolandas Paksas in the next presidential election. Paksas was later impeached and removed from the office by a parliamentary vote on April 6, 2004 (Central Election Commission 2004).

### **2009 Presidential elections**

On 17 May 2009 presidential election held. Voter turnout was 51.76%. It was the fifth Lithuanian presidential election since Lithuania was recognized as an independent country in 1991. Initially fifteen candidates submitted the relevant applications to the CEC. Fourteen nominations were accepted; one was rejected on the grounds that the person was not a Lithuanian by birth. Six nominated candidates failed to present the required 20,000 supporting signatures before the deadline of 2<sup>nd</sup> April. The nominee of the National Resurrection Party (TPP), the speaker of parliament A. Valinskas withdrew

his application. After checking the signatures, the CEC was registered all seven remaining candidates. Grybauskaite, Jezorskas both were individual nominations, Prunskiene – the leader of the peasant party, Butkevicius nominated by the Social Democratic Party of Lithuania, Grauziniene candidate of the Labour Party, Mazuronis of the order and justice Party and Tomasevski from the electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania (Central Election Commission 2009).

The conservative party leader and the Prime Minister Kubilius openly supported Grybauskaite as the party's nominee, who after internal debates decided not to nominate a candidate for their own. Dalia Grybauskaite is a former European Commissioner for financial programming and budget became the first female president of Lithuania. She was supported by the TS-LKD and won the May presidential election with almost 70 percent of vote. She defeated her closest rival Algirdas Butkevicius of the LSDP, who captured less than 12 percent of the votes (Central Election Commission 2009). In the campaign she advocated the continuation of active and well defined Euro- integration and consistent protection of Lithuania's interests in the European Union. Grybauskaite promised to stimulate exports, provide tax breaks and an additional integration into EU. She also promised to develop friendly foreign relations with Russia and constructive relations with the neighbouring countries based on mutual respect and benefit (Baltic Reports 2010: 8<sup>th</sup> June).

### **Political Parties in European Parliament Election**

EU is a political and economic union of 27 member states including Lithuania (Saulius 2011: 108). The EU was formally established by the Maastricht Treaty in 1993 and in the same year the European Council, the highest political body of the EU adopted specific criteria for admission of new member states. The basic conditions required candidates countries to observe human rights, maintain democratic governance and meet certain economic bench marks within a free market system (Ibid : 108).

After the declaration of Lithuania's independence on 11 March 1990, integration to European and trans-Atlantic economic and security structures

became the announced goal of the country's major political groups. On 27 August 1991, the European community recognizes Lithuania's independence. In 1993 Lithuania and the EC implemented a trade and cooperation agreement and the same year Lithuania joined the PHARE programme of assistance to Central European states aspiring to join EU. In 1995 Lithuania formally applied for membership in the EU and signed a number of additional free trade agreements with the union. On 15<sup>th</sup> February 2000 the Lithuanian government formally initiated accession negotiations, which were concluded in December 2002 in Copenhagen. Lithuania and 9 other states signed a treaty of accession in Athens on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2003 and in May 2003 Lithuanian voters overwhelmingly approved EU membership in a referendum (Goehring 2007: 416 and Saulius 2011: 108). Lithuanian political forces and the public strongly supported this particular integration process and the aspiration for EU membership drove the country's political, economic and administrative reforms towards development (Goehring 2007: 416). The political crisis of 2003-2004 that resulted in the impeachment of president Rolandas Paksas did not disrupt the process of accession and on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004 Lithuania formally joined the EU as a member state. In the same year, the first elections to the EP were held in Lithuania and the Seimas ratified the European constitution (Saulius 2011: 108).

On 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004 Lithuania formally joined the EU as a member state. In the same year, the first elections to EU parliament held in Lithuania and the Seimas ratified the European constitution. The electoral system based on proportional representation. In 2007, Lithuania joined the Schengen area of open borders, and in May 2008 the parliament approved the Lisbon treaty (Ibid: 108). EU membership does not really represent a division between political parties and elites in Lithuania. There are no strong and well organized anti-EU movements. All major political actors are unanimously in favour of membership (Duvold and Jurkynas 2004: 151-152).

#### **European Parliament Elections, 2004**

European Parliament (EP) elections in Lithuania held on 13 June 2004. Turnout was 48.38%. Total of 12 political parties were represented in the

2004. The largest forerunner was the new emerged Labour Party, which received 5 seats with the 38.5 percent of the vote. Social Democratic Party, Homeland Union, Centre Union came in the next positions with winning two seats each. Union of Peasants and New Democrats won one seats with 7.4 percent of the vote. Liberal Democratic Party also received one seat with 6.8 percent of the vote. Other parties participated in 2004 EP elections, the New Union (NS), KMS- together we are strong coalition between the Electoral Action of Lithuanian Poles (LLRA) and the Lithuanian Russian Union (LRS), Lithuanian Christian Democrats (LKD), Christian Conservative Social Union (KKSS), the Party of National Progress (TPP) and National Centre Party (NCP) were failed to receive seats (Central Election Commission of Lithuania 2004).

Three new parties managed to cross the threshold and win seats in the EP. For the traditional parties, the elections to the EP were not very successful. The labour Party, which was founded only eight months before the EP elections by a business man of Russian origin and was able to win about 30 percent of the votes and five seats out of 13 in the European parliament (Romanaitė 2006: 70). The Social Democrats and HU won two seats each, the Centre Union, which was formed in may 2003 after a merger of the Liberal Union, the Centre Union and the small Union of Modern Christian Democrats also got two seats. One seat was obtained by the Union of Peasants and New Democracy and one mandate went to the Liberal Democratic Party of Rolandas Paksas. The New Union (Social Liberals) and Christian Democrats failed to get any seats (Ibid: 74).

### **European Parliament Elections, 2009**

Ep elections held on 7 June 2009. The voter turnout was 20.98%. The 2009 elections Lithuania elected 12 members to the EP. Lithuania has actively participated in the various administrative bodies of the EU (Saulius 2001:108). In the EP election of June 2009, 15 political parties participated. The major winner was the conservatives (TS- LKD) which doubled their share of seats compared to 2004, from 2 to 4. The Social Democratic Party won (LSDP) won 3 seats, while the Order and Justice Party (TT) came third and

won 2 seats. The Labour Party (DP), the Lithuanian poles Electoral Action (LLRA) and the Liberals Movement of the Republic of Lithuania (LRLS) won one seat each. The national Resurrection Party (TPP), which was the big winner in the general election of 2008 (winning 15.09 % of vote) failed to win a seat in the European Parliament with only 1.04 percent of vote. Dalia Grybauskaite gained prominence in the international platform as the European Commissioner for financial programming and the budget from 2004 to 2009. Grybauskaite widely acknowledged economic expertise which helped her to a decisive win in Lithuania's presidential election of May 2009 (Ibid: 108). The turnout in the 2009 EP election was the lowest ever since direct elections for the parliament started. Lithuania came second to last with 20.9 percent. It was a dramatic drop compared to its first election in 2004, when almost half of Lithuanians voted (48.4%) (Central Election Commission of Lithuania 2009).

### **Formation of Government**

There has been no significant change in the number of political parties taking part in the formation of government (Janusauskiene 2011: 26). In 1992, twenty two political parties participated in the elections. During the 1996 elections there were six new political parties. The number of political parties who took part in the 1992 elections was twenty two whereas in 1996 it was twenty eight and in 2000 it was twenty seven (Ibid : 26).

There was not much difference in the number of parties contested for the Lithuanian parliament from 1992 to 2008 elections. In 1992 there were almost two movements and nine political organizations (Nørgaard 1999: 88) competed for the Seimas representation, in 1996 elections 30 parties (Walter 2001: 70), in 2000 elections more than twenty parties (Walter 2001: 71), in 2004 and 2008 almost thirty parties participated. But there was a change in the government formation from 1992 to 1998. In 1992 LDLP was able to form a government without any other political party support. In 1996 elections Homeland Union received majority seats and formed the government with the support of small parties. Between 1992- 2000 both LDLP and HU dominated in the government formation. From the 2000 election, the dominance of both major parties reduced and new parties entered into the Lithuanian

government. Two dominant political blocks sought to avoid competition from smaller parties by reducing the proportionality of the mixed electoral system between 1992 and 2000. Despite such efforts, the number of effective parties increased and the parliamentary elections in 2000 resulted in a shift from a two-party system to a multi-party system (Martinaitis 2012: 1). In 2004 and 2008 elections no party was able to get majority seats in parliament. In 2008 Homeland Union- Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party formed the government with the support of other right wing and small parties.

Forthcoming parliamentary elections in 2012 will be crucial for the governing and oppositional parties. It is most likely that all parties will be concentrated on the forthcoming elections. Opposition will try to emphasize all the mistakes the ruling majority committed during its tenure. As usual few of the new parties and political organizations established to participate in the coming election and all parties applied for registering itself to the Ministry of Justice of Lithuania (Editor 2012). The main parties in Lithuania's liberal flank are increasingly expressing their confidence about the upcoming parliament elections in this year October. The cooperation between Liberal Movement (LM) and Liberal and Centre Union and newly created Vilnius mayor Arturas Zvokas party Union will strengthen their chances in upcoming elections. Unity among the political parties will exhibit a positive sign if not the political parties will be mere players in the Lithuanian politics (Editor 2012).

The next chapter discusses on the role and interaction of political parties in Lithuanian society.



## **Chapter Four**

### **Political Parties and Society**

The emergence of political parties marked the development of democratic set up in the Lithuanian society. The institutional framework of democracy and the organisation of civil society through political parties and interests groups are essential factors for a democratic set up (Nqrgaard and Johannsen 1999: 95). Political parties played a very significant role in the Lithuanian independence movement. After regaining independence, parties were crucial for Lithuania in order to develop political and economic system of the new democratic country. During 1991 every active political parties and organizations including former communists supported the democratic transition to liberal market economy. In the initial period of the party

development in Lithuania, only HU, LDLP and Christian Democrats were very strong in the society with different ideological backgrounds. They had strong roots in the Lithuanian society with popular support from the citizens. In the initial stage of independence Lithuanian society was divided by the ideological differences. New parties were established from 1991 to 2011 and are still in process. These parties are totally different from the old parties in terms of ideology and principles. Founders of new parties try to reach out to as many groups as possible without any particular ideology. For example, several parties have been established in order to take up the issues related to various groups such as women, labourers, farmers, youth and business groups. In order to remain untainted and successful especially during elections Lithuanian parties promote their message, policies and agenda. Lithuanian parties built alliances with other groups by linking their member's interests in order to widen more universal values. HU alliance with Christian Democrats, LDLP with LSDP and LLRA with Russian Union was the best example of party alliances based on ideological understandings. Parties provided grater space for liberty, democracy, market economy, social justice, self determination and peaceful co-existence in Lithuanian society. Lithuanian political parties offer voice and choice to citizens. Parties provide a voice to different elements of society, including ethnic minorities.

Lithuanian citizens had participated in six parliamentary elections, five presidential elections, local and European Parliamentary elections since independence. In 2000, approximately 122,700 Lithuanian citizens were members of political parties. They made up 3.5% of the total population of Lithuania and 4.7% of registered voters (Janusauskiene 2011: 40). Even though the percentage of voter turnout was very low, in 2008 elections 2,581,305, in 2009 presidential elections 2,691,603, in 2009 EP elections 2,692,397 citizens were registered as voters. Interestingly in an established democratic country like France, party membership is lower than Lithuania and makes up only 1.7% of the electorate (Ibid: 40).

Lithuanian citizens are participating in every kind of elections with irrespective of age differences and elected as a representative of the Seimas. In 1992 elections, there was increase in the number of seats (36.76%) in the

parliament occupied by between 50- 60 age group. In 1996, 2000 and 2004 elections more seats were received by the age group between 35- 40. It shows the participation of all age's people in the Lithuanian political process. Citizens who belong to 30- 40 age group played a significant role in the Lithuanian Seimas (Central Election Commission 2004).

### **Referendum**

The most important issues like policy making with regard to the state and the citizens was decided by the referendums. A mandatory referendum is considered valid if the turnout is above 50 per cent of all registered voters. A simple turnout of 50% is necessary for other resolutions, laws and provisions under the mandatory referendum. A consultative (deliberative) referendum is considered valid if the turnout is more than 50% of all eligible voters. Resolution is adopted only if a minimum of 50% of votes casted are in favour (Law on Referendum 2002).

On 27<sup>th</sup> February, the Seimas passed a decision to organize a mandatory referendum on Lithuania's entry to the EU in 2004, to be held on 10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> May 2003. The referendum question was as follows; "I am in favour of Lithuania's membership of European Union". Data from 2040 districts (100.00% of 2040) and 60 towns and regions (100.00% of 60) shows that the number of voters was 2638886 and the turnout was 1672317 (63.37%). Almost 91.07% of the citizens cast in favour and the turnout was 63.37%. President Paksas signed a decree on 21<sup>st</sup> august submitting Lithuania's EU accession treaty to parliament for ratification. In total districts 1323584 voters supported the Lithuanian membership in EU. By post 180680 people supported the membership proposal; a minimal number rejected the membership. In totally 89.95% voters were in favour of Lithuania's membership in EU (Central Election Commission 2004).

Among the voters, almost 91.07% voted in favour of the membership. Several Lithuanian citizens considered that the membership will contribute to the state economic development as well as the democratic set up. Almost all political parties and organizations unanimously supported Lithuania's membership to EU. There was hardly any resistance with regard to the

Lithuania's membership to EU. Ultimately Lithuania officially joined EU in 2004 and participated in 2004 and 2009 European Parliamentary elections successfully.

In Lithuania the turnout has considerably declined since the 1990 elections (Nqrgaard and Johannsen 1999: 100). Political participation in the state was considerably low. (Duvold and Jurkynas 2004: 158). Voters did not participate in the political sphere through membership of political parties. The Baltic parties have a weak basis and the electorates prefer informal and unconventional activities rather than participation in formal party structures (Nqrgaard and Johannsen 1999:100). Political parties with an unpretentious ideology kept its members and supporters together in spite of a change in the political leadership, but Lithuanian HU and LDLP failed to maintain mass support which they had maintained from 1990s to 2000. Lithuanian political parties failed to create a linkage between political leadership and civil society, integrate citizens into the broader communities, mobilize the masses for participation in the political process, facilitate the recruitment of leaders, organize government, form public policy and stabilize political process. They failed to unite broad groups of individuals under a common set of beliefs and principles. Parties were dependent on their leaders to raise funds, campaign for the candidate and policies. The development of political parties and stability of the multi- party system is an essential factor for the consolidation of democracy in Lithuania.

### **Institutionalization of Political Parties**

After independence in 1992 Lithuania adopted a new constitution, which provides a constitutional provision for the formation of political parties. Lithuanian constitution of 1992 introduced the legal framework for an effective functioning of political parties by conceptualizing "a political party shall be a public legal person that its own name, has been established pursuant to this Law, and whose purpose is to meet the political interests of its members, assist in expressing the political will of the citizens of the Republic of Lithuania in enforcing State power and the right to self-government" (Constitution of Lithuania 1992). Article 35 of the 1992 constitution provides

citizens the right to freely unite themselves into communities, political parties and associations. But their goals do not contradict the constitution and laws of the nation. The Lithuanian state provides public subsidies (finance) to all political organizations for campaigning and publishing party works (Republic of Lithuania 2011).

During the pre- transitional period the real success on institutional level was a democratization of electoral procedures, allowing non- radical oppositional forces to participate in the elections. The LCP was the dominant political actor in pre- transitional period. After origin of Sajudis in June 1988, the LCP nomenklatura was divided into three political factions: hard-liners, moderates and reformers. So many non- nomenklatura communists joined and even took part in the creation of Sajudis (Krupavicius 1998: 472). Sajudis and divided communist party were the leading political parties in the phase of confrontation. They had ideological differences on democracy, independence and the protection of reformed socialism. During this confrontation phase the hegemonic one party system changed by proto- multipartyism, where Sajudis and LCP were dominant political forces (Ibid: 473).

Phase of system reforms begins with the victory of Sajudis in the initial election. Constituent parliament was the only institution to legitimize the political democracy during system reform phase. Both Sajudis and independent LCP were adopted different strategies of development. The dependent LCP was transformed into the Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party. Sajudis also divided as centre faction of Sajudis in 1992. The fragmentation of Sajudis was very optimistic development for the re-establishment of Lithuania's multiparty system. The 1992 elections were the first multiparty elections in Lithuania since 1926. In the system reform phase more than 30 political associations and parties' were registered (Krupavicius 1998: 474). The consolidation of democracy phase begins with the adoption of a new constitution in 1992. Under the constitution the traditional institutions such as legislature, executive and courts acquired structural stability. In this phase political parties were transformed into autonomous structures and the process of institutionalization was started. From 1992- 2000 Lithuania had experienced stability in the party system. The stability of party

system is an indicator of democracy (Ibid: 474-475). With the emergence of new parties and fragmentations Lithuanian political system may still very unstable. Since 2000 Lithuanian parties are failed to mobilize the voters. Political trust is very less in Lithuania. But the revival of recent party competition in Lithuania was consistent with the democratic transition. Lithuania is a new independent country and it doesn't have much experience with multiparty system. In some transforming countries it will take a longer period to launch stable multiparty system (Krupavicius 1998: 475).

### **Organizational Structure of Lithuanian Parties**

Generally when a country transforms from a state of governance, the existing political parties institutionalise in order to maintain its legality. Institutionalization of political parties includes formal or legal institutional regulations of the party development which provides a legal basis for the party formation. The electoral system, electoral performance and the parliamentary rules of the party activities are all regulated under the process of institutionalization. Institutionalization of political parties also included the organizational structuring of the political parties through the improvement of the specialized bodies necessary for representative politics. It will also concentrate on the improvement of the mobilization of electoral support and the political effectiveness of party activities (Krupavicius 1998: 475).

Partly due to the organisational strength of the LDLP in 1992, spurred the Sajudis to reorganise itself and focus on its organisation building. Though the Sajudis officially continued as a social movement, in reality it was transformed into the conservatives (HU/LC) under the leadership of Landsbergis (Nqrgaard and Johannsen 1999:94). By December 1995 the conservatives had surpassed the LDLP in terms of members with 16000 members in 1995 and 20,000 by March 1999. Furthermore by 1997 the conservatives had more local organisations than any other political party in Lithuania. The Lithuanian Christian Democratic also made considerable organisational strides following their electoral defeat in 1992. By 1995 their membership slightly surpassed that of the LDLP (Ibid :95).

The incursion of political parties in the political set up is considered to be one of the important features of the democracy (Janusauskiene 2011: 39). Various political parties preferred using the term 'movement' or 'union' rather than using the word party. Out of 46 political parties which existed in 2000, fourteen of them did not use the word 'party' in their titles (Ibid: 41). Organizational defects contribute to the malfunctioning of the parliament (Girnius 2002: 59). Most legislators are poorly trained with respect to law-making. Few are lawyers or businessmen or orators with literary background. The large proportion of representatives has little understanding on issues related to economics or business which occupy a prominent place in the legislation process (Ibid: 60). Strong anti-party sentiments in society and under developed party structures disclose the weakness of the parties as social organizations and political institutions (Romanaitė 2006: 86). The political parties are still characterised by weak organizations and a lack of well defined constituencies (Nqrgaard and Johannsen 1999: 94). The low organization rate is primarily due to the wide spread lack of confidence in political parties, parliament and government (Ibid: 94).

Apparently most of the members in the political parties were political elites. Therefore recruitment into political parties to a large extent affected the composition of political elites in the party (Janusauskiene 2011: 52). Ideology of the candidates is a fundamental factor for a candidate to gain a membership of the party. In addition some political parties required recommendations. The Lithuanian Labour Party requires a recommendation of a party member; the HU/LC requires two recommendations from the same. The Christian Lithuanian Democratic Party requires one or more recommendations from the party member. Most importantly it was extremely vigilant about the political past of its members. The Christian Lithuanian Democratic Party provided a limited space for the ex-members of the communist party. The ex-communist leaders were unable to become party leaders for at least ten years. But memberships for parties like Lithuanian Social Democratic Party as well as the Lithuanian centre did not require recommendations. However Social Democrats laid additional importance on the personal behaviour of the candidate (Ibid: 53). The LDLP had a top-down style of government, which

was captured by the expression of “pyramid of government”. The pyramid concept of government is one in which power flows from the apex into ever broadening layers, but retains clear and unchallenged lines of authority (Girnius 2002: 60).

*Sajudis*, in turn, could have had about 180, 000 members in 1989, but most of them disengaged from political activity after the declaration of independence. The HU, which was officially established in 1993, managed to mobilize more than 11,000 members and this number grew steadily until 1998. However, the party membership substantially decreased after the unsuccessful election of 2000 (Romanaite 2006: 82- 83). Since the 1992 elections the LDLP has been on the verge of Degeneration. The government was accused of numerous scandals which took a heavy toll on the party performance. During the 1992 elections the LDLP was reported of having almost 15000 members which gradually deteriorated (Nqrgaard and Johannsen 1999:95). The Christian Democrats reached a comparable membership rate by using the organizational structure and church resources. Other parties which had to create their organizational structure from the scratch had much lesser organizational capabilities. Among the new parties, only the Labour Party invested much effort into building organizational structure. The party claimed to have about 13,000 members (Romanaite 2006: 83).

Lithuanian Ministry of Justice introduced a system wherein the people have an access to the list of names included in the list of political parties. When connected to an electronic system, voters can find the status of their membership. From now on, it will be enough to log in using the electronic banking service; the system automatically checks the list of all the parties and immediately provides information on people’s dependence to political parties. Data included in the system is based on political parties’ information submitted to the Ministry of Justice. All the parties must annually submit updated lists of their members to Ministry in order to check whether the parties have sufficient number of members without any duplication (Ruta Mikucionyte 2012: Lithuanian Tribune).



## **Public Funding**

Direct state funding to the political parties was introduced in Lithuania in 1999 (Romanaite 2006: 83). The idea of public subsidies for parties was initiated by Jonas Simena, a member of the LchDP in 1997. With the agreement of all the parties, a working group of party representatives was established in order to create a pilot project on the state funding of parties. Some parties held the opinion that public funding should not be introduced until 1998 due to economic crisis. However, parties were in great need of resources for the upcoming parliamentary elections in 2000 (Unikaite 2008: 34). Finally the Law implemented in 1999 (Law on Funding to Political Parties 1999; Romanaite: 2006: 83 and Unikaite 2008: 34).

According to the law on the funding of political parties and political institutions of 1999 (Unikaite 2008: 33), state subsidies are allocated to parties which receive at least 3% of the votes in parliamentary or municipal elections. However, according to the law, state subsidies cannot exceed 0.1% of the state budget (Romanaite 2006: 83). Every party in Lithuania is supposed to submit declarations on their campaign accounts and expenditure within 25 days after the elections. Any party failing to fulfil the criteria will lose the subsidies allocated to that party. In 2004 a new law regarding funding and funding control to the political parties, political organizations and political campaign was enacted. It is the most important law regulating a strict regime of campaign finance in Lithuania (Unikaite 2008: 34). The present campaign system provides that campaigning shall be financed from the funds received from parties or candidates which are accumulated in a special election account opened according to a certificate issued by the Central Electoral Committee (CEC). Campaign money can be deposited to the special account from the following sources; the financial resources of the parties, personal funds of the candidates and donations from natural persons (Unikaite 2008: 34).

In 2000 the largest part of the total subsidies (980,000 LTL) was received by two right-wing parties which initiated the introduction of these

subsidies, the HU (384,700 LTL) and LchDP (143,200 LTL). In 2001, the state allocated a smaller amount of money (400,000 LTL) to parties. The biggest subsidy was received by three parties, the LSDP, the New Union-Social Liberals (NU/SL) and the Lithuanian Liberal Union (LLU). In 2002 the state subsidy was reduced, again the above mentioned three parties were successful in receiving subsidies. In 2004 the largest amount was received by Labour Party (Ibid: 35). In 2008 Homeland Union and other right-wing parties received largest share in subsidy. This time, the greatest share of money from the public budget went to the Conservatives as they would get over LTTL 2.5 million. Almost LTL 1.8 million will be given to the Social Democrats, LTL 1.5 million to the Liberal Centrists, LTL 1.3 million to the party Order and Justice. Meanwhile, around LTL 1 million should be allocated to the Labour Party, LTL 700,000 to the Liberals Movement, LTL 650,000 to the Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania and LTL 530,000 to the Lithuanian Peasant and Green Union (Petras Vaida 2012: Lithuanian Tribune).

President Dalia Grybauskaite introduced a proposal to forbid businessman from supporting (finance) parties. The Seimas election campaign projected to cost 20- 25 million LTL for all parties and candidates. The majority of funds are collected as donations to political parties from enterprises, firms, companies and businessmen; therefore, politicians believe that much greater grants should be considered for them from the state budget after the president's proposal to forbid financing of parties by accepting legal. According to the Seimas vice- chairman and leader of the ruling Liberal and Centre Union, Algis Caplikas, if the amount of money remains the same, "it would be true political suicide and destruction of the party system". In his opinion, if there is a will to apply a prohibition against enterprises from financing parties during the campaign for Seimas 2012 elections, it will be necessary for grants for political organizations to be three to four times more than the current figure of 5.5 million LTL (Kelly 2011: Lithuanian Tribune). Parliamentarians decided that an estimated amount of 44.9 million LTL of state budget will be assigned to the Central Election Commission (CEC) for 2012 parliamentary elections. However, 20.278 million LL of the assigned budget will be distributed to political parties in form of grants. The

parliamentary elections will be held this year (2012) on October 14<sup>th</sup> and the second round of elections on October 28 (Lithuanian Tribune: 2012).

### **Emergence of Politically Relevant Cleavages in Lithuania**

The initial year of 1990s the Lithuanian society was more subtle without any trace of political difference. In 1990s in spite of having an unstable party system and unpredictable voting patterns Lithuania managed to balance its political base. By 2000 the political phase completely took a new turn wherein new political parties came up with diverse political agenda pitching behind the old political parties. Politically relevant cleavages emerged strongly in the society. Cleavages refer to the political differences among the citizens which indirectly affects the electoral process. It has also led to the emergence of political dissimilarity. Cleavages in politics are something which leaves its imprint in a long run (Jurkynas 2004: 281).

According to Stefano Bartolini and Peter Mair (1990), a cleavage consists of three parts: 1. empirically, it has to be definable in terms of social structure; 2. normatively, it is a system of values giving a sense of common identity to a social group and 3. Behaviourally, a cleavage manifests itself as an interaction between political actors (quoted in Jurkynas 2004: 282). During the inter-war period in Lithuania cleavages among the political parties hardly existed due to the influence of Soviet regime (Ibid: 282). The emergence of cleavages included various aspects like the historical, transitional and contemporary. The historical cleavages encompasses various aspects like ethnic, religious, urban verses rural, labour verses capital and communist verses social democrats. The transitional cleavages refer to the differences between the Sajudis and the Soviet structure. The contemporary cleavages dealt with conflicts of national/cosmopolitan, protectionist/free-market, generational and winners/ losers of transition. Lithuania witnessed both historical and transitional differences (Jurkynas 2004: 283).

The following cleavages frame the party system in Lithuania: the perception of the nation- state, perception of the Soviet era, religion or the question of the secularity, the question of land requisition and land reform, industrial policy, the national dimension or integration of the minorities and

finally international orientation (Nqrgaard and Johannsen 1999: 91). According to Romanaite (2006: 77) the communist and anti- communist cleavage, religious, rural- urban and ethnic divisions influence in shaping the voting behaviour in Lithuania. Although these divisions don't constitute any dominant political conflict, they have a decisive impact on the structure of the party system (Ibid: 77).

The change in the political patterns in Lithuania can be divided into various phases (Jurkynas 2004: 278). The post-communist transition in Lithuania witnessed three main conflicts in the left/right dimension: centre/periphery (or USSR/Lithuania) (1988-90), ideological value-laden (1990-1997) and the emerging socio-economic (1997-2004) (Ibid: 280). The period of 1990-1997 also witnessed a high level of divergence whereas the period 1990-2000 entirely was dominated by two-party system (Jurkynas 2004: 278).

The current political structure of Lithuania is dominated by the Social Democrats, Social Liberals, Liberals, Conservatives and Liberal Democrats (Jurkynas 2004: 278-279). The political phase in post-2000 witnessed the success of Labour Party and Peasants Union Lithuania experienced changing pattern in its political structure. The Lithuanian municipal and parliamentary elections in 2000 transfigured the political concentration on issues related to socio-economic field rather than the value based issues. Voting patterns in Lithuania completely withered the foundation of old political parties. Value based issues were totally side-lined providing larger space to agendas on socio-economics. This particular shift from the issues of value-laden to socio-economic issues indicated rational behaviour among the common man (Jurkynas 2004: 279). The emergence of socio-economic issues contrarily affected the Lithuanian politics (Jurkynas 2004: 280).

**Table: 8**

**Cleavages and Representing Parties**

<b>Cleavages</b>	<b>Party representing cleavage</b>
Communist- anti-	LSDP- HU/KD

communist cleavage	
Rural and urban cleavage	Peasants Union, LSDP, LKDP
Religious cleavage	Right- wing parties
Ethnic cleavage	LLRA, RU, LSDP
State and church cleavage	Christian Democrats, Conservatives
Personality cleavage	Labour Party, SL, LSDP (in 2000)
EU integration cleavage	Almost all parties

### **Communist and Anti- Communist Divide**

The process of polarisation in Lithuania started from 1990-1997 due the absence of common understanding and augmented differences among the political bodies. The dissimilarities between the Soviet Union apparatus and the Sajudis and also between the Labour Democratic Party (LDLP) and the Conservatives (HU) paved a way for a highly polarised society in Lithuania. Lithuanian society is deeply divided and the level of conflict has been constantly increasing. The main division is not ethnic or religious but political; between former communists and anti- communists (Girnius 2002: 56, Duvold and Jurkynas 2004: 144). The dispute between anti-communists and post- communists was originally about the power and interpretations of the past, relations with Moscow, social justice and inequality (Girnius 2002: 56). The communist anti-communist cleavages, which was politically manifested by antagonism between the Labour Democrats and the HU has deep social roots dating back to the pre-war social structures and in particular the experience of Soviet occupation (Romanaite 2006: 77). Those who have victims of Soviet repression tend to vote for HU; those who enjoyed a privileged life during the Soviet regime are more inclined to vote for the LSDP or LDLP. During every election anti-communist and anti-Russian campaign was led by the Sajudis in full swing. The anti-Russian and pro-western principles were misused by the TSLK. With the defeat in the elections

of 2000, the TSLK drifted away from its anti-communist stance further changing its leadership in 2003. With the change in the Lithuanian political set-up the old political parties like the LDLP and the Christian Democrats suffered a great loss. The Christian Democrats failed to make up to the main stream after the parliamentary elections of 2002. In 2004, in the elections to the European parliament it managed to obtain 2.75% of the total votes casted. In spite of the alliance formed between the LDDP and LSDP their reputation dropped from 31.1% to 14.4% in 2002-2004. The Fragmentation of these political parties and their decreasing popularity resulted in the decline of the value-laden and anti-communist political conflicts in Lithuania. The old parties with their traditional strategies could no more sustain in the new transforming political set up. Gradually the conservatives lost severely from 1996-2000 due to their concentration on the Soviet rule (Jurkynas 2004: 283).

### **Rural and Urban**

Among all the existing aspects of conflict in Lithuania the political conflict between the urban and rural masses very much existed. The urban- rural disparity is a source of salient political division in Lithuania (Duvold and Jurkynas 2004: 149). In the beginning of the party system formation, the urban- rural cleavage was almost nonexistent in Lithuania but it has gained importance in spite of the growing differences in the quality of life in the cities and in rural areas (Romanaitė 2006: 78). Majority of the foreign capital is invested in the major urban areas (Duvold and Jurkynas 2004: 149). Prior to the World War II political parties such as the Farmers Union and Peasant People's Party showed its political presence in Lithuania (Jurkynas 2004: 283). There was a major conflict between the protectionist and the free market division (Jurkynas 2004: 283-284). Though Lithuania was predominantly an agricultural society the number of agricultural labourers decreased from 19% in 2001 to 17% in mid 2002.

The emergence of market economy in Lithuania also led to the increase in the number of the landowning class. The political cleavages in the rural areas led to the decrease in the GDP share of the agricultural production. In 1990s peasant parties like the Lithuanian Peasants Party (LVP) emerged

with pro rural agenda. The urban- rural division was used by the Lithuanian Peasants Party which claimed to represent farmers' interests and demanded protective measures (Romanaite 2006: 79). The party also came up with the protectionism strategies in order to protect the Lithuanian agricultural products. In the 2004 elections the LVP managed to gain 7.4% of the votes which was descent enough to acquire a position through alliance in the parliament.

In 2002 the Peasants Party formed an alliance with the New Democracy formerly known as the Women's Party. The LVP was successful in gaining good number of seats in the local elections but in the general elections it managed to get only 2.9%. The Peasants party has managed to build up a substantial body of electoral support through its performance in certain rural districts. At the same time, the party seems to attract considerably more votes in municipal elections than in parliamentary elections (Duvold and Jurkynas 2004: 148; Romanaite 2006: 79). The party predominantly institutionalised the rural conflicts for its political interests (Jurkynas 2004: 284). Other parties like LSDP, NSSL, LKDP, TSLK and Labour Party were successful in getting a significant support in the rural constituency (Jurkynas 2004: 284-285). Other than the LPP parties like the LLU also took up the issues related to the differences among the rural and the urban sections. After Rolandas Paksas left the Conservative Party and became the leader of the Liberals the LLU managed to get significant amount of votes. The LLU attracted an average of 7.6% of votes in 1992-2004. In spite of 80% foreign direct investment and over 60% of Lithuania's GDP, the unemployment rate was below the national average in cities like Vilnius, Klaipeda and Kaunas. Therefore LLU demonstrated mostly in urban areas. The process of modernisation also led to the emergence new young, educated and rich mass. The voting patterns favoured the liberal minded parties of the right.

In the presidential elections of the 2002 and 2004 President Adamkus managed to gain support from urban areas mostly from large cities. At the same time people affected by the market economy, unemployed masses, low salary employees including rural population expressed their resentment towards the political elite. Attempts to modernize and restructure the country

side have proved slow and difficult (Duvold and Jurkynas 2004: 149). The difference among the rural and the urban population changed the voting patterns. On the one hand the voting patterns showed significant support to the left parties but on the other hand some of them stayed neutral with their absence in the voting. The urban and rural divide was exploited by the LLP and LLU. The existing social structure and electoral behaviour in Lithuania further contributed to the emerging cleavages in the political structure (Jurkynas 2004: 285).

### **Post-communist Social Democratic Cleavage**

With the emergence of various cleavages Lithuania also experienced a clear cut division between the post-communist and the Social Democratic sections. After the reestablishment of Lithuanian independence significant number of people supported both the parties in Lithuania. Early 1990s witnessed a clear ambiguity between the LDLP and LSDP. LSDP refused to recognise the LDLP as a democratic political party due to its policy of closed privatisation (Jurkynas 2004: 286). The LSDP also blocked their membership in the Socialist International in order to isolate LDLP. The LSDP and LDLP formed a coalition in 2001 with their successful co-operation in the local and general elections in 2000 (Krupavicius 2003: 130, Duvold and Jurkynas 2004: 140 and Jurkynas 2004: 285). Unemployed, skilled workers and non-Lithuanians tend to support the LSDP. The strong presence of LSDP has contributed to the institutionalisation of the labour and capital conflict (Ibid: 286).

### **Ethnic Cleavage**

Ethnic minorities play a decisive role in the state politics. Ethnic cleavages occupy a significant place in the process of politicisation. The issues of ethnic minorities are very less in Lithuania when compared to Latvia and Estonia (Jurkynas 2004: 287). Lithuania has considerable number of ethnic minorities, Russians and poles. The polish minority clearly represents a more intricate issue for Lithuania than the Russians (Duvold and Jurkynas 2004: 148). The question of ethnic minorities is not been listed on the political agenda of Lithuania. The Lithuanian poles and Russians are respected by several parties. In fact, the ethnic question has never been politicized in Lithuania (Romanaite



2006: 77). Uniform policy of citizenship and a strong legal framework has avoided the politicisation of the ethnic minority issues (Jurkynas 2004: 287-288). According to the 1989 law on ethnic minorities, Lithuania allows ethnic minorities to develop their culture freely; to expect financial support from the government for their cultural and educational activities (Dovile 2009: 156). The ethnic minorities in Lithuania continue to show their support to the left parties. Ethnic parties like the LLRA are represented by the Polish minority. Union of Lithuanian Russians and the Political Party 'Russian Alliance' represented the local Russians. Various other parties representing the ethnic minorities were fragmented with less than 1% of directives. The parties of the ethnic minorities have never been influential at the national level (Romanaite 2006: 77). These parties showed poor performance with not more than 3% in the general elections. In 1996, the exceptional provision for ethnic minorities was abolished and the minimum threshold was raised to 5% for all individual parties. As a result, the Polish Electoral Action was not able to get seats in multi-member districts (Ibid: 78). In the 2000 elections, the Lithuanian Russian Union ran under the joint list of Brazauskas coalition and received 3 seats. In the EP and the 2004 parliamentary elections, the Russian Union cooperated with LLRA but failed to gain any sort of representation (Romanaite 2006: 78 and Jurkynas 2004: 288).

The voting patterns have favoured the ethnic parties in the local elections. The Electoral Action of Lithuanian Poles (LLRA) has governed municipal councils in Vilnius and Salininkai districts since 1997. The alliance of the ethnic parties in the European parliament elections gave them 5.7% votes. The south eastern Lithuania region is majorly dominated by the national minorities. People in the south eastern Lithuanian region are not in favour of the politicians who belong to a pro-western ideology as well as the rightist orientation (Jurkynas 2004: 288). The victory of Kazimiera Prunskienė in the presidential election of 2004 was an example for the existing voting patterns (Jurkynas 2004: 288-289). Unity of the ethnic parties in Lithuania remains ambiguous. The politicisation of the ethnic issues will result in forming new cleavages in the state (Jurkynas 2004: 289).

## **Religious Cleavage**

Religion played a significant role in the Lithuanian politics. Religious cleavage was highly noticeable during the inter-war period due to the strong presence of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church influenced the Lithuanian political structure as well as the society. The Christian Democratic Party emerged as an important political organisation until the authoritarian coup of Antanas Smetona in 1926. The Communist regime upheld the principle of secularism and atheism which gradually decreased the influence of the Catholic Church. In the process of marketisation the religious norms were side-lined as religion had nothing to do with the market (Jurkynas 2004: 286-287). Despite the anti-religious principles followed by the Soviet regime the Catholic Church operated underground. Christian Democratic Party and the Lithuanian Christian Democratic Union demonstrated the religious issues which were political. The Soviet opposition to the Catholic Church in a way contributed to the reclamation of the religious ideas.

The religious change in Lithuania can be easily reduced to the left- right dimension as well. Religious voters tend to vote for Christian Democrats and for the HU (Romanaitė 2006: 78). The LCDP actively participated in the independence movement and managed to gain 12.6% votes in the elections of 1992. The fragmentation of the conservative parties adversely affected existence the LCDP. Gradually the voting pattern towards the LCDP deteriorated. The value laden conflict dominated in comparison to the religious ideas. The shift from the value-laden issue to the socio-economic provided an opportunity for the LCDP to link their electoral strategies with their religious agenda. Religion as an agenda in the electoral process has gained momentum. The religious strategy has been used in order to draw the interests of people who are highly inclined towards religion. Parties like Homeland Union and conservative parties are taking up Christian and moral values in order to gain maximum support from the masses (Jurkynas 2004: 287).

## **Post-materialism**

The socio-economic development policies by the western countries left its influence on the Lithuanian society. The idea of socio-economic development in the western countries raised the question of quality of life in Lithuania. The low living standard in the central and Eastern Europe made it difficult to adopt the policies of socio-economic development from the western nations. The counter movement against the Soviet regime was initiated by the environmental organisations. The Greens took up the ecological issues as their agenda in their movement against the Soviet regime. The Greens and the Women's Party lacked sincerity in representing the post materialist issues. Basically the Greens opposed the Soviet industrial sector. Gaining 3% in the constitutive elections of 1990, the Greens almost disappeared from the political field after the 1992 parliamentary elections. As the issue of low standard living failed to benefit the post materialist agenda politically due to which the concentration automatically shifted to materialistic issues. The politicization of the ecological issues had a lesser impact as the agenda of independence was crushed. Other than the Greens the Women's Party in 1995 represented the post materialist ideology. The electoral performance of the LWP was extremely poor (Jurkynas 2004: 289). The popularity of the LWP under the leadership of Kazimiera Prunskiene helped the party to enter in the parliament after the general elections of 2002 (Jurkynas 2004: 289-290). The alliance between the LWP and LPP has failed to gain momentum in the Lithuanian political arena. Various other issues like the low standard of living, political issues have dominated the political platform side-lining the issue of post materialism (Ibid: 290).

### **EU integration**

EU membership does not really represent a division between political parties and elites in Lithuania. There are no strong and well organized anti- EU movements. All major actors on the Lithuanian political stage are unanimously in favour of membership. A solid number of Lithuanians supported membership, which was confirmed in a referendum on the question held in may 2003. Over 90% off the people voted in favour (Duvold and Jurkynas 2004: 151). In order to concentrate on the socio-economic

development of the state, Lithuania initiated to associate itself to various international organisations like the EU. The main objective of Lithuania joining EU was to isolate itself from the Russian influence and also show its presence and participation in the joint European decision making. It also aimed at improving the economic conditions of the state through its association with the EU. But Lithuania's association with EU will adversely affect the domestic policies leading to political conflicts. EU's membership will result in the emergence of nationalist ideas overshadowing rest of the issues (Jurkynas 2004: 293).

### **Political Personalities Cleavage**

The leadership among the political parties left a great impact on the party's identity and its reputation. Political leaders were important determinants of the political party. Political parties were identified on the lines of their leadership. Political leadership became a defining factor in deciding the existence of political parties. Leaders like Landsbergis and Brazauskas occupied a charismatic position in the Lithuanian political field (Duvold and Jurkynas 2004: 157; Jurkynas 2004: 290). The underlying personal ambitions and interests resulted in the fragmentation of largest political parties. The LDLP lost the Socialists, the LSDP -- Social Democracy-2000; the Conservatives lost the Homeland People's Party and the Moderate Conservative Union; the LKDP lost the Modern Christian Democrats; and the Liberals -- the LDP. The emergence of new political parties in 1990s mostly revolved around the political leaders. NSSL under the leadership of Arturas Paulauskas was successful in creating its party position in the 2002 presidential elections. Under the leadership of Paksas the LLS became the second largest parliamentary party in 2002. The comeback of Brazauskas from his political retirement in 2002 general elections saved the LSDP and LDDP by yielding over 31% of votes. Unpopularity of the leader of the TSLK, Landsbergis adversely affected the Conservatives in parliamentary elections of 2000. Under the leadership of Lithuanian Russian Viktor Uspaskich the Labour Party occupied a powerful position (Jurkynas 2004: 290).

The preferences for some forms of authoritarian rule are disturbed political set up in Lithuania (Duvold and Jurkynas 2004: 155). 40% of the Lithuanian respondents in the NEB survey as of 2001 agree or strongly agree with the statement, best to get rid of parliament and elections and have a strong leader who can quickly decide everything (Ibid : 154). The respondents belonged between and above the age 30 are strong supporters of former communists.

With regard to the political parties in Lithuania, centre- left oriented parties strongly supported the strong man rule than the left- right oriented parties. Approximately 19% of the centre- left is interested in communist rule, where as only 4% of the left- right showed their interest in communist rule. Even few small parties supported the military rule in Lithuania. LDLP, LSDP and Labour Party and other left oriented parties are best examples of communist rule in Lithuania. 1992 to 2008 elections LDLP and LSDP (merged in 2000) played significant role in the Seimas.

Political parties play an extremely significant role in elections, parliamentary legislation and government formation in Lithuania. Parties are designed to be prime vehicles or representatives in Lithuania. At the same time, post-communist parties tend to be instruments for personal ambitions. To illustrate this point, during the 2000 parliamentary elections, the temporary alliance (prior to the official party merger) between the Labour Democrats and Social Democrats focused heavily on Mr. Brazauskas personal appeal. In fact, the alliance was simply named the “Social Democratic Coalition of Algirdas Brazauskas” and its stunning victory was clearly due to the popularity of Mr. Brazauskas himself (Duvold and Jurkynas 2004: 157). Another case is that of HU, which also has a fairly solid party membership organization, including a leadership pool, yet the increasing unpopularity of its leader Landsbergis, contributed to the parties to near collapse in the 2000 general elections. The rise of the Liberal Union in 2000 was almost equally linked to the popularity of its new leader Rolandas Paksas. The sudden rise of Mr. Paksas new party- the Liberal Democratic Party in the 2002 local elections is evidently linked to high profile during the presidential elections (Ibid : 157) .

The electoral system and the office of the president are the two important institutional factors that strengthened the political personalities. A political representative elected in the single member constituency held a powerful position in the political party. The political parties left a negative impact on the society due to the repeated selection of particular candidates from the single member constituency. The presidential factor also determined the stature of the political personalities. The 1992 constitution granted numerous powers to the president which led to the domination of the individual office in the entire political system (Duvold and Jurkynas 2004: 157). The political personalities have influenced the masses to a large extent. The masses tend to vote a particular candidate despite the party's ideology. Despite the changing trends in the electoral process the influence of political leaders continued in the Lithuanian society (Jurkynas 2004: 291).

### **Traditionalists and Modernists Cleavage**

It is quite plausible to draw a distinction between moderates and traditionalists in Lithuanian politics. In simplified terms modernists are young, educated urbanites with fairly cosmopolitan values and perceptions. They are likely to identify with a liberal agenda in terms of economy and politics and they support Lithuania's further integration into NATO and EU. A significant number of Lithuanians actually believe that soviet communism was a superior political and economic system, although few of them actually want to turn back the clock to the Soviet times (Duvold and Jurkynas 2004: 153).

The post-communist society witnessed a concrete relationship with the social and the political factors. In the 1990s Social and economic interests were not taken into consideration by the electorates due to which political representatives took up the issues related to political problems. Social issues began to occupy its position in the political field with the process of marketisation and the increase in the political experience. The failure of democracy to bring up a better standard of living and the distrust towards the political parties as well as the parliament has decreased the number of voters since 1992 (Jurkynas 2004: 291). Despite of the variation in the voting patterns there has been considerable support to the Labour Party. Lack of

socio-economic development and also the political instability among the political parties have increased discontentment among the citizens especially from regions like South-Eastern Lithuania. This expression of discontentment has given space to new political parties like the Liberal Democrats in order to fill the vacuum of underdevelopment (Ibid: 292)

Anti-communist, rural- urban, religious and ethnicity were the social issues are available for political management into cleavages in 1990-2008. With considerable period politically subtle issues like transitional, religious, labour verses capital and urban verses rural have transformed to pure political issues. With an emphasis on anti-communist outlook the religious issues were politicised in the 1990s. The conflict between the urban/ rural and the protectionist/market was highly politicised by the Liberals and the Peasants. The ethnic conflicts also became an issue of cleavage (Jurkynas 2004: 293). Ethnic issues can become politically relevant only if the existing fragmentations among the ethnic parties are corrected. Post materialist issues were absent on the political agenda due to the lack of comfortable circumstances (Ibid: 294).

### **Trust in Parties**

According to the President Grybauskaite,

Lithuanian institutions and political parties became small Lithuanian duchies. Nearly 80% of the people in Lithuania no longer trust the political parties, politicians and public institutions. In other words, people have lost the confidence in the state. The pessimistic polling results are confirmed by the irrefutable fact that more and more citizens choose not to vote. By their own decision, they are renouncing the right to participate in the governance of their state. In 1992 referendum on the constitution, 75% of the voters came to the polling stations despite the heavy snow fall that disrupted traffic and power supplies. They came because they believed that their vote could make a difference. For instance the celebration of independence this spring when thousands of people gathered to express their solidarity to their homeland or the recent environmental campaigns which brought together hundreds of young people with strong belief that they can make Lithuania clean and beautiful. It is extremely unfortunate that the same people have lost their trust and confidence in the electoral process. They no longer believe that a change of political colours in parliament or the local municipality will bring about real change in the country or in their personal life. They no longer trust the rightists, leftists or political new comers who have also disappointed them. They have lost confidence in the government, politicians and politics. This gives a serious warning ring to all the political parties who have enclosed themselves in narrow party shells and forgot that their future which lies in the

hands of the voters, not the other way round. Let us finally make the political system more open to the public and non-party citizens. Let us also make political parties more open to new faces, view points, ideas and democratic decision making. Together we will send that the voice of the people is important and their participation in the life of the state is not only possible but also awaited (Grybauskaite: 2010).

Lithuanians have lost trust in the state institutions, trade unions and political parties. With an exception of the presidency, the other political representative institutions failed to gain the public trust. In Lithuania less than one third of the population trusted in the parliament, courts, local governments and political parties. On the low level of trust among the public showed the inefficiency of the democratic set up of Lithuania but on the other it indicated the critical thinking of the Lithuanian public.

**Table: 9**  
**Trust in Political Institutions**

<b>Name of the Institution</b>	<b>% of Trust</b>
Political Parties	10%
Civil Service	39%
National Government	31%
National Parliament	23%

Source: (European Commission 2004: 26).

Since the communist phase the public showed no trust in the public institutions. According to the EBM 2004, Lithuanian citizens had less trust in political parties (10%), national government (31%) and parliament (23%). In general, Lithuanians lacked the ‘resources of trust’ (Janusauskiene 2011: 49). Less than 10% of Lithuanians are satisfied with the existing government. Nearly 79% of responders say the cabinet of ministers was inefficient. Only 0.6% of responders said the cabinet was performing well (Dugan 2009).

**Table: 10**  
**Top three trusted institutions**

<b>Name of the</b>	<b>% of Trust</b>
--------------------	-------------------



Institution	
Army	47%
The European Union	47%
The Religious Institutions	45%

Source: (European Commission 2004: 32).

Lithuanians trust the radio and internet including religious institutions and they have slightly inclined towards television and the press (European Commission 2005: 5). According to the recent surveys, the fire fighters and the army have the largest percentage of trust among the electorate, polling at 90.3% and 52.3% respectively. On the other hand the police (39.5%), the education system (44.8%), the social insurance fund (44.5%) and the constitutional court (30.9%) all received lower percentage of trust. Both President Dalia Grybauskaite and her office saw a significant drop in the number of constituents trust, dropping from 60.8% to 55%. Expectedly the survey showed that Lithuanian political parties were the most distrusted organizations in the nation, with 73.6% of those polled expressing distrust in them. On the other hand, the most popular and trusted institutions in the country were the church commanding a 51.1% of the trust, the health care system (41.1%) and the courts counting with 17.3% of the citizenry's trust (Marcano 2012).

### **Voter Turnout**

In Lithuania the turnout has considerably declined since the 1990 elections (Nqrgaard and Johannsen 1999:100). Very few people actually participate in politics (Duvold and Jurkynas 2004: 158). Lithuanian parties are poorly linked with the electorate. Most Lithuanian parties are elite creations- initiated and operated by ambitious political leaders with weak loyalty to party organizations. A large number of parties split and factionalism in the parliament testify to this pattern (Ibid: 142). There are several possible ways of explaining the low level of participation in Lithuania. Factors such as lack of personnel resources, lack of government determination to build frameworks

for participation are the main causes for the low level turn out (Duvold and Jurkynas 2004: 159). There are more than 300 political organizations and the number is growing. Nevertheless most of them have insufficient funding and are poorly linked with organizations, due of these reasons mass participation remains rather limited (Durold and Jurkynas 2004: 159).

**Table: 11**  
**Turnout in Parliamentary Elections**

		Registration	Abstention	Voting & Population	
	32,2	2,581,305	2,944,905	2,835,909	
	40,1	2,488	3,511	2,883	

	2 1 9	6 , 7 5 0	2 9	3 , 2 0 8		
	4 8 . 1 8 9	2 , 6 4 6 , 6 6 3	4 0 . 4 3 9	3 , 0 5 3 , 0 3 7		
	5 2 . 9 2 9	2 , 5 9 7 , 5 3 0	4 9 . 9 6 9	2 , 7 5 1 , 3 2 0		
	7 5 . 2 2 9	2 , 5 4 9 , 9 5 2	7 0 . 2 1 9	2 , 7 3 1 , 6 6 0		

Sources: (Central Election Commission of Lithuania 2008).

The above table explains the turnout in the Lithuanian parliamentary elections from 1992 to 2008. Percentage of voter turnout is declining in every election due to the distrust of the people in political parties and government. Gorbachevs reforms (Perestroika and Glasnost) and national revival in the late

1980s and early 1990s spurred a broad movement against the Soviet regime. Two million Baltic people were joined hands in an extra ordinary 370 mile human chain in 1989. More than 70% of the electorate casted their votes in Lithuania's founding elections of 1990 (Duroid and Jurkynas 2004: 160). But Lithuanian parties and government institutions failed in implementing the assured promises and people lost trust on parties. In 1992 elections almost 75% voters participated, in 1996 the percentage of turnout and was dropped into 52.92%, in 2000 elections the turnout was slightly raised to 58.18%. However, in 2004 and 2008 elections the turnout percentage was dropped to 40.21% and 32.37% respectively. Political parties failed to draw the voters to participate in the election process.

**Table: 12**

**Turnout in presidential elections**

			Turnout	Voting population		
			48.	289		

		3 , 2 7 8	0 4 %	9 , 9 8 2		
		1 , 3 5 4 , 1 0 3	4 9 . 2 4 %	2 , 8 3 3 , 2 0 8		
		1 , 4 3 6 , 3 2 2	5 0 . 9 5 %	2 , 8 1 3 , 8 7 6		
		1 , 9 3 7 , 7 8 6	7 0 . 5 2 %	2 , 7 4 8 , 0 2 4		
		2 , 0 1 9 , 5	7 3 . 1 5	2 , 7 6 0 ,		

			0	%	2		0
			1		0		0
			3		0		0

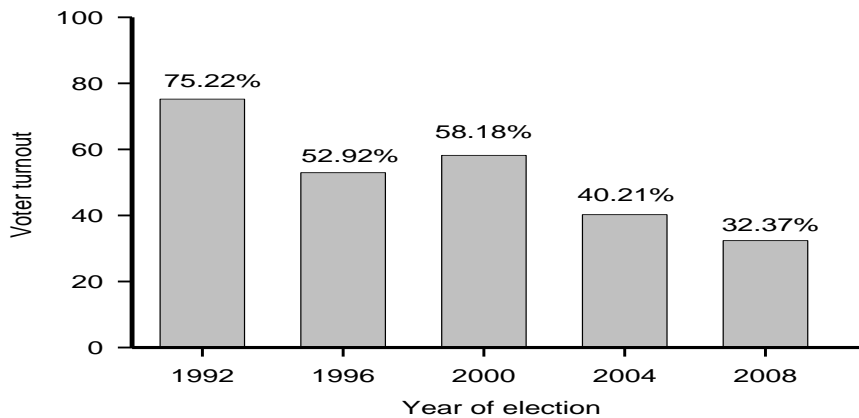
Sources: Central Election Commission of Lithuania.

According to the surveys, the Lithuanian presidency is one of the trusted institutions among the Lithuanian voters. Compared with the parliamentary elections, Lithuanian voters are interested to participate in presidential elections. In 1993 first presidential elections 78.62% of voters attended the election. In 1997 presidential elections the turnout declined slightly to 73.66%. From 2003 onwards the turnout in the presidential election was declined immensely. In 2003 elections to the office of the president 52.65% voters turned out, in 2004 election it was 54.46%, and in 2009 voter turnout was 51.76%. Slowly the office of the Lithuanian president also became one of the distrusted institutions in Lithuania.

In 2004 Lithuania formally joined in European Union. In the 2003 referendum on Lithuania's membership, more than 90% voters supported the membership proposal. According to survey, European Union is one of the trusted institutions among Lithuanian communities. In fact the EU failed to resolve the problems of Lithuanian people. In the 2004 Lithuania's opening elections of EP 48.38% voters' elected thirteen representatives from various parties. The turnout percentage was reduced to 20.98% in 2009 EP elections. Lithuanian accounted for the lowest turnout among EU member states in 2009 EP elections.

**Figure 1**

**Voter Turnout in Lithuanian Parliamentary elections**



Source: (Central Election Commission 2008)

Voter turnout has dropped in new democracies across central and eastern Europe for various reasons (Dugan 2009). Lack of interest in politics may to some extent account for low electoral turnout in Lithuania. Elections perhaps the most basic form of political involvement failed to attract more than 6 out of 10 voters (Duroid and Jurkynas 2004: 160). The above chart explains how the turnout was fluctuated between the elections. The broad perception is that Lithuanian politicians are indifferent to the problems of ordinary Lithuanians. People are dissatisfied with the government results and policies. However, even full- scale elections do not typically attract a large majority of voters in Lithuania (Kevin Dugan 2009: Baltic Reports, Nov 16).

### **Electoral volatility**

Volatility usually is related to handful of other instability traits; merges and splits of parties, success of new political forces. Party system with high levels of electoral volatility can lead to wild swing in policy, open doors to non-traditional parties and candidates, make it harder for states to negotiate treaties and agreements with external actors and in some cases, even threaten the stability of the democratic regime (Powell and Tucker 2012: 1). There are two types of electoral volatility. The phenomenon of volatility occurs when voters switch their votes between existing parties. This is the first type of volatility. This type of volatility is considered to be a healthy component of representative democracy and essentially reallocates power between political actors that are already by and large a relevant part of the political process. The

second type of volatility is caused by the entry and exit of parties from the political system (Powell and Tucker 2010: 1-2).

In a united party systems the status and association of social groups with particular political parties is stable. Subsequently the new political parties face difficulties in establishing themselves. But in Lithuania the prospects of party system is different. The level of voter volatility remains high in Lithuania (Saarts 2011: 88) mainly because the public have the slightest experience in competitive and multiparty elections (Novagrokiene 2001: 151). The Lithuanian case in the 1990s reveals a short coming of electoral volatility as major indicator of party system in CEE (Saarts 2011: 88). There also exists widespread disappointment towards the political elite and the ineffectiveness of the democratic institutions in executing their responsibility. The unsuccessfulness of democratic institutions in Lithuania led to the upcoming of new political parties prior to the elections ( Novagrokiene 2001: 151-152).

Electoral volatility is growing rapidly in Lithuania politics. Fragmentation of Lithuanian parties, lack of stability, cleavages and emergence of new parties are the significant reasons for the high level volatility. In 1992 elections the percentage of volatility was low, but from 1996 it existed due to the existing fragmentation. Several new parties entered in the Lithuanian political system and led to the high level of volatility. In 2000 the volatility reached 42.2% and in 2004 it was raised to 50.2%. In 2008 the percentage of electoral volatility was reduced, because of the stability of the Lithuanian party system (Saarts 2011: 88).

Each election in Lithuania managed to bring up radical changes in the balance of political forces in the Seimas. For instance in 1992 the LDLP won a majority whereas in 1996 a right-wing coalition government was formed with Homeland Union and the Christian Democrats. Despite of its popularity the Homeland Union succeeded with the support of its electorates who constitutes 15% of all the voters. The fluctuation in the Lithuanian elections was significantly visible in the 1996 elections with LDLP losing the highest number of votes. Political parties like the LSDP also lost considerable number of votes compared to the 1992 elections. The 1996 elections experienced shift



of votes to those parties who failed to achieve minimum of 5% in the party list vote. The percentage of such votes increased from 12.47% to 35.93% in 1996. Electoral volatility was increasing even more after the earth quake elections in 2000, when several new parties entered the political arena (Saarts 2011: 88). This changing trend in the voting patterns mainly exhibited the public apathy towards the current political parties. It also showed the public's search for a political alternative which would provide effective governance. Due to the absence of the consolidation of the political parties in Lithuania the electoral patterns entirely changed.

The changing electoral volatility transformed the situation of the both new as well as the old political parties. In such a situation the older political parties continued with their principal electorate whereas the new parties tried to appeal certain masses who were completely disappointed with the current establishment. The newly initiated political parties mostly brought those candidate who were less experience and not familiar with the rules and regulations of the election campaign. These new candidates failed to look at the problems in a broader sense instead escalated those issues of lesser concern. These underlying limitations with the newly established political parties made the process of cooperation more difficult with the other established parties (Novagrockiene 2001: 152).

### **Ethnic parties**

Lithuania has two major ethnic minorities: Russians and Poles (Girnius 2002: 51; Duvold and Jurkynas 2004: 148). The Polish minority clearly represents a more intricate issue for Lithuania than the Russians. Fractions of the poles expressed secessionist views during the Lithuanian independence struggle and some Lithuanian nationalists expressed open hostility towards the poles (Duvold and Jurkynas 2004: 148). According to the 1989 law on ethnic minorities, Lithuania allows ethnic minorities to develop their culture freely, to expect financial support from the government for their cultural and educational activities (Dovile and Sotirovic 2009: 156). There are two distinct ethnic parties in Lithuania, the Electoral Action of Lithuanian Poles (LLRA)

and the Union of Lithuanian Russians (LRS) (Duvold and Jurkynas 2004: 149).

In the first post-communist elections in 1992 no party was explicitly related to the Russian speaking community (Zoltan and Robert 2005: 130). The Union of the Russians of Lithuania was founded in 1995 (Bugajski 2002: 149). It is a political party which represents the Russian minority in Lithuania. The party participated in the 2004 elections in the list of Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania. Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania (LLRA) is a centrist Lithuanian political party founded in 1994 (Alan, Roger and Thomas 2002: 341; Bugajski 2002: 149; Zoltan and Robert 2005: 130). According to the party program of Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania, the party represents both left- wing (social protection and welfare state) and right- wing (loyalty to Christian traditions). It represents and protects the political and economic rights of the Polish minority in Lithuania. In 1994 the law on social organization was adopted, according to this law social organization were allowed to transform into political parties or simply remain as social organizations. Till that time the Association of Poles in Lithuania (APL) was a public political organization. APL was transformed into a political party in 1994. It was registered as the Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania. LLRA party program envisaged three main objectives; reforming the state of Lithuania on the model of progressive western democracy, social and economic revival of the Vilnius region and to create conditions in which all citizens of the republic of Lithuania regardless of nationality will be able to fully exercise their political, economic, social and national rights. According to the statute of the LLRA, the main objectives of the party are; consolidation of democracy in Lithuania, defending human rights and freedoms, ensuring social justice and economic prosperity (LLRA Party Programme 2012).

Most Russians and Polish activists initially opposed Lithuanian independence (Bugajski 2002: 149). The Polish Temporary Council assumed that to create a Polish- Lithuanian state, a reconstruction of the former Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth which expired with the third partition in 1795 (Lane: 2001: 3). Ethnic parties have played a greater role in Lithuanian politics when compared to Russia. Russian and Polish candidates have

survived under the banner of ethnic parties. These parties did not enjoy enough electoral success, but have managed to acquire considerable number of seats (Zoltan and Moser 2005: 130).

Both Russian and Polish communities in spite of making a significant percent of the total population managed to be a successful ethnic party with 5% legal threshold. In the 1992 elections the threshold of the party was 4% and it offered two seats to Lithuanian Russians (Girnius 200: 53; Zoltan and Moser 2005: 130). The Union of Russians was received only 1.63% of the total-vote in the October- November 1996 general elections and failed to receive any seats (Bugajski 2002: 149 and Romanaite 2006: 78). The party performed better in the 2000 elections only because it became part of a large left of centre electoral coalition of Brazauskas and received 3 seats (Zoltan and Moser 2005: 130; Romanaite 2006: 78). In 2004 and 2008 parliamentary elections the party failed to receive any seats. In the EP and 2004 parliamentary elections, the Russian Union co-operated with LLRA but failed to get any representation (Romanaite 2006: 78).

The Electoral Action for Lithuania's Poles won four seats in the 141 seat parliament of 1992. In 1996, the special provision for ethnic minorities was abolished and the minimum threshold was raised to 5% for all individual parties. As a result, the LLRA was not able to get seats in the multi- member districts (Ibid: 78). The party won 2.98% of vote in the 1996, 1.93% in 2000 and 3.79% in 2004 parliamentary elections. In the 2008 elections the LLRA won 4.8% popular vote and 3 out of 141 seats in the Seimas and in the European parliamentary election the party won one seat with 8.20% of vote. LLRA has had more influence on the local level. It has been in charge of the municipal councils in Vilnius and Salcininkai regions, winning the local elections in 1995, 1997 and 2002 (Dovile 2005: 167). Overall, the representation of the Electoral Action in local government has been declining (Ibid: 167). The performance of the Polish party was poor in national level (Zoltan and Moser 2005: 130).

### **Women's Role in Politics**

Women played a significant role in the Lithuanian politics. Thirty three (33) women's organizations have been set up or reestablished during the country's transition (Dalia 1998: 107). Among them is the Society of Mothers of Lithuanian Soldiers, the Widows Association, the Women's Home, the Association of Lithuanian Business Women, the Lithuanian Society of Catholic Women, the Women's League, the Lithuanian Society of Polish Women, the Lithuanian Society of Christian Democratic Women and others. Each in its own way fought against legal, social and moral injustice (Dalia 1998: 107). At present more than 63 women organizations are active in Lithuania (Taljunaite 2004: 5). Women organizations address legal, educational, social, ethical and moral issues (Dalia 1998: 107). Five of the largest parties in Lithuania have women's groups. The Lithuanian Centre Unions Women section includes Lithuanian Democratic Women's Group, Lithuanian Social Democratic Women's Union, Union of Women's Conservative, and the Women's section of the Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party (Ibid : 5).

Public women's organizations are very diverse in Lithuania. Several organizations are active at the national level, while a number of others operate at the regional or city level. Some of these organizations have set a very clear goal of equal rights and opportunities. Cooperation among women's organizations is strong and more than ten international organizations are working in Lithuania (Taljunaite 2004: 5).

According to the statute of the LSDP Women's Union, the main objectives of the union are; spreading the social- democratic ideas and values, change the SDP and all members of the society towards women's political participation and decision- making of public interest, achieve equal rights for men and women, economic and legal guarantee for children and family building and achieving equal opportunities in the labour market and business (LSDP Party Programme 2012).

### **Lithuanian Party of Women:**

The Lithuanian party of women is an independent volunteer political organization which unites members to take part in political activities and solve

problems. The party works on the principle of equality of all its members (Dalia 1998: 96). LPW is a lawful body which has a seal and a current bank account. The party follows the constitution and laws of republic of Lithuania (Dalia 1998: 96-97). After gaining 101 out of the 141 seats in the Lithuanian Supreme Council, Sajudis nominated Kazimiera Prunskiene as a first female prime minister. Later she resigned from office in 1991 and joined the Farmers Party (Forest 2011: 75). In 1995, Prunskiene co- founded the Lithuanian Women’s Party as a way of capturing public attention (Bugajaski 2002: 143). Her initiative influenced the major parties to nominate more female candidates (Forest 2011: 75).

These are the main objectives of the Lithuanian women’s party;

- To establish a new non- patriarchal environment in Lithuania
- To train women in self- expression, formalities and responsibility concerning the working of the state
- To develop an environment in which would encourage the participation of women in political and government activities (Dalia 1998: 97).

Lithuanian women participated in every election under the banner of different parties and received significant positions in the Seimas. This tradition of participation in national politics was revived with the *Sajudis* national revival movement, and symbolized by Kazimiera Prunskienė, the first prime minister of independent Lithuania.

**Table: 13**  
**Women Representatives in the Seimas**

Year of election	Men	Women	% of women seats
1990	127	14	9.9%
1992	131	10	7.1%
1996	113	24	18.1%
2000	126	15	10. 64%

2004	110	31	21.99%
2008	116	25	17.73%

Source: (Election Commission of Lithuania 2008).

In 1992, female representation in the Seimas dropped to its lowest at 7.1% although with left wing majority, which appointed only three female deputy ministers (Forest 2011: 75). During the 1996 elections wooed by conservative HDU, the share of women in the Seimas increased to 18.3% and seven women joined the government. Legislative representation dropped to 10.6% in 2000, women maintained a relatively strong position within the cabinet, with three ministers (including finance) and eight deputy ministers during the term (Forest 2011: 75). Women access to executive positions remained quite unchanged even after their representation at the Seimas hit a record high of 22% in 2004. Since the 2008 elections, with only 18% of women were participating in the parliament with only one female minister.

Lithuanian women were more successful in ensuring representation in the first elections to the EP in June 2004. Five women were among the 13 individuals were elected to the body. Only the Labour Party nominated three women candidates. There were few parties including the Liberal and Centre Union, which did not include any women among their five candidates (Taljunaite 2004: 3). Women's position has been reinforced by the growing credibility of female presidential candidates. In 2004 Kazimiera Prunskiene passed the second round of the election and defeated by Adamkus. In 2009, Dalia Grybauskaite was brilliantly elected in the first round of the presidential elections (Forest 2011: 75).

There is a lack of political participation among the Lithuanian women community due to the absence of legal, economic (financial) and political support, lack of information, lack of implementation of quotas and limited number of NGOs (Taljunaite 2004: 6; Dalia 1998: 107). The greater participation of women can bring new, positive features to the political life of Lithuania, and thus improve the stability of the party system.

The next chapter sums up the conclusions and findings of the study.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Conclusion**

In 1991 Lithuania regained its independence from the former Soviet Union. Immediately after independence, Lithuania began its political transition from authoritarianism to parliamentary democracy by incorporating the norms and values of established western democracies. Lithuania introduced political institutions required for a democracy such as constitution, parliament, regular

competitive elections, party system and an organised legal system. It adopted its present constitution on 25<sup>th</sup> October 1992. Parliamentary form of government has been introduced. Political representatives have been elected through the democratic electoral process. It has also conducted elections for Seimas, president, European parliament and municipalities. Lithuania conducted five successful parliamentary elections of the Seimas. In 2009 presidential elections Lithuania elected Grybauskaitė as the first female president of the country. In 2004 Lithuania joined in EU and NATO to strengthen their economic and security policies. Citizens have unrestricted freedoms of association and of assembly within the basic democratic order. Freedom of expression of the press and media are guaranteed by the constitution. There are five national daily news papers. A total of 297 news papers and 493 journals were published in Lithuania in 2009. There are 29 television stations and 49 radio stations.

Political parties and multi party system are very essential features for the consolidation of democratic system in Lithuania. The emergence of political parties and multiparty system in Lithuania has the historical development process from 1919 to 2011. Lithuania gained independence in 1919 from the Bolsheviks. After independence it engaged in developing a democratic structure in the political set up. Ideological differences led to the formation of numerous political parties. Christian Democrats, Populists and Peasants were the main political forces during inter-war period. These parties dominated in the parliamentary elections from 1920 to 1926. The transformation from one party system to multiparty system initially started during inter-war period. But the existing political parties failed to contribute to the formation of a democratic state. The Nationalists and Christian Democrats opposed to the restoration of strong parliamentary system of government due to external and internal political reasons. As a result Lithuania turned to an authoritarian state. With the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact (non-aggression pact) on 23 August 1939 between Nazi Germany and Soviet Union, Lithuania came under the German control. However, shortly after the end of the World War II in 1939, Lithuania was transferred to the Soviet Union



During the Soviet period (1940- 1985) the democratic institutions of Lithuania collapsed. Political parties were abolished. Multiparty system turned into single dominant party system under the leadership of Communist Party of Soviet Union. Political movements and cultural organizations were banned. Under the leadership of Stalin, several Lithuanian political leaders were arrested, killed and exiled. Elections were held in Lithuania with the Soviet control, only CPSU was allowed to contest elections in the country. The policy of Sovietisation ended the political, economic and social rights of the Lithuanian people.

After the death of Stalin, the cultural revival was initiated in Lithuania. Several cultural and social organizations were established. Lithuanian Helsinki Watch Group, Lithuanian Freedom League, Green Movement and Organization for the Defence of the Rights of the Catholic's were in the forefront demanding justice and equality from the Soviet Union. These organizations fought for the cultural, political and human rights of the Lithuanian people. During this period Lithuanians started guerrilla warfare against the Soviet authoritarian regime. In the Sovietization period the dominance of the Communist Party conditioned the political system by restricting the growth of political parties and multi- party system in Lithuania. However liberal reforms initiated by Gorbachev extended political opportunity for the development of multi- party system in Lithuania.

Several political movements and organizations were established in Lithuania during the democratic transition, which can be traced back to Gorbachev's liberal reforms *glasnost* and *perestroika*. Gorbachev's reforms and democratic transition helped to develop national awakening in Lithuania that mobilized people to work together for independence. In 1988 intellectuals, leaders and students organized the Lithuanian movement for *perestroika* (LMP) popularly known as *Sajudis*. In the beginning it focused on environmental issues and the protection of Lithuania cultural and religious rights. Intellectuals, anti- Soviet leaders, reform communists, and students were part of the *Sajudis* movement. *Sajudis* and the other independent organisations initiated mass rallies and demonstrations and mobilized thousands of citizens against Soviet regime. In fact the emergence of multi party system was started with the disintegration of

Sajudis movement. Sajudis movement gave birth to several political parties and factions such as HU, LLU and LCU etc.

The singing revolution of the 1980s formed by the Lithuanian intellectuals, writers and students played a significant role in the formation of a multiparty system. It was a peaceful movement and people used it as a platform to express their feelings through songs in a non-violent manner. Lithuanian citizens criticized Soviets political, economic and cultural domination through cultural performance like singing. They used to sing songs related to Lithuanian culture, history and freedom. It was extremely successful in mobilizing people throughout the country for the establishment of independence. During this period people gathered in masses and demanded political and economic freedom from Soviet Union.

Initially the origin of multi-party system started with the anti-communist political groups. In 1985, there were several organizations and movements against the Soviet regime. These fronts and organizations participated in mass protests and rallies against the Communist regime. But most of the organizations failed to turn as a strong political movements or political parties. All these organizations were unprincipled, ideologically unclear and organizationally very weak. Including these problems, ideological differences within the organization led to the fragmentation of this organisation.

Lithuania regained its independence in 1991 and experienced four kinds of transition; transition to democracy, transition to market economy, transition to multiparty system and transition to capitalism. Systematic transition and political independence of Lithuania (1990- 1991) provided the opportunity for its citizens to establish political parties and multi-party system. The development of multiparty system is based on political culture, democratic values and legal basis for the parties. To take up these values Lithuania adopted transition process from one party system to multiparty system.

After the declaration of independence Lithuania has been tried to associate with European Union and NATO. This integration process led to massive changes in various institutions with the implementation of European

community principles. Lithuania adopted the market economy, independent institutions and democratic principles to gain a place in the EU. In 2004 Lithuania became an official member of EU. This democratic process led to the development of multiparty system in Lithuania.

Lithuanian constitution of 1992 introduced the legal framework for the functioning of political parties by conceptualizing “a political party shall be a public legal person that its own name, has been established pursuant to this Law, and whose purpose is to meet the political interests of its members, assist in expressing the political will of the citizens of the Republic of Lithuania in enforcing State power and the right to self government.” Article 35 of the 1992 constitution provides citizens the right to freely unite themselves into communities, political parties and associations. But their goals do not contradict the constitution and laws of the nation. A law on political parties passed on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1991 enabled Lithuanians to establish parties if they were successful in gathering at least 400 signatures and possessed a party program.

The establishment of political parties and multiparty system in Lithuania developed with the re- establishment of old parties, the emergence of reformed communist parties and formation of new political parties. The Social Democratic Party established in 1896 (the first political party in Lithuania's history) was the first to restore on 12th of August 1989. On 29<sup>th</sup> December 1989 the Democrats were restored. The Christian Democratic and Green Parties were also restored during the election to the supreme council. In December 1990, the National Communist Party reorganized itself into the Democratic Labour Party of Lithuania. After independence the important parties which came into being in 1993 and played a decisive role in the shaping of the current political landscape are: the Homeland Union (Lithuania's Conservatives) and the Centre Union of Lithuania. In addition to these principal parties, there are also some parties and organizations like the Russian and Polish Unions. The parties which were formed prior to Lithuania Communist Party in post Soviet Lithuania were Home Land Union (1993), New Union- Social Liberals (1998), Social Democratic Party Of Lithuania (From the merger of LDDP and LSDP.2000), Liberal Movement of republic

of Lithuania (2000), Lithuanian Peasants Popular Union (2001), Order and Justice party (2002), The Labour Party (2003), Liberal and Centre Union (2003), National resurrection party (2008) etc. These are the parties playing a vital role in Lithuanian parliament, municipal and European parliament elections.

The formation of new parties is continuing even after the 2008 elections. Four new parties Courage Path Party established by Drasius Kedys, Democratic Labour and Unity Party (DDVD) led by the president Brazauskas wife Kristina Brazauskiene, the Lithuanian Peoples Party initiated by businessman Vladimir Romanov and as well as Emigrants Party submitted their documents to the Ministry of Justice for registration. According to the Ministry, it has granted the permission to register the Lithuanian Peoples Party and Emigrants Party. The Ministry rejected the DDVD party to register on the basis of incorrect documents. At present there are more than 44 officially registered political parties and are playing crucial role in the Lithuanian party system.

The countries electoral law was passed by the supreme council in the summer of 1992. The law established a mixed majoritarian – proportional system of national elections; 71 members of the Seimas were to be elected directly in single- mandate electoral districts and 70 parliamentary seats were to be filled on a proportional basis. In Lithuania, first post- soviet parliamentary elections were held in 1992. More than 75.2 % of the voters were participated. The ex- Communist Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party (LDLP) gained majority with 73 out of 141 seats. In the 1996 elections Lithuanian Conservative/ HU gained 70 seats and formed the government with the help of other small parties. In the 2000 general elections, a left-of- centre coalition spearheaded by the LSDP gained 51 seats with 31.08 percent of vote. The Labour Party of Viktor Uspaskich gained majority in 2004 elections (39 seats) and formed coalition government. In 2008 parliamentary election TS/LKD won 45 seats and formed coalition government with the right- wing parties.

The party system in Lithuania has changed dramatically between the 1992 general elections to 2011. In the 1992- 1996 Seimas, HU and LDLP were dominated and prevented new parties to enter into political representation. The party system was dominated by LDLP during the 1992 Seimas. From 1996 to 2000, the party system was dominated by the Homeland Union- Lithuanian Conservatives. From 1992 to 2000 the party system was defined as a dominant party system in Lithuanian politics. In 2000 election the party system was changed to multiparty system from dominant party system. Both the LSDP and HU were not able to win majority in 2000 parliamentary elections. This election transformed the party system and political system of Lithuania. In both 2004 and 2008 elections no party was able to get majority seats to form the government. Every party required the support of other parties to form a coalition government. There has been a constant rise in the number of political parties in Lithuania which makes it difficult to form a single party government.

Lithuanian political parties also participated in presidential, local and EP elections. In the presidential elections LSDP and Conservatives were dominating from the independence period. But in municipal elections small parties were successful in gaining majority of seats. In 2004 EP elections the Labour Party received majority of seats. In 2009 European Parliamentary elections were dominated by the conservatives. These three elections changed the party system in Lithuania from one party to multiparty.

During the independence period Lithuanian political system was dominated by two cleavages; the Communist – anti- Communist cleavage and religious cleavage. Lithuania experienced other cleavages such as rural- urban cleavage, ethnic cleavage, state- church cleavage, personality cleavage and EU integration cleavage. The communist and anti- communist cleavage was represented by the HU and successor communist parties (LSDP and LDLP). Those who were victims of Sovietisation preferred voting HU and those who think they had better life during the Soviet Union preferred voting for LDLP or LSDP. The rural- urban cleavage were represented by the Peasants Union, LSDP, NSSL, LKDP, TSLK and Labour Party. Peasants Party has its strong

support in the rural areas and the party played major role in local elections. Religious cleavage exploited by right-wing parties of Lithuania. Ethnic cleavages were represented by the Russian Union and LLRA. These cleavages influenced the party system in Lithuania and instigated the conflicts in the party system.

Voter turnout has remained extremely low in Lithuania. In 1992 elections almost 75% of the citizens coasted their votes. Turnout is reducing between election to election. In 1996 general elections only 52% voters turned out to polling stations. In 2000 elections the turnout slightly increased to 58% but again in 2004 (40%) and 2008 (32%). The overall general elections turnout was very low. In the recent elections saw a turnout of only 51.8% in the 2009 presidential elections, 21% in the elections to the European Parliament in 2009 and 44% in the 2011 municipal elections. Voting volatility and political distrust are the main reasons for the low electoral turnout in Lithuania.

Party system in Lithuania is plagued by conflicts and has resulted in fragmentation. Number of parties fluctuated and new parties entered in Lithuanian politics. New parties are coming up without any ideological affiliation which would indirectly affect the existing older parties which are based on particular ideology. New parties are trying to attract voters. With the fragmentation of party system and emergence of new parties the electoral volatility is very high in Lithuania. Volatility can influence the party system and political stability of the country.

In Lithuanian women occupy approximately 50% of the total population. But their participation in political system and public administration is very low. The representation of women in the political parties is extremely low. Roughly three to four women party leaders are there among the 44 registered parties. There are several women organizations and movements in Lithuania trying to establish gender equality in the Lithuanian society. Lithuanian women actively participated in every election. They were successful to a large extent in the EP elections. On the one hand in 2009 Lithuanians elected Grybauskaitė as the first women president of the country. On the other there is a lack of political participation among the Lithuanian

women community due to the lack of legal, financial and political support. Women participation is very crucial for the development of the multiparty system. The greater participation of women can bring new, positive features to the political life of Lithuania, and thus improve the stability of the party system.

The constantly shifting coalitions among political mutations have led to considerable instability and fragmentation in Lithuanian politics. The voting volatility, cleavages among the political parties and ideological conflicts are the other reasons for instability in parties and multiparty system in Lithuania. Moreover, parties are facing legitimate crisis as people have lost trust in the parties. This indicates the failure of political parties in inculcating democratic political culture and values among people.

In fact, the number of parties is growing rapidly; recently two more new parties were registered with the Ministry of Justice. With the emergence of new parties, the domination of party blocs in Lithuania has ended. In 1992 Lithuania experienced one dominant party system with LDLP in the Seimas. In 1996 the power shifted to HU but the party system was dominated by one party. After the 2000 elections party system was transformed from dominant system to multiparty system. In 2004 Lithuanian political set up transformed into a complete multi party system. In 2008 again party system was moving from extreme multiparty system to dominant one party multiparty system. The political future of Lithuania is unpredictable and remains ambiguous. At the most we can expect that in the 2012 elections party system Lithuania will transform into a stable multiparty system.

This study intended to test the following hypotheses.

4. Ethnic cleavage and oligarchy influences the organizational and ideological structure and electoral participation of political parties in Lithuania.
5. Lithuanian party system shows fragmentation and instability due to the disappearance of old parties and rise of new political parties during elections.

6. A low level of trust in political parties and parliament exist in Lithuania as parties are subordinated to the business interests and corporate sector.

Relatively all the hypotheses are tested positive. However, the evolution of multiparty system in Lithuania is found different. Though there are signs showing instability and fragmentation in the political landscape, it is not at the detriment of democratization and evolution of democratic political system. Lithuanian parties are well advanced in the process of institutionalization and are successfully performing the functions of the intermediary structures in consolidating democracy. In fact satisfaction with the economic, political and institutional performance is increasing among the Lithuanian citizens. The number of parties functioning in Lithuania is consistently growing. Rapid development of political parties and stability of multi-party system are essential for the party's development in Lithuania. The parties must open their doors to the non-elites also. This strategy will help in broadening the parties' popular base at the local level, making them more effective channels.



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