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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ALBANIA'S CHALLENGING PATH TO EU INTEGRATION IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY .....</b>	<b>6</b>
LUMNIS ÇELA .....	6
<b>THE ACCULTURATION AND ETHNIC IDENTITY OF THE ALBANIAN IMMIGRANTS IN ITALY .....</b>	<b>13</b>
CANDIDATE MATILDA BROKAJ .....	13
REZARTA BROKAJ .....	13
<b>SOME SOCIAL STRATUM IN DYRRACHIUM DURING ROMAN IMPERIAL PERIOD .....</b>	<b>21</b>
ARLIND KASA .....	21
ERALD SHAHINI .....	21
<b>THE CREATION AND THE FUNCTION OF POPULAR ASSEMBLY IN CONSTITUTION OF 1950 .....</b>	<b>29</b>
IRVIN FANIKO .....	29
<b>INTER-RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATION, RELIGIOUS RADICALIZATION AND SECURITY ISSUES .....</b>	<b>32</b>
XHAVIT SHALA .....	32
<b>PARADOX OF THE MISSION OF ALBANIAN POLITICAL PARTIES .....</b>	<b>39</b>
ILDA JEHA .....	39
<b>THE EXTENT OF ITALY'S MILITARY CONTROL IN NORTHERN ALBANIA AND THE CRYSTALLIZATION OF CONTRADICTIONS WITH FRANCE (1917-1918) .....</b>	<b>45</b>
LAVDOSH AHMETAJ .....	45
<b>THE GREAT POLITICAL ROTATION IN ALBANIA (MARCH 1992) .....</b>	<b>50</b>
BRUNILDA DURIÇI .....	50
<b>AT THE BORDERS BETWEEN ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY: A MODERN READING ON AN IDENTITY CYCLE IN ALBANIAN LITERATURE .....</b>	<b>55</b>
ERMIR XHINDI .....	55
<b>THE DYNAMICS OF THE NAME ISSUE OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA .....</b>	<b>62</b>
DORENTINA ASANI .....	62
<b>ELEMENTS OF THE BEKTASHI ORDER .....</b>	<b>66</b>
BLERINA KËRÇUKU .....	66
<b>ALBANIA'S CHALLENGES TO EUROPEAN ASPIRATION, BRINGING THE JUSTICE SYSTEM TO JUSTICE.....</b>	<b>71</b>
JETON XHAFERI.....	71

## Albania's challenging Path to EU Integration in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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### Abstract

It is more than a quarter of a century that Albania has abandoned self-isolation and embarked on a *quasi* Europeanization pathway. While significant progress has already been achieved on many fronts, considerable roadblocks have been faced and others still lie ahead. Indeed, a multifaceted array of problems among which, a distorted democratization panorama, a divisive political environment, fragile institutions, and a lagging economy, are noticed along transition years while the country is still hobbling on the weary road to EU. Albania's application for membership to the European Union nearly a decade ago was a major landmark for its future aspirations, but the long awaiting question that needs to be addressed is whether Albania can meet minimum EU accession requirements in the context of persisting domestic gaps and deficiencies that characterize the environment where its integration mode operates. In the above context, this paper focuses on the trails of Albania's journey towards the EU membership goal especially during the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Given the slow pace of integration encountered so far, where internal and external factors share their own pieces of responsibility, the paper aims to analyse and assess certain critical junctures which deem to have had more impact on Albania's delayed EU prospect, as well as underline some of the challenging issues that still need to be faced.

**Keywords:** Albania, transition, perspective, EU integration.

### 1. Introduction

After the fall of the communist system, Albania has been undergoing many complex transformations, moving gradually from the initial numerous difficulties of the transition phase towards the later challenges of the European integration pathway. The country's trajectory of developments has not been an easy one, indeed, concerning the persistence of a wide array of political, economic, legal, and social problems throughout the years. However, despite Albania's troubled reputation, especially noticed over (but not confined solely at) the first post-communist decade, when certain domestic legacies continued to have a negative impact on the country's integration mode, the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century opened a new page of perspectives. The European Union began to express its unequivocal support for all the Western Balkans countries, coupled with a region-tailored enlargement policy which was widely promoted as the anchor of future reforms (Elbasani, 2013) that would lead to an eventual accession to the common 'club'. This friendly open-doors support coming from the neighbouring Europeans, accompanied by an ever increasing domestic interest for integration, led to Albania's formal engagement to the EU membership goal.

To date, many years after having embarked on the Europeanization pathway, Albania still has a long way to go despite the roadblocks that have already been surpassed. In this context, the long existing issue that still needs to be tackled concerns not only the past, but also the present, and if possibly the future peculiarities and challenges of the country's trajectory of developments where internal gaps and deficiencies, accompanied by an external scepticism, keep shaping its (delayed) pace and (poor) quality of EU integration. Therefore, in order to shed more light on this panorama, the first part of the paper provides a chronological description of the EU integration process of Albania, highlighting the key moments from the early beginnings up to date, by focusing mostly in the 21<sup>st</sup> century developments when the EU perspective of the region became increasingly articulated by both sides concerned. In addition, the second part of the paper focuses on some background domestic factors that are thought to have had a deterring effect on the integration mode of the country, not only during the first years of the transition period, but also further than that. And finally, the third part of the paper generalizes on Albania's challenging integration journey that it has embarked upon, by focusing mostly the current setting where intermingled internal and external elements need to be well considered in order to adhere to the EU requirements properly, and thus eventually achieve the long-aspired accession goal.

## II. Pursuing the traces of Albania's integration journey

Albania's diplomatic relations with the European community were established in 1991, after many years of international isolation and self-reliance approach. Indeed, this historic step towards the long-expected opening process was not simply of diplomatic value but also practical one, as it hacked the pathway for the subsequent signing of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement a year later, and make Albania eligible for funding under the PHARE programme (Abazi, 2008; Veshi, 2012; Kalemaj, 2016). In the upcoming years, due to the political developments that the whole Balkan region faced as a result of ex-Yugoslavia's dissolution and the subsequent creation of a set of new states, the European Union was urged to adopt a Balkan policy called "Regional Approach" in 1996. In the context of a significant threat to European security, the aim of this step was to develop and strengthen relations between Balkan countries and the EU, where the fulfilment of political and economic conditions was of paramount importance. Unsurprisingly, as far as Albania was concerned, the noticeable 'democratic deficit' encountered in the new pluralist context; the politics' inefficiency to hold free and fair elections during the mid 1990s; and the state institutions failure and economic collapse of 1997 (Jano, 2008, p.59; O'Brennan & Gassie, 2009, p.64; Biberaj, 2000, pp.471-494), prevented the consolidation of Albania-EU strategic relationship, which had been epitomised earlier, since 1990, in the calls of the country's youth "We want Albania like the rest of Europe" (in Varoshi, 2012, p.332).

In a broader context, however, the European perspective of the Western Balkans, where Albania belongs, was not particularly accentuated until Kosovo's conflict near the end of the decade. Indeed, the Union policies towards this region changed in a positive direction when the EU leaders finally reached the consensus that in order to achieve stability in the region and consequently in Europe, there was a need for faster integration (Vesnic-Alujevic, 2012, p.29; Varoshi, 2012, p.238). Thus, it was in May 1999 when the European Union proposed a new Stabilization and Association Process for those countries that had not concluded any agreement with the EU earlier, and Albania became part of this initiative since its launch. The process aimed establishing closer relations between the EU and each respective country by specifying commitments with regard to political, economic, trade, and human rights reforms fulfilment, as well as promotion of regional cooperation (Hoffmann, 2005, p.59; Abazi, 2008, p.239). However, in November 1999, the European Commission report on the feasibility study for opening negotiations with Albania for the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement concluded that Albania did not meet the conditions for such an agreement (O'Brennan & Gassie, 2009, p.64; Xhuvani, 2013). Given the noticeable problems that the country encountered during the first post-communist decade, the EU question would remain pending even at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

At the Zagreb Summit organized in November 2000, the EU emphasized its interest in the Balkan region by considering the Stabilization and Association Agreement as a starting point for the accession perspective of any aspirant country (Vesnic-Alujevic, 2012, p.32). In order to support the process the European Council established in December 2000 the "Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilization (CARDS) as a new financial instrument for the region (Hoffmann, 2005, p.60; Abazi, 2008, p.248). As for Albania, the Union decided to intensify cooperation through the creation of a High Profile Taskforce which aimed to assess the country's capacities, as well as point the areas where improvements were needed, in order to meet obligations arising from an agreement with the EU. After a series of meetings held in Tirana, the Commission concluded that although much remained to be done, the prospect of opening negotiations for a Stabilization and Association Agreement with Albania was the best way to maintain the pace of political and economic reforms in the country (Elbasani, 2004, p.38; Xhuvani, 2013). After certain technical discussions and necessary preparations, negotiations were formally opened on January, 31, 2003, by the president of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, whose notable stance was about building bridges, not destroying them; opening borders, not closing them; and restoring relations and trade links, not severing them (Prodi, 2003).

Indeed, a clear integration perspective was officially stated within a few months time, at the Thessaloniki European Council Summit held in June 2003, which confirmed that the Western Balkans countries, including Albania, were identified as potential candidates for EU membership. One important element of the Thessaloniki Agenda and the progress towards European integration concerned the political and economic dialogue (Vesnic-Alujevic, 2012, p.33). While relatively rapid progress during the first years of the new decade (especially in comparison to the chaotic and struggling 1990s) strongly confirmed the necessity and inevitability of EU support and guidance in conducting successful post-communist reform, and thus defined the essence of Western Balkan states' and people's motives to accede to the EU, it also confirmed the rightness of the EU's motivation and policy to expand into this region (Petrovic, 2009, p.44). As a result, in June 2006

Albania signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement, which was finally ratified on January 2009 by all the EU member states of the time, after a continuous grappling with an image problem and unstable environment. This historical and important moment for the country, in fact marked transition towards a new stage, where Albania moved on to a more concrete footing in its relationship with the European Union (O'Brennan & Gassie, 2009; Goxha, 2016).

Compared to the first post-communist decade of the 1990s, in time there could be observed a major shift in EU's strategic priority, from an approach aimed at reconstruction and economic development to one of integration (Hoffmann, 2005, p.64). Indeed, the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century appeared to have opened a much prosperous pathway in terms of Albania's future EU accession goal. Immediately after the Stabilization and Association Agreement entered into force on April 1, 2009 Albania applied to become an EU candidate country on April 28. Despite this daring step, in the next two upcoming years the European Commission did recommend neither the candidate status nor the opening of accession negotiations for Albania as a result of the country's failure in fulfilling the required reforms with respect to the 12 key priorities, put forward by the Commission Opinion of 2010. However, the lifting of the visa regime in November 2010 finally made Europe a touchable reality for many Albanian citizens who had dreamt about their freedom of movement for many decades in a row (Xhuvani and Kane, 2012, pp.448-449).

Although this act can be interpreted very positively from the point of view of symbolic integration into Europe, in terms of economic and political development Albania kept being hindered by the lack of basic preconditions, e.g. weak institutions and governance, political instability and polarisation, high emigration rates, weak rule of law, corruption allegations, underdeveloped infrastructure, high dependency on foreign aid etc. Indeed, even during the second decade of the new century, Albanian developments were rather unsatisfactory considering the slow pace of general progress. Nevertheless, recognizing the need to address 12 priorities identified by the European Commission's Opinion for Albania the government and opposition embarked in a joint endeavour in November 2011 that led to some concrete results, such as the adoption of electoral reform, the adoption of important pieces of legislation, etc. Consequently, in October 2012, the Commission recommended that Albania be granted EU candidate status subject to completion of certain reforms, thus by reinforcing the EU's transformative power and its role as a catalyst for positive change in the country as well as the region as a whole (Xhuvani, 2013, European Commission, 2016).

On June 24, 2014, Albania finally received the candidate status after a series of failed attempts. In the subsequent years, despite a number of problems, there was a notable progress in the integration journey of the country, whose changes have been mostly due to impositions by the EU representatives rather than by the Albanian political elite, which has frequently hampered this process due to lack of political dialogue between political forces (Goxha, 2016; Mirel, 2018, p.4). In order to lead the country to the next station, which is the opening of accession negotiations, Albania continued to actively participate in high level dialogue meetings as well as in related joint working groups especially regarding the 5 key priorities namely: corruption, organized crime, judiciary, administrative reform, and human rights. Undoubtedly, the consecutive yearly Progress Reports for Albania did note on each of the improvements made while at the same time pointing at those that still had some way to go.

The 17<sup>th</sup> of April 2018, finally marked another important date in Albania's path to EU membership as the Commission recommended for the first time an unconditioned opening of EU accession negotiations with the country. Two months later, on June 26, after a marathon session, the European affairs ministers followed-up with a prominent decision to open the accession talks within 2019, while launching an immediate screening process in the meantime (Deutsche Welle; Politico; Reuters, 2018). Referring to the past experiences, it is worth reminding that despite a positive Commission recommendation in 2012, it was not until 2014 that the Council decided to grant candidate status to Albania. A similarly negative decision was taken even in 2016, after a conditional recommendation on future reform by the Commission to open accession negotiations that year. Yet, taking into account the EU's belief that the perspective of a closer integration is strong enough to induce reforms and consolidate transformation in any aspirant country, there is still enough room for optimism regarding Albania, which now seems to be 'a big step closer to the European family' (Goxha, 2016).

Indeed, the end of this EU Commission's term has been accompanied by an increased political momentum for enlargement towards the Western Balkans. Both the EU High Representative, Mogherini, and Commission President, Juncker, visited this region in February 2018. Likewise in April, the Union's President, Tusk, started a regional visit from Albania with the message that there is a clear EU future for the Western Balkan countries. On one hand, it is true that Albania remains much behind the EU average in terms of economic development and good governance, and it is ranked partly free by Freedom House in 2018 (Kajsiu, 2018). However, on the other hand, the country has also made considerable progress in the rule of



law, especially after Albanian political parties unanimously voted for the first time in 2016 to change Albania's constitution, in line with demands from the EU and other Western partners (Barbullushi, 2018). In view of such developments, the EU focus on the region is expected to be maintained, but it is also in the hands of each respective country, including Albania, to accelerate (or not) the pace of integration and catch up with the wasted time.

### III. Does the background matter? Assessing some domestic factors

Generally speaking, the integration agenda during the transition years has been characterized by a mixture of achievements as well as limitations and failures. Considering the Union's expressed interest in bringing all the Western Balkan countries into the EU family, the case of Albania can exemplify some of the typical features that explain the slow pace of integration, given the long time span that this country has needed in order to reach the upcoming station of accession negotiations. In this context, it is worth pointing at three factors that had to be confronted and coped with in the course of Europeanization processes during transition, namely: (1) the role of domestic elites; (2) hindering historical legacies; (3) weak stateness (O'Brennan & Gassie, 2009, p.72; Elbasani, 2013, p.9). These factors were not insuperable obstacles, indeed, but their restraining impact has been noticeable throughout the transition years among the Western Balkan countries, including Albania, which is part of the same spectrum.

As far as the first factor is concerned, Albania's break with the totalitarian past was rather ambiguous in the early 1990s and many old apparatchiks managed to survive the regime change and take hold of key political and governing positions by converting some of their previous power into new political and economic clout, thus managing to resist the EU's reformation agenda in the subsequent years. However, compared to the vicious circle of the first post-communist decade, when the aforementioned phenomenon was quite evident, the new century brought a much better atmosphere indeed (Jano, 2008). The country moved towards accumulating more 'liberal capital', be they individual leaders, political parties, and social groupings that were more favourable to the project of European integration. Still as anywhere else in the Balkans, even in Albania these reformists often proved too weak to pursue deep-seated change, embedded, as they were, amidst hybrid institutions and complicit old networks that had everything to lose from substantial reforms (Elbasani, 2013, p.10). Consequently, such roadblocks served to impede the Europeanization processes of the country and unavoidably slow down its EU integration pace.

As regards the second factor mentioned above, the post-communism Western Balkans undoubtedly was not a very fertile ground for the introduction of the political culture of liberal democracy primarily because of its past legacies (Biberaj, 2000, p.119; Jano, 2008, p.59). This heritage has been rather problematic for the respective countries of this region, 'which share a general weakness of reformist coalitions, but also next-to-no prior democratic experiences, long-term patrimonial state-society relations, poor socio-economic development, former totalitarian regimes, and predominantly violent and chaotic modes of transition' (in Elbasani, 2013, p.11). Given this context, the eventual violent breakdown of Albanian state authority in 1997, and the quasi-destabilization in 1998, due to the conflictual political culture demonstrated by the parties, proved that they were as 'infected' as their communist predecessors since political opponents were considered as 'enemies' (Biberaj, 2000, p.498; Radovanovik, 2012, p.209; Sabriu 2013, p.75). This background, on one hand exemplifies the dramatic impact that the above mentioned factors had on the country's transition pathway during the first post-communist decade, whereas on the other hand, it explains the difficult nature of the democratization, Europeanization and integration trajectory that was to be pursued in the years ahead.

As far as the third aforementioned factor is concerned, the problem of weak stateness is related to the lack of infrastructural capacities to exercise state authority and enforce the rule of law. Along the basic challenges in the political, economical and social sphere, other problems came to the fore, among which the most challenging ones were corruption and organized crime (Jano, 2008, p.63; Mirel, 2018, p.7; O'Brennan, 2018, p.4). Indeed, the disorderly transitions across the Western Balkan states, including Albania, created great opportunities for ruling elites to emasculate the state by 'privatizing' decision-making mechanisms as well as exercising government prerogatives on behalf of clientelistic interests (Elbasani, 2013, p.12). This type of state, partly captured by particular interests and quite often subject to elites' predatory projects of extracting state resources, was generally short of necessary capacities and willingness to carry out the necessary reforms and implement policy visions, such as the EU integration goal. As a consequence, the process of building institutions capable of overcoming every single problem mentioned above was not only an issue that delayed the integration steps for so long, but also a challenge that keeps determining the future EU perspective of the country.

#### IV. The EU test for Albania: handling the ongoing challenge

There exist many concerns and doubts on Albania's capacities and eventual readiness to join the European Union. Indeed, this issue gets more and more complex as the conditionality keeps standing, the screening keeps growing and the standards keep elevating. However, it is of great importance that significant measures are taken especially by the political ruling elite since complying with EU standards depends first and foremost upon them. This is easier said than done, though, as far as the problems of integration do not rest only on the formal compliance to the EU requirements. Indeed, Albanian's greatest challenge is to abandon many practices of the past and become "behaviourally Europeanized" (Jano, 2008, p.67; Radovanovik, 2012, p.211). Therefore, it is of great importance that every relevant actor in the country keeps the prospect of EU membership intact in order to proceed with accomplishing all the reform processes needed, because any other option would seriously undermine stabilization and instigate a vicious circle of disappointment, frustration and destruction (Xhuvani and Kane, 2012, p.450).

Indeed, 'the rift between formal commitments made by the leaders and informal practices is still a challenge' for Albania's EU perspective (Mirel, 2018, p.8; O'Brennan, 2018, p.4). The European guiding rhetoric of integration does not count much unless it is put into practise by undertaking deep-seated political, economical, legal and social reforms. The EU, on its own initiative, has already put into practice the use of 'the sticks' (i.e. punitive) and 'carrots' (i.e. rewarding) principle in order to push forward any aspirant country to comply with the set of membership requirements known as 'Copenhagen Criteria'. Such mechanism have been Union's most powerful tool in inducing changes and accelerating reforms in order to bring laggard countries like Albania closer to the EU trajectory. Within this context, by following the practise of transformation prior to accession, the EU normative model has automatically turned into a necessity (Abazi, 2008, p.240), that has to be replicated sooner or later in order to achieve the manifested membership goal from any possible candidate.

However, a whole set of questions do constantly come to the fore concerning the Europeanization capacity of states like Albania. In view of the great number of challenges that exist in this geo-political area, convergence would still require time, patience, and persistence on the side of the aspirant but also a constant and firm support by the EU (Radovanovik, 2012, p.212), which is not short of its own internal problems too. Indeed, during the recent years the European Union has been finding itself in a critical situation, since, on one hand, it has been continuously putting conditions to every country that seeks to become part of the club, whereas, on the other hand, it is facing many internal challenges regarding self consolidation. The articulation of the so-called "enlargement fatigue" and the questions raised over the EU's "absorption capacity" has led to further tightening of the terms of membership for every potential candidate. (Petrovic, 2009, pp.45-47; O'Brennan, 2018, p.2), leading to the perception that the Union aims to keep the Western Balkan countries within Europe, but outside the EU institutional core.

Despite what is mentioned above, Albania still has a long way to go before it can realistically expect to be accepted as a full member of the Union. Therefore, in order to maintain the integration trajectory safe, combined efforts from both sides are vital, as long as it is in the common interest to implement reforms and to create a framework for long-term stability which can counteract any negative trends that may stem from lack of peace, security, and prosperity (Sabriu, 2013, p.72; O'Brennan 2018, p.12). Indeed, despite all existing uncertainties and difficulties regarding the EU integration process, what is of great importance is that it is rather irreversible (Jano, 2008, p.66; Radovanovik, 2012, p.211). The variety of factors at large, are likely to influence only the speed but not the general course of integration. This means that joining the Union stands as the only long-range vision not only for Albania itself but also for the rest of the Western Balkan region. Truly, due to the geographic proximity the EU integration course is a strategic necessity and destiny as long as it serves to complete the European geo-political jigsaw where both parties happen to be.

#### V. Conclusion

Albania's a-quarter-century-old integration journey, starting from the early Trade and Cooperation Agreement in 1992, and heading towards the memorable beginning of the EU's led Stabilization and Association Process at the turn of the 21st century, by reaching at the current desirous stage of accession negotiations scheduled opening in 2019, has been marked by a multifaceted array of challenges. On one hand, the country had to adapt to the Union's pattern which has ranged from an initial shaky reaction to regional events culminating with Kosovo's war in 1999, into a later crystallized strategy that embraced all the Western Balkan countries as prospective EU member states. On the other hand, Albania had to engage in a long, deep, tiring, and sometimes even defiable EU-oriented self-reformation process in order to become an eligible, credible and promising EU aspirant. For this small Western Balkan state, indeed, the European Union remains the primary

focus of its diplomatic and political activity, and the only game in the town as regards its geopolitical orientation (O'Brennan and Gassie, 2009, p.81). However, evidences have shown that Albania has faced many difficulties on its long and weary journey towards meeting EU's norms and standards.

Along the ups and downs encountered during the years, the paper has highlighted a set of internal factors such as: the role of elites, the past legacies, and the weak stateness that are believed to have had a restraining impact on Albania's Europeanization and reformation processes, by weighting heavily on many political, legal, economic, and social sectors of the country. Besides this, the EU perspective of the Western Balkans, including Albania, has also been affected by the occasional external articulation of the so-called "enlargement fatigue", and the issues raised over the EU's "absorption capacity" help to explain why the accession process of any aspirant country of this region, is not to be considered as an easy one. Indeed, the Albanian experience up to date testifies that the EU integration has been a highly complex process that resembles the pieces of a puzzle that need to be considered all, in order to give the true picture of a country, with its many transformations, challenges and causalities (Jano, 2008, p.68). Nevertheless, despite the uncertainties of the integration journey noticed so far, Albania should keep accelerating the momentum for deeper reforms, and renew its commitment to a profound restructuring and change according to the best EU model, as long as this continues to be the only gravitating force that can make the country a success story.

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## The Acculturation and Ethnic Identity of the Albanian Immigrants in Italy

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### Abstract

Acculturation is defined as a process of psychological and behavioral change in people and groups due to their long-lasting contact with another culture (Berry, 1980; Berry & Sam, 1997). Culture is dynamic, constantly changing through social interactions (Handwerker, 2002). Moreover, people today live in different cultures and therefore, they are always altering. The host culture and that of immigrants are transformed through their interpersonal and intercultural experiences. In this context, the problem is how to describe and measure changes that occur during acculturation. On the other hand, it is true that ethnic identity has survived even within a culture other than that of origin. Instead of being assimilated, members of ethnic groups have implemented a more complex form of adaptation. These people have not only acquired the ability to integrate within a host culture (acculturation), but have also preserved some characteristics of their culture of origin (ethnic identity) (Mendoza, 1989). Albanian immigration to Italy has such peculiar characteristics as to make it one of the most relevant study case for the sociology of ethnic relations. For this reason this research work is about the study of possible differences between Albanians in Albania and Albanian immigrants to Italy. In this way we analyze: 1. The attitudes of the Albanians who immigrated to Italy towards some Italian and Albanian foods; 2. The acculturation and ethnic identity of the Albanian immigrants to Italy.

**Keywords:** acculturation, ethnic identity, Albanian immigrants, scale of acculturation, scale of ethnic identity, food

### 1. Introduction

So as to analyze the degree of acculturation and identity of Albanian immigrants to Italy, it is also important to consider the **scale of acculturation and ethnic identity**, which is widely used in research works conducted with immigrant participants (Laroche, Kim, Tomiuk, 1998; Zea, Asner-Self, Birman, Buki, 2003; Lim, Heiby, Brislin, Griffin, 2002; Dacosta and Wilson, 1996; White and Kokotsaki, 2004, etc.).

There are two different perspectives to measure the process of adaptation of immigrants. The first is a bipolar linear model (Phinney, 1992). According to this model, a person, by acquiring aspects of the host culture, at the same time, loses aspects of its culture of origin. Therefore, we risk confusing ethnic identity with acculturation. The second model, which is more complex, emphasizes the fact that adaptation is a multicultural process (Mendoza, 1989). Thus, the acquisition of traits of the dominant culture is not necessarily positively correlated with the loss of ethnic identity. For this reason, some studies employ independent scales to measure ethnic identity and acculturation (Laroche, Kim, Tomiuk, 1998; Zea, Asner-Self, Birman, Buki, 2003; Lim, Heiby, Brislin, Griffin, 2002).

In line with this second perspective, Berry (1990) classifies the possible results of ethnic identity and acculturation scale in four modes. *Integration* takes place when a person preserves elements of its culture of origin and at the same time acquires elements of the host culture. When a person acquires elements of the new culture and fails to preserve elements of its culture of origin, we have *assimilation*. *Separation* includes the rejection of the new culture and the preservation of the culture of origin. Finally, *limitation* includes the rejection of the culture of origin and of the host culture.

As for the scales of acculturation and ethnic identity, different dimensions are used in different studies, given that characteristics of different cultures change. A dimension that can be important in a culture is not necessarily important in others.

A research work on Italian immigrants to Canada (Laroche, Kim, Tomiuk, 1998), with regard to ethnic identity, employs the following dimensions: Italian language used with family members, participation and social interaction in Italian activities, and Catholicism. Whereas for acculturation, other dimensions were employed: exposure to the Canadian mass media, participation and social interaction in Canadian activities. Another research work on acculturation and the ethnic identity of the Latin population in the United States (Zea, Asner-Self, Birman, Buki, 2003), for both scales, employs the following dimensions: behavioral aspects, cultural identity, knowledge, language and values. A different research work related to the Cambodian immigrant population in the United States (Lim, Heiby, Brislin, Griffin, 2002) employs such dimensions as: cognitive, language, emotional. As one can see, the 'use of language' dimension is the most common, because it is the one that most shows the integration in a host culture or the preservation of the ethnic identity.

## 2. the Methodology

The research work is based on two main goals, each of which involves different experimental hypotheses. The first goal is to analyze the attitudes of the Albanian immigrants to Italy towards some Italian and Albanian foods.

The second goal of the research is to compare the acculturation and ethnic identity of the Albanian immigrants to Italy: if living in another country, have resulted in Albanians preserving elements of their culture of origin or acquiring elements of the host culture

The questionnaire for the 200 participants consists of three sheets. The first page, for both questionnaires, contains a letter of introduction which provides information on the purpose of the research; invites participants to read the questionnaire carefully and answer the questions; reassures participants that there are no right or wrong answers, but it is only important to express their opinion; underlines the importance of collaboration for research purposes; guarantees the anonymity and use of information only for scientific purposes within the university.

The second page offers a list of five Italian foods (among the best known in Italy) and five Albanian foods (among the best known in Albania). The aim is to gather information on the cognitive, emotional and behavioral elements of attitude towards the foods listed. For each of these foods participants must indicate if they know it, if they have tried it and if they liked it (yes / no answers). The five Italian foods are *pizza*, *mozzarella*, *spaghetti*, *Parmigiano Reggiano* and *tortellini*. The five Albanian foods are *dollme* (it is consumed especially on New Year's Eve. It is a mixture of flour, water, salt and eggs, cooked in the oven and then crumbled into small pieces, soaked into turkey broth and served hot with the turkey meat), *tave kosi* (it is prepared with lamb meat, rice, low-fat yogurt and eggs. The mixture is placed in the oven until golden brown), *bakllava* (it is a dessert of Turkish origin especially consumed especially on New Year's Eve), *arapash* (a *polenta* prepared with the broth and the internal parts of the lamb) and *stuffed peppers* (it is prepared with peppers stuffed with rice, tomato and chopped onion).

Again, the second page included question B) which serves to understand their eating behavior before coming to Italy. So it invites the participants to indicate if they had tried some Italian food before coming to Italy. Question C) measures the ability of the participants to recall some Italian foods that they had tried before coming to Italy (if they answered 'yes' to the previous question) and to vote on a scale from 4 to 10 (as at school) for each food they recalled. The vote can vary between 4 and 10, as in Albania the marks at school are within these limits. This information is important to understand if the participants were already acquainted with Italian foods before coming to Italy.

The third page concerns the scale of acculturation and ethnic identity. To build this scale for our research we referred to the study of Zea, Asner-Self, Birman and Buki (2003) on The Abbreviated Multidimensional Acculturation Scale. That research work was carried out on the Latin population in the United States and it has been validated either among students or in the community.

There are 42 items in the original questionnaire (for both acculturation and ethnic identity), but for our questionnaire we thought it appropriate to select only 16 (see the appendix). From the original scale we have removed the part concerning the understanding of the language and the knowledge of history, heroes, magazines and newspapers for both cultures. In our questionnaire the items regarding acculturation (8 in total) and those regarding ethnic identity (8 in total) are substantially the same, only the fact that the former refer to the host culture and the latter to the culture of origin change. The information collected serves to understand whether the participants have integrated into the host culture (the Italian one), or have preserved the characteristics of their culture of origin (the Albanian one). For both scales respondents must

indicate their position on a 5-point Likert scale (with the same scale labels shown above). Recall that acculturation and ethnic identity are two independent processes that are not mutually exclusive.

## The Results

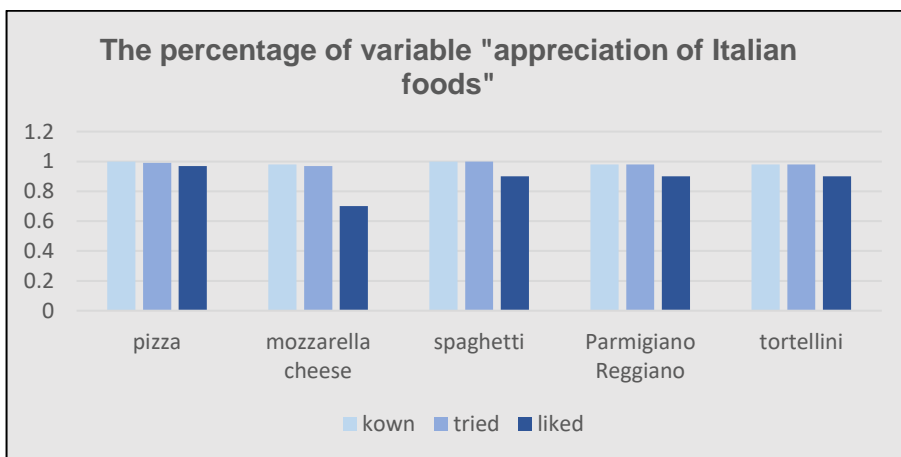
### Attitudes towards Italian and Albanian food

The questionnaire is developed in order to analyze some food attitudes of the participants. Attitudes are positive or negative orientations that we take throughout the experience and help us to build representations of the social world (Palmari, Cavazza, Rubini, 2002). The first section, concerning the knowledge, liking and tasting experience of 5 Italian foods and 5 Albanian foods, intends to measure the cognitive, emotional and behavioral component of the attitude towards such foods, through yes/no answers.

As for the five Italian foods, from the analysis of the data, it emerges (see graph 1) that the best known food is *spaghetti* with 100%, while the less known is *tortellini* with 96%. Spaghetti is also the most tried food with 100%, while the least tried food is *tortellini* and *mozzarella* with 95.90% (two participants did not answer). Although the best known and most tried food is *spaghetti*, the most appreciated is *pizza* with 95.80% (four participants did not answer) and the less liked is *mozzarella* with 72.30% (six participants did not answer).

It can be said that Italian foods, in general, are quite well known, tested and liked by the Albanian population residing in Italy. This can be an indicator of the high degree of acculturation of our participants.

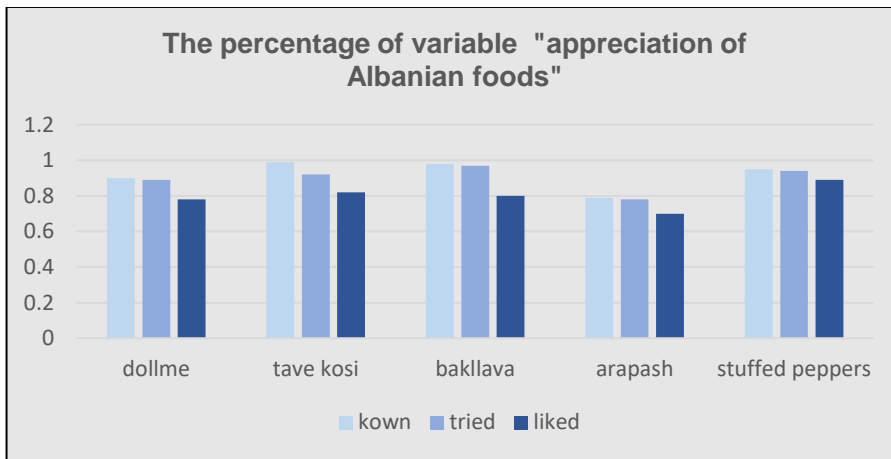
#### Graph 1



Among the five Albanian foods (see graph 2) the best known food is *tave kosi* with 98%, whereas the less known is *dollme* with 90.90% (one participant did not answer). The most tried food is *bakllava* with 94.90% (one subject did not answer) and the least tried one is *arapash* with 77%. The most liked food is *stuffed peppers* with 87.40% (five subjects did not answer), while the least liked food is *arapash* with 70.10% (23 subjects did not answer, because they hadn't tried).

Therefore Albanian foods are still quite tried and liked among the Albanian population living in Italy. This can be an indicator of the high degree of ethnic identity of our participants, who seem to keep alive the culinary traditions of the country they belong to. As for question B), 68 (68%) participants said they had tried Italian food before coming to Italy.

**Graph 2**



The analysis of the data related to question C) has shown that the most tried foods by the Albanian sample before coming to Italy are (in descending order): *spaghetti, pizza, parmesan, tortellini, mozzarella, lasagna, ham, salami, rice salad, panettone, chocolate and mortadella*. So, of the 68 participants who said they had tried Italian food before coming to Italy: 58 (85%) tried spaghetti and rated it with  $M = 8.03$ ; 51 (75%) tried pizza and evaluated it with  $M = 8.57$ ; 17 (25%) tried parmesan and evaluated it with  $M = 8.70$ ; 16 (23%) tried tortellini and evaluated it with  $M = 7.50$ ; 14 (20%) tried the mozzarella and evaluated it with  $M = 6.71$ ; 9 (13%) tried the lasagna and evaluated it with  $M = 8.78$ ; 7 (10%) tried the ham and evaluated it with  $M = 9.14$ ; 4 (6%) tried salami and evaluated it with  $M = 8.5$ ; 2 (3%) tried the rice salad and evaluated it with  $M = 9$ ; 1 (1%) tried the mortadella and evaluated it with  $M = 10$ ; 1 (1%) tried the chocolate and evaluated it with  $M = 10$ ; (remember that these answers are formulated on a scale from 4 to 10, like the grades in the Albanian school).

In conclusion, it can be said that the Albanians before coming to Italy had tried a considerable number of Italian foods.

### Acculturation

In the context of an increasingly global world the problem is how to describe and measure changes that occur in the process of acculturation. The scale of acculturation measures the integration of immigrants within the host culture.

**Table 1. Means and standard deviations for the items of the acculturation scale**

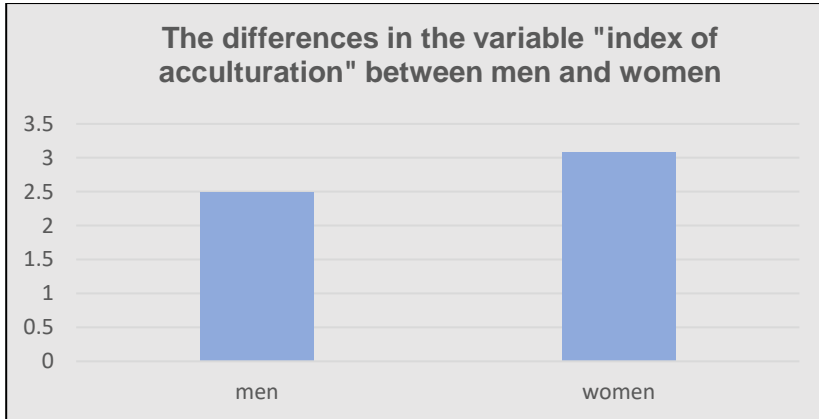
Nr	Item	Mean	Deviation
1.	I think of myself as an Italian citizen	1.91	1.14
2.	I feel part of the Italian culture	2.11	1.18
3.	I speak Italian with my friends	2.40	1.38
4.	I speak Italian with strangers	3.03	1.45
5.	The parties I celebrate are Italian	2.55	1.31
6.	The food I eat at home is Italian	3.43	0.98
7.	My favorite music is Italian	2.83	1.25
8.	My favorite TV shows are Italian	3.28	1.05

We have developed a unique index of acculturation ( $\alpha = 0.82$ ), which consists of the scale items answers means. The average acculturation index is  $M = 2.69$  ( $SD = 0.81$ ). The means and standard deviations of single items are shown in table 1.

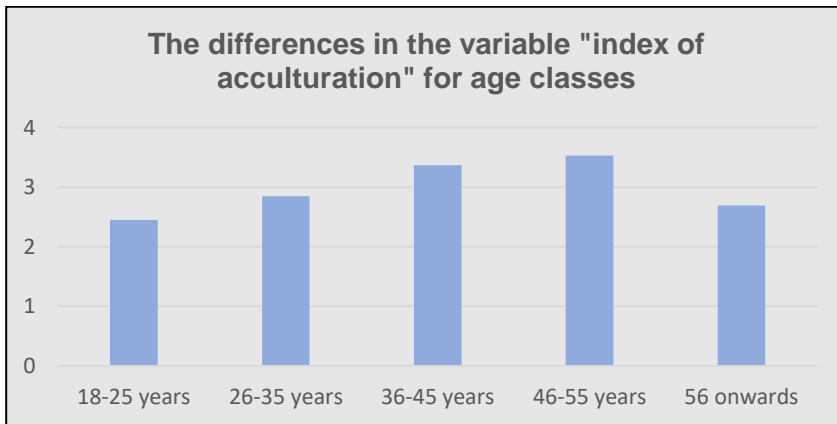


Analysis of variance shows that women ( $M = 3.08$ ;  $SD = 0.87$ ) are more likely to assimilate a new culture than men ( $M = 2.50$ ;  $SD = 0.72$ ),  $F(1,98) = 12.25$ ,  $p < .05$  (graph 3).

**Graph3**



**Graph 4**



Analysis of variance shows a significant difference in the level of acculturation based on the age of the participants,  $F(4,90) = 3.85$ ,  $p < .05$  (graph 4). Acculturation increases with age up to 55 years (from  $M = 2.45$ ,  $SD = 0.70$  for the age group of 18-25 years at  $M = 3.53$ ,  $SD = 0.97$  for the age group of 46-55 years). From 56 years onwards we observe that the degree of acculturation decreases ( $M = 2.69$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ). As you can intuitively think, the data show that for older people it is more difficult to assimilate a culture different from that of origin.

### **Ethnic identity**

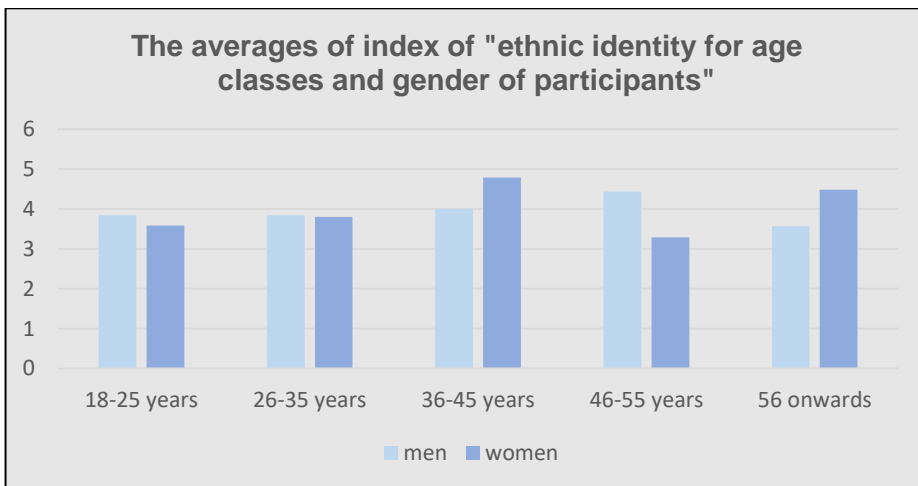
We have built a unique index of ethnic identity ( $\alpha = 0.76$ ), removing *item 4* ("with strangers I speak Albanian") to improve the internal consistency of the index. The mean of the ethnic identity index is  $M = 3.79$  ( $SD = 0.66$ ). The means and standard deviations of the individual items are shown in tab. 2.

**Table 2. Means and standard deviations for the items of the acculturation scale**

Nr	Item	Means	Deviation
1.	I think of myself as an Albanian citizen	4.38	1.03
2.	I feel part of the Albanian culture	4.41	0.90
3.	I speak Albanian with my friends	4.18	1.01
4.	With the strangers I speak Albanian	3.03	4.10
5.	The parties I celebrate are Albanian	3.71	1.07
6.	The food I eat at home is Albanian	3.18	0.96
7.	My favorite music is Albanian	3.42	1.13
8.	My favorite TV shows are Albanian	3.27	1.16

The ethnic identity index is not significantly different between men and women. There are no significant differences even between the age categories. However, analysis of variance highlights a significant interaction between gender and age,  $F(4) = 2.69, p < .05$ . Men obtain on higher levels of ethnic identity than women aged from 18 to 35 and 46 to 55, while women aged between 36 and 45 and those aged 56 and over seem to preserve the traditions of the country of origin more tenaciously than male peers (graph 5).

**Graph 5**



Comparing these results with those related to acculturation, we see that ethnic identity index means and those of individual items of the scale are higher than means related to acculturation. The paired-sample t-test for both indices shows that this difference is statistically significant,  $t(99) = 9.84, p < .001$ . This indicates that, for our participants, the degree of ethnic identity is higher than the degree of acculturation. The subjects have sought to preserve the traditions of their country of origin more than they have assimilated the traditions of the host country.

From the perspective of Berry (1990) regarding our participants: 49 (49%) are placed in the *separation* mode (remember that it is the mode in which the participants preserve the elements of the culture of origin and do not assimilate the elements of the host culture); 47 (47%) are placed in the *integration* mode (they do not only preserve the elements of the culture of origin but also assimilate those of the host culture); 3 (3%) are placed in the *assimilation* mode (the refusal of the culture of origin and the preservation of the new culture); only 1 (1%) is placed in the *limitation* mode (the rejection of both cultures).

## Discussion and Conclusions

As concluded in the previous paragraph, before coming to Italy, the Albanians had tried a considerable number of Italian foods. This result can be interpreted by referring to three possible explanations:

- Italian cuisine is well known all over the world;
- both countries (Italy, Albania) are geographically very close to each other;
- the flows of immigrants (from the 1990s onwards) have made sure that Italian foods are widely used and appreciated in Albania.

According to these explanations, both culinary cultures (Italian / Albanian) are not so different (they interact with each other).

Secondly, (unexpectedly) it was discovered that for Albanians in Italy the ethnic identity is negatively correlated with the fear of trying Italian foods. It can be assumed that participants with high ethnic identity are not afraid of losing their identity and are willing to try new foods (which they do not see as a "threat" for the preservation of their already established traditions).

The scales (of acculturation and ethnic identity) we have used, have been built *ex-novo* for the research performed in Italy, and perhaps need to be tested for validity and reliability. However, we have no evidence to suggest that concepts have not been understood. On the other hand, it can be said that our sample is not representative of either the Albanian population or the Albanians present in Italy. This means that we can not generalize our results to the entire Albanian population.

The current research gives important information on Albanian immigrants in Italy. The fact that 47% of the sample has a high degree of acculturation (they have acquired elements of the host culture) and that these participants knew and appreciated many Italian foods before coming to Italy, can be helpful for many food producers who see the Albanian market as a potential alternative. It can also be said that all these results can also be useful for associations that deal with the interests of immigrants in Italy as well as for nutritionists interested in public health.

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## Some Social Stratum in Dyrrachium during Roman Imperial Period

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### Abstract

The archaeological excavations in Dyrrachium, today Durrës in Albania, are discovered data about some stratum during Roman Imperial Period. Dyrrachium was one of the most important cities in the ancient period in Albanian territory. It was inhabited by thousand citizens from VII century BC until now and its inhabitants were divided in different social categories in Roman Period. In this paper, we will mention some of these categories that are discovered in Durrës. With the data that we have, it is impossible to identify all stratum that have lived in Dyrrachium in I-IV century AD. The study has told us that Dyrrachium citizens were separated in three categories: the Upper, Middle and the Lower stratum. Every category was composed by groups with a particular social position in roman society in Dyrrachium.

**Keywords:** Roman Colons, Metalworker, Priests, Traders, Architect, Potter

### 1. Introduction

In this day, the archaeological studies for the ancient society are more and more focused in social and economic field. The researchers are interested to know about social and economic problem in Antiquity. Therefore, our study is focused in social and economical field of the inhabitants of *Dyrrachium* during Roman Imperial Period. This ancient city was one of the most important in Albanian territory during Greco-Roman Period.

In this period, it was one of the most important towns in the western coast of the Balkan Peninsula. The historical and archaeological data inform that *Dyrrachium* was a economical developed town in Antiquity. Also, *Dyrrachium* was one of the causes why began "The Peloponnesian War" between Athens and Sparta. Not only that, it was the reason why started "The First Roman-Illyrian War". Some important roads connected the city with other parts of Balkan. This city was the starting point of the ancient *Via Egnatia*, the most important eastern road in the Roman Empire. The port of *Dyrrachium* was an important destination for traders and trade convoy from Italy to Balkan in I-IV centuries AD. This was favored from the geographic position and the climatic condition of the city. The archaeological finds that are discovered in the excavations in Durrës were imported from North Africa, Asia Minor, Greece, Dalmatia region, Italy, South Gaul etc. The city of *Dyrrachium* during I-IV centuries AD had about 40-50 thousand inhabitants.

These reasons inform for the economical development that *Dyrrachium* had in Antiquity and it was the reason of social division of inhabitants of *Dyrrachium* in Roman Imperial Period. Although, the classical study defend the theory that in Antiquity the people were divided only in two social categories: the poor people or slave and the richest or masters, this study inform that *Dyrrachium* was a heterogeneous city in I-IV centuries AD.

#### 1.1 Project Objective

In the modern city of Durrës are realized dozens archaeological excavations in XX century by Albanian and by non-Albanian archaeologists. Not all of these scientific excavations were focused to study economical and social problems because the archaeologists were more interested to study the artifacts that they had discovered. The studied of stratum was prohibited when the archaeological excavations were concluded from the communist ideology of the regime of dictatorial in Albania, where conflict between the two classes is the root of all problems in society and this situation will ultimately be resolved

through a social revolution. Today, after the fall of communist regime in Albania social and economical studies can be conducted freely. This is the focus and the objective of this paper:

Firstly, we will identify stratum in *Dyrrachium* during the I-IV centuries AD. We know that it is impossible to identify all the social categories that have lived in *Dyrrachium* because the data are scarce.

Secondly, the study will identify who were part of the Upper, Middle and Lower stratum. As we know, this objective is very difficult because anyone today has made a similar study in Albania yet.

Lastly, we will speak for the privilege that had which of these categories during the Roman Imperial Period. Although, we know that this is a difficult purpose because the historical and the archaeological information are incomplete for *Dyrrachium*.

On the other hand, these are the purposes of this paper. However, we know that these objectives are not so easy but the archaeological finds will help.

### 1.2 Research Methodology

As know, all the scientific study uses their scientific methods. The archaeology study has its methods that scholars use to make scientific study. In this paper, we have used some scientific methods that archaeologists usually use in their study.

Firstly, the principal methods that it is used are the archaeological excavations. These excavations are made by Albanians archaeologists during the last four decades. In different archaeological excavations, they have discovered data about stratum in *Dyrrachium* during Roman Imperial Period. These archaeological methods are: epigraphic inscription, ceramic, coins, grave etc.

Secondly, ancient Greek and Roman authors have written for *Dyrrachium* in Antiquity. In their books, they mentioned people and social category of this important city. Some of the ancient authors have mentioned in their book social categories in *Dyrrachium* during Roman Period. So, they are very important data but.

Also, we have studied the archaeological finds in some Museum in Albania, where they are today. We analyzed the data in the Archaeological Museum of Durrës, in the Archaeological Museum of Tirana and in the Historical Museum of Tirana. These archaeological evidence have important information for stratum in *Dyrrachium* during I-IV centuries AD

Lastly, another scientific methods used are the conclusions that other archaeologists have made in their studies. In the last fifteen years, Albanian and foreign researches have published papers and books for *Dyrrachium* where they have spoken for the inhabitants of Durrës in the I-IV centuries AD. These scholars mentioned only one or two social category during the Roman Imperial Period.

In conclusion, these methods not only are scientific but are the most modern. Today, they use all the archaeologists in the world. Although, these are not all scientific methods that archaeologist use in excavations and studies but they are more than that. For this paper, we have used the four methods that we mentioned before because we are conditioned from the archaeological data. In the future, the other archaeological data and methods will identify more stratum in *Dyrrachium*.

## 2. Analysis Result

The city of *Dyrrachium* was one of the most important towns of the Eastern Adriatic coast during Roman Imperial Period. As we mentioned before, important naval and earthly roads connected the city with other parts of Balkan and Apennine Peninsula. So, products and goods came in *Dyrrachium* from Italy to Balkan and vice versa. Also, the geographic position and the climatic condition had influenced the development of the city in I-IV centuries AD. This is demonstrated from the archaeological finds that are discovered in the archaeological excavations in *Dyrrachium* as coin, ceramic, glass production, statue, terra cotta, the amphitheater, roman bath, aqueduct etc. These archaeological finds and the ancient roman authors inform that *Dyrrachium* was a heterogeneity city during Roman Imperial Period. In this paper, I will classify these stratum in three categories: Upper, Middle and Lower stratum.

So, in *Dyrrachium* during Roman Imperial Period are discovered data that prove that Upper stratum or the Aristocracy has lived here. In this paper, we will mention some of these Upper stratum that are identified until now. The category that we will mention were classify as Aristocracy because they were rich, had privileges and they had governed the city during all Roman Imperial Period.

Firstly, some data inform that roman colonist had inhabited the city after Octavian Augustus declared *Dyrrachium* a Roman Colony during the end of first century BC. This Roman Emperor established their veteran roman soldiers. This can be proved from some Latin inscriptions discovered in *Dyrrachium* on four roman graves. The inscriptions on them inform that in these tombs were buried members of roman family of *Aemilia* (Miraj 1991). This was an older roman Patrician family that was established in the town. On others roman tombs discovered in *Dyrrachium*, as altars and sarcophagus (Koch 1988), are found Latin inscriptions for other roman colonists. The city was governed by these roman colonists during I-IV centuries AD. This category was the richest of the city and they have a lot of privilege. When they came in *Dyrrachium*, the colonists brought their culture, government system, lifestyle, traditions, religion etc. from their native land. So, the city adapted the roman colonist culture, gusto and requests.

Secondly, the Priests are another Upper stratum discovered in *Dyrrachium*. This social category is mentioned on some roman inscriptions discovered in Roman cemetery of Durrës and in other part of the city. These inscriptions inform that *Augustales*, *Pontiff*, *Flamines*, *Vestal* and for simply priests existed in *Dyrrachium* in I-IV centuries AD (Tartari 2004).

The *augur* were priest and official in the Classical World where his role was the practice of augury and to interpret the willingness of the gods studying from the flight of birds: whether they are flying in groups or alone, what noises they did when they were flying, direction of the flight and what kind of birds they are. This was known as "taking the auspices". The ceremony and function of the augur was central to any major decisions of Roman society, public or private, including matters for war, commerce and religion decisions (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augur>).

On a grave-altar of second century AD in the Archaeological Museum of Durrës it is written that the person who is buried here was a *Pontiff* (Tartari 2004). During the Roman Imperial Periods, a Pontiff usually was membership of the College of Pontiffs. One of their most important duties was guardianship of the *Libri Pontificales* or Pontifical Books. Among these books were the *Acta Indigitamenta* (lists of invocations or the names of the gods), *Ritualia*, *Commentarii*, *Fasti* and *Annales* (yearly records of magistrates and important events). These books were under the possession of the College of Pontiffs and only they were allowed to consult those when it is necessary.

Also, in the Archaeological Museum of Durrës it is the grave-altar of Luc Papi. On his tomb, it is an inscription which inform that he was a priest of *Augustales* during second century AD (Miraj 1991). The *Augustales* were an order or *sodalitas* of Roman priests, instituted by Tiberius to attend to the maintenance of the cult of Augustus. The *Augustales* were chosen only by principal persons of the city. Women might be appointed priestesses of Augustus. In the Archaeological Museum of Durrës are other data that prove for existence of the *Flamines* (Sesteri 1943) and *Vestal* (Koch 1988) priests.

Also, some ancient authors told in their books for the existences of some temples in Durrës. We knew for the existence of the temple of Artemis (Appian 2002) and for the temple Venus, both were outside of the city. On another roman inscription, we informed that in *Dyrrachium* was also the temple of Minerva, erected by Luc Papi on a public proprietary (Miraj 1991). Today, all these temples aren't unidentified yet.

Lastly, the third Upper stratum that it is identified in *Dyrrachium* is the Local Aristocracy of the city. The inscription on the grave of *Syr Epidamnos* is an example. On his tomb the inscription said: *Roman horseman, Duumvir, Aedili Quinquennial, Flamines, Augustales, Protector of the Dyrrah Colony, High Priest, Magister (Carpenter) in honor of their permanent prefect...* (Miraj 1991). As we can see, *Syr Epidamnos* had a lot of roman title and only an aristocrat could had all the position in the roman administrate that are wrote on his grave. The archaeological artifacts dated this tomb in I-II centuries AD but his surname, *Epidamnos*, was the name of Durrës in Hellenistic Period. So, it is difficult for us to believe that a roman colonist had as surname the Hellenistic name of the city of Durrës. As a result of, we believe that *Syr Epidamnos* was a local aristocrat of *Dyrrachium* that was Romanize and the Roman State included the local aristocracy for govern the city.

So, when Roma invade *Dyrrachium*, in the first century BC and established the roman colons, a part of local aristocracy of *Dyrrachium* stood in the city and they took roman culture. The local aristocracy of *Dyrrachium* coexisted with the roman colons and they together have governed the city between I-IV centuries AD. This was the reason why *Syr Epidamnos*, a person from *Dyrrachium*, had all these positions in the roman administrate.

In *Dyrrachium* are discovered data about Middle social category during I-IV centuries AD. The archaeological artifacts, as ceramic, inscription, glass, unfinished statue, imported products etc. and the ancient roman author informed us for the existence of craftsman in *Dyrrachium* in I-IV centuries AD. These were part of Middle class and they had wealth, businesses

and privileges in Antiquity. So, the Middle stratum had lesser political influence in the city than the aristocracy in I-IV centuries AD because they were lesser rich and privileges than the Upper category. During the day, craftsman worked in their manufactory, which was called by roman *Tabernae*, to manufacture and sold their goods and products. In this study, will mention some of these Middle social categories that we have identify in this town.

Firstly, the archaeological evidence testified that in the city have lived traders. Some of these ceramics were local products but some others were imported from different part of Roman Empire, also outside the Roman Empire. Also, other artifacts discovered in Durres as roman sarcophagus (Koch 1988), lamps, cups, plates and other ceramics fragments were from Asia Minor, Aegean region, Italy, south and eastern Mediterranean Sea (Tartari 2004) and Dalmatia, Dardania etc. These archeological objects were produced these region and they were imported in *Dyrrachium* by traders, who move the products and the goods according to market request. The traders made trade between *Dyrrachium* and the other regions of Roman Empire. Traders moved products and goods from one region to other and sold them. In this period, the producers rarely had directly contacts with consumers.

*Dyrrachium*, during the Roman Empire, was a consumer city and for completed the inhabitant request the traders went in the other Roman Empire regions to bought products and goods. The free movement, *Pax Romana*, the unique coin, the street network, the geographical position of the city etc. had an important role to increased the trade between *Dyrrachium* and other regions of the Roman Empire. However, it is difficult to identify the intensity of this commerce because we have few archaeological data to make a definitive conclusion.

The architects were a category that has lived in *Dyrrachium* in Antiquity. Today in Durres are finds great and important roman monuments as Aqueduct, Roman Public Bath, Amphitheatre, house, network road, sidewalk, Bibliotheca and temples. These were greatest engineering structure during I-IV centuries AD and these building were erected only by architects. In *Dyrrachium*, only in one case it is discovered a data about existence of architects during Roman Imperial Period. On a brick of the *hypocaust* column in Roman Public Bath it is discovered an inscription where wrote: *Luc Tullit Valerii Rutus Arkitekt* (Miraj 1991). This is a proof which informed us that this category has lived in I-IV centuries AD in *Dyrrachium* and they built building.

The Potters are another social category discovered in *Dyrrachium*. The archaeological excavations in Durrës discovered manufactories where were produced ceramic objects (Frashëri 2015). In one case, it is discovered a complete furnace of the second century AD where were produced tiles, bricks and vase as bowl, dishes, amphora, Olpe, Pelike, Krater, cup, Oinochoe etc. (Pani & Papajani 1986). Today this roman furnace it is in the Archaeological Museum of Durrës. The vases produced by potters in *Dyrrachium* were imitation of Greek, Italian and Dalmatian imported objects. This phenomenon reduced the price of vases and large persons bought that.

The massive use of vases in Roman Imperial Period can be explained from some factors. The pottery was not the primary product that was traded in Antiquity but pottery was the principal manner used to transport the primary products and goods. Consequently, pottery was traded and sold together with the primary products. Also, in the Roman Imperial Period the pottery was not used only to transport products but also for cooked, to deposited produce and it was used to kept liquids and food. As a result, the ceramic was an important product in the lifestyle of persons. The imported vases in *Dyrrachium* were imported from Central and North Italy, from Greece, where distinguished Athens and Corinth, and from the Asia Minor (Tartari 2004) but large vases were produced from the local manufactures of the city. For the scarcity information, we don't have sufficient data to prove if potters in Roman Imperial Period had employees or not in their manufactures.

The data that are discovered in archaeological excavation in Durres inform us for presence of woodworker and Carpenters in the town. A manufacture where was elaborated the wood of the I-II centuries AD it is discovered in *Dyrrachium*. In this manufacture were a produced furniture for house as table, chair, portmanteau, wood spoon, bed etc (Frashëri 2015). Also, for the existence of the carpenter in *Dyrrachium* are discovered two data in the roman cemetery of Durres. Firstly, on a sarcophagus it is decorated part of a ship and the researchers thinks that the person who was buried here was a ship owner and a carpenter (Koch 1988). Today, this sarcophagus it is in the National Museum of Belgrade.

The second prove that demonstrate the existence of carpenters in the city it is an inscription of I-II centuries AD on the marble tombs of *Syr Epidamnus*, where was wrote that he was a Magister of Carpenter during Roman Period and the tomb was erected from the College of Carpenter of *Dyrrachium* (Miraj 1991). Today, this inscription it is in the Louver Museum of Paris. So, we understand that carpenters lived in *Dyrrachium* and they were organized in college under a magister



leadership. It is logical the presence of carpenters in *Dyrrachium* because the city was closely connected with the sea. This closely connection of *Dyrrachium* with the sea can explain with massive used of marine roads communication and the sea food that the inhabitants of *Dyrrachium* consumed in Antiquity. The wood ships had an important role in communication and in fishery. These ships were constructed and repaired by carpenters. So, it was normal that *Dyrrachium* had specialized persons that constructed and repaired the wood objects.

The sculptors are a middle stratum that have lived and worked in *Dyrrachium* in I-IV centuries AD. Proves for this category are discovered in some archaeological sites in Durres. In a site near the roman amphitheatre of Durres it is discovered an unfinished statue of a man worked in sandstone (Zeqo 1989) inside an edifice that it was a studios. A bas-relief and a high relief in calcareous stone are discovered on two sarcophagus in *Dyrrachium* unfinished (Koch 1989 /Tartari 1997) inside another building which was a second studios. These evidences, inform us that in this city had manufacture or studios of local sculptors who worked stone to created artwork. These artists imported un-worked stone from different regions because *Dyrrachium* had not quarry nearby. The geological analyze of the artifacts that we have mentioned before inform that calcareous stone of sarcophagus were imported from two regions in Albania, Kruja and Karaborun (Tartari 1994).

In *Dyrrachium* during I-IV centuries had lived tailors, who were s called *Sarcinatoris*. This is proved from an inscription on a calcareous roman grave of I-II centuries AD (Tartari 2004), where the inscription for the death person said that he was a *Sarcinatoris*, which was the name of tailor in this period. This grave was erected from the Tailor College of *Dyrrachium* in honor of the master of *Sarcinatoris* of the town, who was buried here. The archaeological data are scarce to prove if the tailors were specialized in production of a type of clothing or more than one. We would believe that they could have produced more than one type of clothes. The tailors worked inside of *tabernae* and they could elaborate leather and wool. If the tailor had employed workers, slaves or they worked alone in their *tabernae*, the archaeological data and the ancient authors wouldn't have informed for this detail.

Another category that is discovered in *Dyrrachium* during I-IV centuries AD is the fishermen. The existence of this stratum came from weight stones and fishhooks discovered in archaeological excavations. The weight stones were used by roman fisherman for held the fishnets immersed under water while fishhooks were used during fishing process (Zeqo 1989). These archaeological evidences inform us that in *Dyrrachium* lived fisherman. The factors that have favored the businesses of fish in *Dyrrachium* during Roman Imperial Period were the presence of sea and the market request for sea foods as fish, mussel, shrimp etc. All the sea foods were sold in the market of the city and in hinterland.

In *Dyrrachium* are discovered facts that in I-IV centuries AD have lived and worked glass producer. We argue this idea from significant number of glassware, un-finished glass dough and two glasswork manufactures that are discovered in *Dyrrachium*. From the quantity of artifacts, the centuries I-II AD was the gold period of glass production in *Dyrrachium* because the major part of glass objects, un-finished glass dough and glasswork manufactures are discovered in these centuries. So, part of glassware was imported but the major roman glass that are discovered i *Dyrrachium* were local products of the city. The glass vessels are brought in *Dyrrachium* through trade from different province of Roman Empire as Italy, Gaul and Cyprus (Tartari 1996). The local glassware was produced in the glasswork manufactures of I-II centuries AD discovered in *Dyrrachium* from archaeological excavation. These two manufactures were burned in the end of second century AD (Frashëri 2015).

Also, the chemical analyses of some roman glass objects, discovered in the archaeological excavations in Durres, proved that the sand which was used for the production of these objects was from suburb of *Dyrrachium* (Tartari 2004). The major glass objects in *Dyrrachium* are discovered in roman tombs. They were used during the funeral rituals, kitchen utensils and as pharmaceutical and cosmetic objects. Apparently, the import of glass objects had not completed all market requests. This had influenced the local glass production with a low quality but they have undercharge than the imported glass objects. All local glass vases were imitation of the imported objects. The local production reduced the prices of glass objects, even the poor inhabitants.

The Chemists or Pharmacists were part of middle stratum and they have lived in *Dyrrachium* during Roman Imperial Period. This is proved from archaeological objects that are discovered inside roman tombs in Durres. These archaeological finds were ceramic, glass and ivory objects which were used for preparation, preservation and trade different medicines in I-IV centuries AD. We can mention a small ivory *Psykter* (Toçi 1965), an *Alabastron* (Bllaca&Tartari 1989), a vase-urn discovered in the tomb number 63 (Tartari 2004), a pharmaceutical black weight stone that was used to the pharmaceutical scales (Bllaca & Tartari 1989) and a bone spoon which was used for measured medical dose (Bllaca & Tartari 1989). All

these objects were used in medicine field. So, during I-IV centuries AD in *Dyrrachium* had persons who produce and commerce medication. The inhabitants of *Dyrrachium* bought medicines to Pharmacist or Chemist when they were sickened. If Pharmacist or Chemist had or not workers or they were organized in college, we wouldn't have enough data about their work.

In the end, in this important city of western Balkan Peninsula in I-IV centuries AD have lived and worked surgeon. This can be proved from the surgical instruments that are discovered in roman graves in *Dyrrachium*. Different forms and of types scalpel are discovered in *Dyrrachium*, which surgeon used during surgical interventions. We can mention two bronze scalpels with leaf form (Bllaca & Tartari 1989), another bronze scalpel in spoon form and others two iron scalpels with lance form (Tartari 2004). All these scalpels were used only in ambulatory surgery during Roman Imperial Period. In one case, it is discovered inside a tomb of second century AD a skull with a surgical intervention (Bllaca & Tartari 1989). Obviously, the skull aperture of the dead has quadrangle form and it had to a result of a surgical intervention. Maybe, the person had brain illness and he had to a surgical intervention. A more curate analyze of the aperture told that the wound had stated to heal. So, here is a proof for a surgical intervention on a patient who survived from the surgery intervention but he died some weeks later.

These are the Middle Class that are discovered in *Dyrrachium* until now. Of course, we know that these are not all the categories because they were more than that. Other data are still in archaeological underground of Durres un-excavated which are waiting to discover from the future archaeologist.

The archaeological finds and ancient authors inform us that in *Dyrrachium* during I-IV centuries AD also lived poor inhabitants, who were part of Lower Stratum. In this category we have included as slaves also freeman. The major numbers of inhabitants that lived in *Dyrrachium* were poor. This category had not right, wealth or privileges as the other two stratum that we mentioned before. Of course, some freeman had property as a house, furniture and some things but the slaves had not any right and property. The poor inhabitants of *Dyrrachium* did the hardest worked in the city. In this paper, we will mention some poor member of *Dyrrachium* inhabitants that are sure indentify from the archaeological excavations.

The gladiators were part of Lower category that archaeological finds inform that had lived in *Dyrrachium*. The First archaeological proof this, it is the roman amphitheater of *Dyrrachium* with a capacity about 20.000 persons, which was the second amphitheater in the Balkan Peninsula, where were held gladiators games. The second proof it is discovered an inscription on a grave that said: *Luc Etereius, master of the gladiators game. Goodbye* (Miraj 1991). So, in I-IV centuries AD in *Dyrrachium* a gladiator master organized gladiator games for spectator entertainment. If gladiators were from *Dyrrachium* inhabitants or they were taken from other parts of Roman Empire, we wouldn't have enough data to prove this. An interesting proof it is discovered in *Dyrrachium* about gladiator games organization. An inscription on a marble plaque said that the gladiator games were organized from the Roman State or by private persons (Miraj 1991).

Secondly, in *Dyrrachium* lived freeman during I-IV centuries AD. The data for this stratum are discovered in the Roman Cemetary of Durres. In this burial place, it is it is discovered an inscription on a roman grave which inform that the buried person was a *Libertus* (Tartari 1997). The ancient roman called *Libertus* a freeman, who initially was a slave but he had won his freedom. These persons did hard work to live as: tiller, plowman, digger, sanitation worker etc. They lived in their house because it was not rare that a *Libertus* had a property. This stratum had few right and they were poor.

The slave is the last stratum that we have indentified in *Dyrrachium*. Again, the evidences are discovered in the Roman Cemetary of Durres. In this cemetery are discovered poor tombs as funeral stones (Tartari 2004) and grave with tiles (Tartari 1991). The simple architecture, the poor funeral objects inside and the low price are evidence that the persons who had passed away and their family had not enough money for erected a costly tomb. So, in these graves were buried slaves. Due to the scarcity of proves, it is impossible for us to identify all slave categories. This is a great loss for understanding the Lower Stratum in *Dyrrachium* because slaves constitute an important percentage of the inhabitants of the city.

However, these categories were not all Lower Stratum of *Dyrrachium* that have lived during I-IV centuries AD but they were more than we mentioned. The difficulty to identify all Lower Stratum in *Dyrrachium* consists in the scarcities of information that are discovered until now. The city of *Dyrrachium* was heterogeneous in Roman Imperial Period. The inhabitants of the city were divided in three social categories: Upper, Middle and the Lower.

### 3. Results and Discussion

This study is focused on the social categories of Durres during the Roman Imperial Period. The study has produced some results that we like to share with other.

Firstly, the archaeological and historical data proved that *Dyrrachium* was a heterogeneous town in this period. The reason of this heterogeneity was the economical development of the city during the I-IV centuries AD. The economical development has contributed in the social progress and in differentiation of citizens.

Secondly, the archaeological finds proof for the differentiation between the *Dyrrachium* citizens in the Roman Imperial Period. So, in I-IV centuries AD have coexisted three stratum: The Upper Stratum or The Aristocracy, The Middle Stratum or Crafts and Traders and The Lower Stratum or Poor and Slaves.

Also, each of these categories had their right, privileges and wealth, which were different from each other. Of course, the aristocracy had the most right, privileges and wealth from the other two stratum.

This study proved that the Middle stratum in *Dyrrachium* during Roman Imperial Period was the most heterogeneous from the other two. Apparently, in this historical period a significant portion of Durres inhabitants were part of Middle stratum.

Lastly result, after Octavian Augustus declared *Dyrrachium* as a Roman Colony in the end of I century BC, the inhabitants were Romanized only in the end of II century AD. This result proved from the archaeological finds as the amphitheatre, roman public bath, the roman aqueduct, the ritual and architectural burial, the artifacts etc. that are discovered during archaeological excavation. All these are very similar with the data found in the city of Rome. These prove that the inhabitants of *Dyrrachium* in second century AD had roman culture and lifestyle.

This study told us an interesting topic for discussion. The most part of *Dyrrachium* inhabitants during I-IV centuries AD were part of Lower and Middle category but the artifacts that are discovered in archaeological excavation were produced by the Upper stratum. The discussion that we wish submit is: if we will have also the artifact of the Middle and Lower stratum, the history of *Dyrrachium* will be different or not? If yeas, how many different will be the history from what we know today?

### 4. Conclusion

These were the social stratum that we have identified in *Dyrrachium* during I-IV centuries AD. Naturally, these are not all the categories that had lived in *Dyrrachium* in this period. We believe that were more than we have mentioned in this paper. Some classes like baker, batcher, musician etc. are not identified in *Dyrrachium* yet. The problem of non-identification is linked with the scarcity of data that we have today because *Dyrrachium* has an un-interrupted life from VII century BC to today. So, some data are destroyed with passing the time and other are not discovered yet.

In conclusion, the study has told us that the *Dyrrachium* citizens during I-IV century AD were classified in three different social stratum: the Upper Stratum, the Middle Stratum and the Lower Stratum. So, the Upper Stratum included roman colonist, priests and local aristocracy. In the Middle stratum included architects, traders, potters, sculptor, glass producer etc. Lastly, the poor categories included the gladiators, slaves and freeman. Naturally, the archaeological excavation indicated that *Dyrrachium* during the Roman Imperial Period was a heterogeneous city. In this city, the inhabitants were divided in three social stratum and they were not classified only in two categories, the poor and the rich persons, as we think. The future archaeological excavation will discover more data for the other social stratum in *Dyrrachium* that are not identified yet.

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## The Creation and the Function of Popular Assembly in Constitution of 1950

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### Abstract

Because of the emigration phenomenon, from the '90s of the last century, the small country of Balkans, Albania, is under scrutiny of public opinion. Students of University in the early '90s start the protest which in a few months brought down the Communist regime of Ramiz Alia. To understand better and fully the institutional system of Albania, it is necessary to analyze the legal way of historical evolution, especially in light of the importance of juridical institutions which covers the actual structure of the Constitution. Specially we need to have in mind the evolution of the historical constitutional of this country, to understand the new democratic challenges of the actual political life.

**Keywords:** assambly, parliament, evolution, structure

### 1. Introduction

#### Historic Moments of the Socialist Constitution Birth in 1950

With this paper, we will analyze the Constitution of the Popular Republic of 1950 in Albania, and especially the birth of juridical history.

This Constitution of 1950, started the socialist era in Albania, and for this socialist historical moment the next one was in 1976, when the Republic changed the nomination in Socialist Popular Republic. The similarity of them is the state sovereignty, which derives from the Popular Assembly. In that time it was the supreme institution of the state. But there are some changes and they are connected with the integration of the communist ideology which started the elimination of human rights and in the other side there was the consolidation of the Popular assembly and also the head of the communist party.

In the first constitution, it was only determined the government form, which was temporary with the aim of liberating the state from any foreign invasion.

In 8 November 1941, was created the communist party of Albania and Hoxha was elected the one of the seven members of the Temporary Central Committee.

Albanian's people, supported by the invasion of Italians to Greece and later from invasion of Germany to Brss<sup>1</sup> and from the fact that the fascist did not change the economic situation in that period decided to not capitulate without a war.

With the coming of the fascism, the poverty was increased despite the reduction in unemployment and because the fascist government favored the feudal class in the country. In 16 September 1942 was the Peza Conference, in continuous victories against fascism army. In this conference participate all the political branches of the country like the Communist Party, and Balli Kombetar etc. In this Conference they decided that the people's organization was nominated The Antifascist National Liberation Council, composed by a popular army and where later also participated in Italian soldiers.

The National Union Council was the supreme institution of the movement. The first official act was the liberation of the city of Skrapar.

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<sup>1</sup> Soviet Union

In the first national conference, which was held in March 1943, Hoxha was officially elected General Secretary of the Communist Party<sup>1</sup>.

To direct Albania on the road to the Socialist Hoxha, thanks to the National Liberation Army, started a new face of battles.

## 2. The Creation of the People's Republic of 1946

Albania was declared People's Republic in March 1946 by the Constitutional Assembly, which also named Hoxha Prime Minister.

Happened in this historical period the declaration of the People's Republic of Albania<sup>2</sup>, the confiscation of the invasions and the country's collaborators properties. The second empire of the Constitution declared Albania as the People's Republic: "*The State of Labor and the Farmers*".

The Constitution of the People's Republic was formulated in 1946 and was approved after four years in 4 July 1950 in Tirana.

The communist ideology begins to show in the first amendment especially in the third<sup>3</sup> and fourth<sup>4</sup> amendment, which declares against the fascist and the give the sovereignty to the labors.

In the third amendment that determines the rules of the People's Council, we can clearly see that the role of the dictatorship of the proletariat<sup>5</sup>, formed from '*city labors and the farmers*'. The People's Council is the structure of the proletarian state.

In fact, the People's Council was born before the people's organizations of the war against fascism<sup>6</sup>, and were transformed as organizational group into proletarian sovereignty, and later with the end of the war and the revolution were changed into state organizations.

## 3. The Rule of the Popular Assembly in 1950 Constitution

Taking example from the structure of the political institutional chinese state, more from the soviet federation, the institution of the assembly, is chosen from the Albanian Democratic Front lists. This was only the organization of the Labor Party of Albania as a *super partes* institution and stands at the top of the state structure of the pyramid and decides for every problem in the political life of the country as the highest organs of the state which represent the popular sovereignty, as was determined in article 41 of the Constitution. The Article 44 decides that: "*The Popular Assembly is chosen from all peoples in the electoral zones in proportion to one member of the parliament to ten thousand people*". For most of all in the first people's assembly from 121 members of the parliament, three of the members were women's.

The equal between men's and women's was shown in the article 17 first chapter of the Constitution, where is said: '*the women are equal to the man in any aspect of private, political and social life*'.

The members of the Assembly had the parliament immunity and their mandate was for four years. The assembly was gathered in to two full sections in a year.

At the head of the popular assembly was the Presidium which had the duty of coordinating the people's assembly and the function of the Constitutional Court, and this last one was not determined by the Constitution. The institution of the Presidium was formed by the President, three vice presidents, one secretary and ten members (Article 57).

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<sup>1</sup> In may 1944 the antifascist congress of Përmet has nominated Hoxha the President of Antifascist National Liberation Committee.

<sup>2</sup> Look at the characteristics of the totalitar state at Pasquino G., *Corso di scienza politica, Il Mulino, Bologna 1997, pp 220-228.*

<sup>3</sup> Article 3 of the Constitution: "*The political base of the Peoples republic of Albania are the peoples council created in the natinal liberatin war against the fascism with reaction and determination for the historic victory of this war and along the born the socialst classes*".

<sup>4</sup> Article 4 of the Constitution: "*The sovrantiy in People republic of Albania is given to all the labours of the city and the country, rapresentet by the people's councils*".

<sup>5</sup> See Marx K. e Engels F., *Manifesto del partito comunista, pp 39-55.*

<sup>6</sup> See Biagini A., *op. cit.*, p. 139.

These duties were not fixed, but renewed in any of the People's Assemblies (Article 59) but their decision over the legitimacy of the constitutional law, as for Article 58 of the Constitution, had to be approved by People assembly which had approved the law by themselves.

#### 4. Conclusions

Albania had a troubled history and it has moved from the status of the Ottoman Empire, which has ended in 1912, until the total isolation of Hoxha communist regime. This isolated character along with the ignorant highlands typology of the country along with the early character of the autochthon population, has made Albania as one continues isolated country. One country between the borders that has created lots of curiosity in the scientific community, so also different types of anthropology's studies.

Has been missing in particular organic studies on the constitutional right, and because lately has been proves against it.

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## Inter-Religious Communication, Religious Radicalization and Security Issues

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### Abstract

The object of the research in this study is the inter-religious communication, religious radicalism and their impact on security issues. The study undertakes to answer the question of how inter-religious communication and religious radicalization impacts on security. The study is of interest at the national, regional and global level. The lack of communication and inter-religious dialogue as well as the religious radicalization, have often led to inter-religious and inter-ethnic hatred, crimes against humanity, genocide and terrorist acts, becoming thus a serious threat to regional and global security. The Srebrenica massacre, the former Afghanistan under the regime the Taliban, today's ISIS, and also today's trends of the radicalism of Balkan Islam prove this perfectly. The study argues that the Albanian efforts to establish their own national state were never religious reasons. They were not only set up out of the religion framework, but they also stripped off religious divisions from their political raiment. Whereas the religious radicalization shifted the religious affiliation as a priority compared to the national affiliation. But for the Albanians, religion is not the defining feature of their national identity. Defining religion as a priority before the nation, the radicalization of religious beliefs, can become a danger for our national identity, and not being able to secure it, can turn it into an existential threat for our national security. This study applies the methods and instruments of the basic scientific researches, quantitative and qualitative, like the methods of analysis and synthesis, comparative analysis, historical, legal, comparison and confrontation ones, as well as the case studies. In the end, this study concludes that the curb of religious inter-religious communication weakens religious tolerance, and creates space for the radicalization of religious beliefs. Not being able to secure the religious beliefs can turn it into a risk and a threat for our national identity and the very foundations of the Albanian state themselves. This requires the state not to be just a neutral guarantor for the freedom of religious beliefs, but to act as a promoter of these freedoms and pass from passive neutralism into active secularism.

**Keywords:** inter-religious communication, religious tolerance, religious radicalization, national security, religious exclusivity

### 1. Introduction

#### Communication among Religious Faiths, Main Streams

Rivalry and non-acceptance of the dialogue and communication between religious faiths, as well as their relationship with the state, society and the individual has had a great influence in the development itself and the progress of the human society. It was exactly when instead of the conflict, there was communication and dialogue between the religious faiths, at a time when the religious was separated from the state and there was the start of the secularization era and the time when pluralism and religious tolerance became part of the society, which in turn led society into the path of development and progress.

From the way people view other religions in rapport with their religion and the level of acceptance of communication with them, we may distinguish three main streams: the stream of non-communication and that of excluding other religious faiths, otherwise referred to as religious exclusivity; the stream of involvement of other religious faiths or religious inclusivity and the stream of accepting the legitimacy of religious faiths or pluralism. People who belong to the stream of religious exclusiveness, thus, of the exclusion of other religious faiths, see their religious faith as the only true religion. According to them, other religions are not real. They are rivals of their faiths and are only Satan's shape<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Xhavit Shala (2016), "State, Religious Faith and Security Issues", Lambert Academic Publishing, p.124.



A characteristic of their behavior is non-communication, exclusion, intolerance and violence. The representatives of the religious exclusiveness often find the drive for a wrong interpretation that they make to the passages they got from holy books, like in the<sup>1</sup>, as well as in the Koran.<sup>2</sup> The spirit of exclusivity exists often even inside a religion, supposing they pretend the truthfulness of a version, compared to another version of the same religion<sup>3</sup>. Even the representatives of the religious inclusiveness stream, otherwise including other religious faiths, view their religion as the only true religion. Different from the exclusivity, they do not regard other religions as wrong and do not interrupt their communication with them, but, according to them, they are not complete and partly developed. Only when at a time it became dominant in the society the acceptance stream of the legitimacy of the religious faiths or pluralism, of the acceptance of the indispensability of communication between religious faiths, then Europe was safe from religious fanatics and entered the path of modernization. According to the representatives of this stream, religions are all legitimate, valuable and true, when they are seen from the inside of their special culture. All the religious traditions merit respect. Regarding religious pluralism we may use even the term religious diversity. The exclusivity (expectance) and religious pluralism are two contradicting streams in the way how they see the religious world in rapport with their religion.

## 2. Crisis of Communication between Religious Faiths, Radicalization and Security Issues

If there is freedom given to the supporters of the religious exclusivity, not only they may stop the inter-religious dialogue, but they may also increase hatred and violence against religion and members of other religious communities, threatening the security of a country.<sup>4</sup> Lack of inter-religious communication and dialogue in the last decades is accompanied with a radicalization of the religious faiths, which on its own side often led to inter-religious and inter-ethnic hatred, in crimes against humanity, genocide and terrorist acts, becoming therefore a serious threat for the national, regional and global security. The massacre of the Muslim people in Srebrenica in July 1995<sup>5</sup>, previous Afghanistan under the Taliban regime, and the 11 September, 2001 attacks against USA, terroristic act of Brejvic<sup>6</sup> in Norway<sup>7</sup>, today's ISIS genocide against the Jazzed people<sup>8</sup>, as well as the today's tendency for the radicalization of the Balkan Islam<sup>9</sup> prove this well.

It is still even more dangerous when the religious exclusivity is turned into a dominant ideology and state politics. In this case we are dealing with a theocratic state, known mainly in the Middle Ages, but that in the last decades is reappearing again. The turn of the religious exclusivity in the state politics is accompanied with consequences for the inner politics of these states. Such states, not allowing other religious faiths, make constant and systematic offence to the human rights and freedoms. They become shelter, radicals and trainers of the militants of the same religion from other countries. In the foreign politics, these states become a concern for the regional countries, putting forth and serving as exports for the terrorism covered by religion, threatening in this way, the regional security and beyond. In order to illustrate this, it is enough to mention the Afghanistan case till the year 2001. Taliban's victory was a typical case, where not only religious Islam exclusivity was turned into a state politics, but also inside Islam itself, the exclusivity belonged to the Sunnis version.

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<sup>1</sup> *In the Bible, apart from the love and peace messages there are found other messages regarding repressive measures against those who do not accept faith. For example, in the Bible, Matthew, 12:30, it says: "Those who are not with me, are against me, and who does not get together, separates".*

<sup>2</sup> *In Koran, the people are divided into two groups, in Muslims and non-Muslims. The Muslims form an Islamic community and include the territories of the «Dar al –Islam» (Islamic place), a place where the Islamic law acts. The non-Muslim group, are inhabitant of the «Dar al – Harb» (place of wars). They must obey the Islamic law, and in order to keep their religious faith and protect property, they must pay the tax.*

<sup>3</sup> *[Iran, even though it was an Islamic State itself, it created reserves and attracted the attention of Taliban actions, because of the exclusiveness of the Sunni-Pashtu faith of Taliban]*

<sup>4</sup> *For more see: Xhavit Shala- «Albanians at a Crossroad», 42- 56, Tirana, May 2004. Published by the Albanian Center of Studies for National Security*

<sup>5</sup> *VOA 25.03.2016: The leader of this massacre Radovan Karaxhiç, was sentenced for for persecution, extermination, deportation, forcible transfer and killings – but was freed from charges of genocide related to a campaign to get rid of Bosnians and Croats from the villages conquered by the Serbian forces during the war of the years 1992- 1995.*

<sup>6</sup> *BBC 23 June 2011, Anders Behring Brejvic, a Christian fundamentalist, kills 85 people, mainly young males and females in the Utøya village in Norway. [In the script of 1518 pages, called "European Declaration of Independence: 2083", published on internet, Anders Brejvic openly expresses his hatred against the Muslims. He also mentions the idea of their extinction and the division of Islamic states].*

<sup>7</sup> *Ardian Vehbiu, ResPublika 30 July 2011: Brejvic saw himself as a crucifier, a mission for which he fought even sacrificing himself to defend the Christian Europe from the Muslims threat.*

<sup>8</sup> *VOA 30.10.2014: Victimization of women from ISIS.*

<sup>9</sup> *Dr. Xhavit Shala, "State, Religious Faith and Security Issues", Lambert Academic Publishing, p.40.*

Religious exclusivity of Taliban had consequences for the internal security of Afghanistan. After they took power in 1996, they excluded democracy, established the holy law, and limited a lot the human rights, especially for women. In Afghanistan, Bin Laden, found the right grounds, and in 1998 he made the unification under his command, of the terrorist groups that acted at that time and created the Liberalization Front for the Holy Countries<sup>1</sup>, which later became known as Al-Qaeda. The Taliban power grew the concerns for security in the Central Asia Republics. These Republics were afraid of the possibility that Afghanistan made to export religious terrorism and destabilize their fragile governments.<sup>2</sup> Taliban Religious exclusivity became a threat even for the global security. In Afghanistan on September 11, 2001, there was created and prepared a terrorist attack in the USA.<sup>3</sup>

Religious exclusivity is a state politics and in the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, otherwise known as ISIS, ISIL, or even DAESH. It is "responsible for the genocide against the people in the areas it controls, against the Jazzed, Christians and even Shiite Muslims. Their self-declared mission is genocide like an ideology, as well as their actions from whatever they declare, what they believe in, what they do."<sup>4</sup> It is already turned into a world centre for radicalization, recruitment, training of the desperate citizens from different countries of the world, despite their religious faith, as well as their use in terrorist acts.

ISIS, within a period of less than two years became the main threat for the security in Europe and for the whole actual system of international security. On March 22 this state, through declared state of war, hit Brussels, the capital of the Western civilization values, the main center of the economical power for the European Council and the center for NATO, challenging consequently the strongest and biggest organization for military defense in the world. The main actors of the today's international system in the USA, EU, Russia, Islamic Countries Organization, etc, are hesitating to call ISIS a state, at a time when different from other states, this irresponsible state lacks international recognition. This is done so, in order to cover their already present failure confront such threat. To accept that ISIS is a state, which has declared war and done armed attacks against these actors, one must answer ISIS through conventional war, thus even with a ground intervention which up to now, the main actors in the international system are afraid to do so. Today there are three military coalitions that fight ISIS from the air. Despite air strikes from the three military coalitions lead respectively from USA, Russia and Saudi Arabia, ISIS has only lost 20% of the territory of its state. The three coalitions one by one but also in coordination of their actions, at least in the air, are not being able to win over ISIS. But as Clausewitz says, victory will come "when the center of the enemy's gravity, the main point for its power, will be captured or destroyed"<sup>5</sup> and this is achieved through ground intervention. Only in this way, this may change permanently and irrevocably for a long period the form of the regime on that terrain.

### **3. Inter-religious Communication and Dialogue of the Albanians is a Treasure of Our Culture and European Democratic Values, but Already in Risk**

Inter-religious communication and dialogue of the Albanians is a value for which West is expecting us to transmit it into our common European family where we are aiming at integrating. This value is one of the most valuable treasures of our national inheritance and culture, created by our nation in years, through manifestation, development and transmitted among generations of a religious tolerance, capable for an ancient and civilized European nation.

As a consequence of the Ottoman conquer and empire, the Albanians entered in the modern history separated into three different religious faiths. Thus, religious consciousness of the Albanian believers was dominated by three religious institutions, belonging to three foreign cultures and schools. These clerical institutions depended on three universal centers. Two of these centers, the Sultanate of Khalifa and the Fareon Patricana have just not supported continually the idea of an Albanian National State. However, different from the Balkan "practice", the Albanian people did not divide themselves into as many nationalities as religions. The Albanian nationality consciousness was never dominated by that religious one. In the Albanian population it did not dominated the feeling of nationality. Among the believers of different religious communities

<sup>1</sup> Part from the confession of the accused, Ahmet Ibrahim Al Nagar, given in front of Egyptian justice, «Albania» newspaper, dated 2 December 2001, pg. 5. [Arrested on 25.6.1998, in "El Hagi" Institution, Elbasan and sent to Egypt].

<sup>2</sup> Alexander del Valle, *Genesis and the actuality of pro-Islamic strategy of USA*.

<sup>3</sup> [From «Afghan school» there came a major part of figures that became leaders in the terrorist circles, starting from Osama Bin Laden, Ajman Zavahiri – actual leader of Al Qaeda; Al Zarkavi, leader of terrorist acts in Iraq etc.]

<sup>4</sup> VOA, 17.3.2016, *Declaration of the USA State Secretary, John Kerry*.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Sheehan, "Evolution of modern war" in "Strategy in the Contemporary World", Oxford University Press, 2007, pg.64

in the country, there were preserved spiritual, economical, social and even family ties. Under such conditions, the National Albanian Movement, different from other Balkan countries could not use the religious hatred against the conqueror as a motif for all the people to be engaged into a war. Unification of the Albanians in the independence way would have been a reality out of religion, on religion itself and only dependant onto the nationality principle. Even the Albanian religious authorities are engaged not less in the case of the Albanian National Movement by pen or weapon. However, they have never fought in the name of their religion. They are engaged in this war not only for religious motifs, but also for national ideals. This may be summed up in the famous saying of Pashko Vasa that "Albanians religion is being Albanian". Thus, for Albanians war is a national issue, which was common for all the Balkan national movements and had its own characteristics. It never had a religious motif. It got raised not only out of religion, but it was also led against the identification of the religious belongingness of different elements of the Albanian people with those national ones, as well as it got rid of the religious separation from the political cover. This is one of the most precious gifts that the Renaissance people gave to Albania and the Albanian people. The values of such a choice, even though obligatory at that time are extraordinary today in the modern times. It presently makes the foundations of the religious harmony and tolerance of Albanians.

Therefore, the foundations of the national identity of the Albanians not in the religion but rather in the language, tradition, culture<sup>1</sup> and beyond, acceptance in an Islamic religion generally popular and soften by Bectashism<sup>2</sup>; adaption toward intolerant streams in Islam, as it is the Wahabism<sup>3</sup>; the obligatory cooling of the new generation of Albanians against religion during communist regime; not being able to turn the economical and social conflicts into a religious ones, as well as the tradition of the Albanian political forces that historically did not aim at creating people to be elected on religious grounds<sup>4</sup>, are some of the factors that have stopped our religious communication, harmony and tolerance and have preserved the traditional religious faiths of Albanians from fanatics, extremism or religious fundamentalism. These are at the same time even the European democratic values.

But the treasures of the culture of a nation are always in risk if you do not take care of them, if the factors identifying them are not at risk and even if one does not invest to neutralize the effect of these factors. Even the inter-religious communication and tolerance, as treasures of our national culture, even though they are created and have resisted in years, must be secured<sup>5</sup>, thus treated as property in risk<sup>6</sup> from radicalism.

#### **4. Inter-religious Communication and Dialogue, Passive Neutrality and Acting Secularism**

Albanian state, immediately after the declaration of independence, even though fragile, valued inter-religious communication, dialogue and harmony and in general, the religious issues, as very important for the national security. In 1923, Visarion Xhuvani, who later became the Archbishop of the Albanian Orthodox Church, expresses that: "We all know how the importance of religious issues has been and is confused in here. We all know how much it cost to the state. May God not allow them to be a weapon of enemy even for the future"<sup>7</sup>. Starting from these specific circumstances, the other patriot and citizen, Mehdi Frashëri, ordered that "Government must be a little bit more into the religion..."<sup>8</sup>

Since that time, the Albanian patriots have tried to spread the feelings of the religious faiths, despite the number they were treated, represent and feel themselves equal. This has been and remains one of the piles of inter-religious dialogue, communication and tolerance for the Albanians.

Sanction since the creation of the independent Albanian state with such principles as a state secularism, the religious freedom of faith and its change, equal treatment of religious faiths, definition in details of the way of nomination of the primaries of religious faiths, of financing of such communities, have all been measures to encourage dialogue of inter-

<sup>1</sup> Veton Surroi, "Religion and Civilization", "Korrieri" Newspaper, 14 November 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Mehdi Frashëri, "The ancient History of Albania and Albanians", p. 44 -45

<sup>3</sup> Prof. Dr. Arbër Xhaferri in «Religion, Politics, Albanians», published in "Religion and Civilization in a new millennium – Case of Albania", pg. 68

<sup>4</sup> Prof. Dr. Artan Fuga - "Albanians Behavior Today against Religion". 20 April 2004 / TN / QSHDNJ

<sup>5</sup> Classification of the assigned problems in the category of security issues for "securing" these problems, which means justification of measures to confront. For more see the representatives of the Copenhagen Buzan School, Waever, de Wilde, 1998: 23.

<sup>6</sup> For more see Xhavit Shala, "Religious Issues in the Albanian land and our national Security". Seminar held in the Scientific Conference entitled "Preservation of national and religious values of Albanians", held in Skopje, on 3 September 2010.

<sup>7</sup> AQSH, Fond. 246, D- 68, Fl. 471, 1923

<sup>8</sup> AQSH, Fond. 246, D- 68, Fl. 637, 1923

religious communication. They have influenced the consolidation of the religious tolerance of our people and consequently, have influenced in the enforcement and security of the Albanian state itself.

For this specification the religious faith of Albanians, the problems it may raise and be present inside the religious community, may not only belong to them, but also to all the Albanian people. We are and have the right to be worried all due to the risks that none of the traditional religious community of Albanians is immunized.

Among the main factors that have influenced in risking the inter-religious communication and tolerance in our country are: importing in an uncontrollable way through NGO-s of the religious spectrum of a series of religious streams<sup>1</sup>, which threaten the rights of Albanians to exercise their religious traditions; crises and political, social, economical, financial instability that our country has suffered during transition (1991, 1992, January-March 1997, September 1998), accompanied by lack of legal state and severe threats of order and security; lack of finance from the state and hope of aid coming from abroad; delays and full non-return of the properties of religious communities; lack of a law for religious communities; convenient geographical position of Albania between the East and West; lack for a long time of the efficient state structures<sup>2</sup> to undertake the management of legal rapport and common obligations of the state with religious communities<sup>3</sup>, participation of hundreds of Albanian citizens in the conflict in Syria; facilitation of radicalization and recruitment of believers through social webs; the increasing intolerant pressure in Islam like Wahabbis-Selephism, etc.

Wahabbis-Selephism represents not only intolerant streams in Islam, but also are a risk for the Albanian democracy, state of law, people's rights and for our national security itself. Today, it is not illegal to be Wahabbis, but it's a personal choice. But from the moment that they organize themselves and try to radicalize and impose others, they become a risk to be secured. Wahabbis is a risk for the democracy in general, because they want to impose their own rules, by not accepting the rules of the games in a democratic order. They do not know and respect the state institutions. They are streams in Islam that do not accept a democratic order. For them, state must be based on holy laws. But Albania, Kosova and the Albanians in Macedonia are declared to support Western, Euro-Atlantic democracy, where the rights and freedoms of people are respected. By doing so, the Wahabbis-Selephists come against and have nothing in common neither with the Albanian Muslims, nor with the Albanians as a nation. We have nothing in common with them and if we are to refer to the history, we will find that Albanians have had a severe war with them. It is enough to mention Ibrahim Pasha from Egypt, who about 185 years ago, fought and won over the Wahabbis extremists that were risking the Islamic faith. Islamic Community in the Albanian space have been defined and under their "constitution" they are faithful to the traditional Albanian Islam, therefore belonging to the judicial school of Hanef. On the contrary, the today's Wahabbis are targeting the Albanian traditional Islam. They exclude not only other religious faiths, like Christianity, but also exclude the Islamic faith that the Albanians practice. For them, it is unacceptable the symbols and national holidays, which do not coincide with those religious ones. According to them, religion is a priority and then the nation itself. But for the Albanians religion is not the defining feature for their national identity. By defining religion as a priority in front of the nation, the Wahabbis damage our national identity. The thinning of the action space of the Wahabbis-selephism would be a valuable contribution, not only for the traditional Albanian Muslimanism, but also for the Albanians geopolitics in the region, for their Euro-Atlantic integrity and our national security. The Muslim communities in Albania, Kosova, Macedonia and Montenegro, today face a serious threat and they will know to define themselves their physiognomy in the future, but treating this matter properly is something that touches the Albanian society and their geopolitical position in the region. Therefore, these risks must be secured not only from the religious communities, but also from all the Albanian society. The seriousness of such issue seeks efficient action not only from the Islamic Communities, but also from the society and law enforcement agencies in Albania, Kosova, as well as a special attention from the Albanian political factors in Macedonia and Montenegro.

We all must contribute to neutralize the risk of extremist penetration and the radicalization of our religious communities. It is a pity that in the previous years of pluralism, every state material support to religious was omitted. Such omission toward religion in reality should not be part of a democratic government program. Albanian law enforcement personnel did not

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Xhavit Shala, "State, Religious Faith and Security Issues", Lambert Academic Publishing, Pg.38, 122

<sup>2</sup> [In Albania in 1992, there existed only the Cult State Commission. By decision of the Ministers Council of the Republic of Albania, No.459, dated 23.9.1999, "For the creation of a State Committee for Cults", for the first time the tasks of such structured are assigned. This structure has continually come to be reduced with personnel. In many other states, especially in the ex-communist East, such structures are at a ministry level.

<sup>3</sup> [On October 2008, after 18 years of democracy and after ten years of constitutional obligation, it was signed the agreement between the Albanian government and the traditional religious communities in the country].

involve themselves like their patriotic predecessors, in the creation of that indispensable legal infrastructure to defend from risks the Albanian religious faiths. In order to do so, the Albanian law enforcement agents must engage themselves so that the state passes from the passive neutrality position<sup>1</sup> of these years, into that acting secularism, because religious harmony as great as it is, it is also fragile. It is enough for the first serious breakdown and radicalization of one of the faiths for the whole to be broken down, our great writer, Ismail Kadare<sup>2</sup> says.

The state is obliged to guarantee the freedom of faith not to be declarative. It must undertake all the necessary measures to guarantee an effective happiness of the religious faith freedom. In order to achieve the later the state must protect the religious faiths from the interference which aim at creating deformations, extremist views, their radicalization or whatever other occurrence of aggressiveness admit the believers. This is what acting secularism means.

That does not threaten the secularism of the centuries, which are holy for a democratic state. That in turn does not threaten the right of the human faith as a private life right which is protected in all the international documents that concern the human rights. On the contrary, being laic or active, the state undertakes the role of the guarantor for the realization of the facts of religious freedom.

Albanians must engage to start a de-realization process in order to correct for the lost time, a process which must include a wide social, political, legal, educational and economical program package, compiled especially to stop the unsatisfied and radical individuals to be included in terrorist activities. In order to do so, Albania<sup>3</sup> and Kosova<sup>4</sup> must strictly apply their approved strategies against violent extremism and radicalism, a strategy which must be taken into consideration even from the Albanian political factors in Macedonia and Montenegro.

## 5. Conclusions

After this study and research on inter-religious communication, religious radicalism and their influence in security issues we may come to these conclusions:

- Lack of inter-religious communication and dialogue in the last decades is accompanied with a radicalism of religious faiths which on its side has often led to inter-religious and inter-ethnic hatred, in crimes against humanity, genocides and terroristic acts, becoming therefore a serious threat for the national, regional and global security
- The state must therefore pass from passive neutrality position toward the acting secularism. That does not threaten the secularism of the century, which is often holy for a democratic state. On the contrary, being laic or active, the state can undertake to guarantee and realize the fact of the freedom of religion
- Inter-religious communication and dialogue among Albanians are the values of our national culture which have been created and resisted through centuries. Such values are risked from radicalism and as such they must be secured.

## 6. Recommendations

- We would recommend based on the above-mentioned facts:
- Coordination of the entire Albanian factor and the compilation of common politics to neutralize the risk for deportation of extremism and the radicalization of our religious communities.
- Engagement to start a de-radicalism process, a process in order to correct for the lost time, a process which must include a wide social, political, legal, educational and economical program package, compiled especially to stop the unsatisfied and radical individuals to be included in terrorist activities.

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<sup>1</sup> For more see, Dr. Xhavit Shala, «National Security and integration challenges», pg. 107. Tirana, May 2003. Published by the Albanian Center for National Security Studies

<sup>2</sup> Ismail Kadare, Speech in International Conference «Religion and a new millennium – Albanian Case», held in Tirana, 13-14 November 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Decision of the Ministers Council of the Republic of Albania, No. 930, dated 18.11.2015 «For the approval of the National Strategy for the fight against the violent Extremism and action plan»

<sup>4</sup> Prishtina, 16 September /ATSH/ - Kosova Government approved today the strategy for the prevention of violent extremism and radicalism that leads to in terrorism for the period of 2015-2020

- Widening and improvement of the Albanian legal framework for defining a penal case of any forms of violent extremism, as well as the recruitment of the foreign terrorist fighters.
- Enforcement of the capacities and expertise of the law-enforcement officials, in order to prevent violent extremism.
- Becoming an incent for the state institutions to be engaged into local communities, religious and other actors representatives, for the purpose of identifying groups in need, which are or may become a target of the violent extremism.
- Identification and understanding of the social concerns of the local communities, in order to treat properly the fundamental causes for violent radicalism and extremism.
- Compilation of the specific programs and politics adapted to prevent the spreading of violence and extremism, as well as at the same time, to increase the awareness of the society on such phenomena.

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## Paradox of the Mission of Albanian Political Parties

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### Abstract

While everyone has a negative opinion on political parties, they are all powerful because, when they win the elections, they all win. They have a paradoxical mission: only political parties can hire anyone who helps them win the election. There are political parties of the majority who "appoint" the President of the Republic. Despite the large number of political parties, as a sign of the country's normal democratization, the parties remain divided into two categories: the main party and the partisans, which survive thanks to the main parties. The worst thing is that the "party equal employment" tradition is being taught, as every member or party militant calls the normal job demand after the victory of political elections by the coalition where his "party". Generally, in Albania there is a negative opinion about political parties, but the high poverty and unemployment, as well as the fact that work finds easier when you join one party and win the elections, have made many people become party members. This has also led to a "pragmatic" view of political coalitions. It is up to the opinion that coalitions are good to be post-election, that parties and party parties should measure their real strength, but also program, so that everyone with a single tongue and within their family.

**Keywords:** political parties, democracy, coalition, stability

### 1. Introduction

Albania's political and economic progress following the political changes of 1991 is enormous, though its democracy is still considered to be dysfunctional. Political parties have their important role in this process as representative institutions of the political will of the people, with a maximum ambition to win political elections and to run reforms and rule the country.

The basic framework for political parties in Albania is clearly defined in the Constitution and in a special legal framework adopted by the Parliament, which is considered as incomplete by special articles<sup>1</sup>. Because political pluralism and free and programmatic membership have been the aspirations of Albanians since the time of a single communist system. Political parties exist as there are different views and desires among people.

All of these have been typical features for all the countries of the former communist East and represent the essence of the democratic reforms of their transition. Albania does not seem to make any exception, though it is part of a group of countries called the Western Balkans, where Europeanization is considered to be difficult<sup>2</sup> and opposition parties find themselves very difficult<sup>3</sup>.

The common of the Western Balkan countries is that a lot of mentalities, methods, or styles of governance continue to be significantly affected by previous mentalities, methods and styles. Such is the case of the Albanian Constitution, which stipulates that the President of the Republic of Albania is elected by the Albanian Parliament with the proposal of the party that chairs the governing coalition. Up to here everything is fine. But the problem starts right here. Because the election in this case is legally replaced by "appointment". The election of the President by the Parliament is done in 5 rounds, of which only 50% plus one vote is needed<sup>4</sup>. For this purpose, the Constitution has been amended with the agreement of political parties in Albania, and its implementation has degraded to the point where it is overcome 3 the first raquets only to be solved by a simple majority the candidate-elect proposed by the ruling majority. In the case of Albania, special importance

<sup>1</sup> Krasniqi, A., "Albanian political parties, undemocratic and non-transparent structures", *Javanews*, 30.05.2016.

<sup>2</sup> Vuckovic, Vladimir., *The Europeanization of Political Parties in Montenegro*, *Romanian Journal of European Affairs*, Vol. 16, No. 3, September 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Zajc, Drago., *Role of the Opposition in Contemporary Parliamentary Democracies- The case of Slovenia*, *Journal of Comparative Politics*, January 2016, Vol. 9 Issue 1, p19-35.

<sup>4</sup> *Constitution of the Republic of Albania, Tirana, 1998.*

is given to the democratic culture of the people, because the Albanian society is generally distrustful of political parties and is an apathetic society. This political apathy is based on the rooted mentality of the past when membership in the Labor Party, which was the only existing political party, was very advantageous at that time, which in democracy suddenly turned into a great personal handicap for many people.

Poverty and unemployment turned into the main characteristics of Albanian transition. These encouraged people to join political parties with the hope of hiring them because the mentality that membership in a political party could be the only way they could get a job was rooted. This mentality began to further promote people towards membership, creating a misguided idea of the role of political parties. Simplifying the role of political parties in employment tanks instead of leading the reforms testified to a deficient democratic culture in the people. This mentality has also been reinforced by the winning political parties themselves, arguing in many cases as a necessity for the implementation of their political programs.

From an ideological point of view, the space of political parties in Albania is limited by the political and economic transition of the country. Because some common and unchanging fundamental objectives are already clear, such as the establishment of a democratic system, a market economy, integration into the European Union, partnership with the United States of America. The political debate thus focuses on more fundamental issues, without affecting these very obvious principles.

The issue of political coalitions remains the most fundamental issue to be debated in Albania and related to the very existence of political parties. Although Albania is a small country, in the last political elections 60 political parties have been registered, out of 118 registered in court, whereas the threshold for the Parliament has never exceeded six. In fact there are only two main parties, while the others are simply the partisans who "feed" on the largest and exist on their own. From an ideological point of view, most of the Albanian parties are alike, because their base is the same: the democratic system, the market economy and the progress of the individual. There is also a party that supports communist ideology, the past system, and collectivism. Parties usually have realistic structures both at national and local level. While the parties usually have only national organization and find it difficult to have a real local organization while it is easier to have only national bodies. Since the most active contribution of the party membership is expected at the local level, there is a great contradiction in the partisanship of the parties in Albania. Frustrated by the past, many people join a major party only to secure a job in the public sector. The rank of the function depends only on the will of the party chairman. In the case of small parties with only national structures, it is sufficient being prominent by shouting louder than others and you have a good position because there are not many people, so the competition is almost non-existent. Usually political parties are based on their membership and sympathizers. The latter are integrated into political parties as "independent members". The identity of a party is usually expressed in its program. It is a party program that legitimizes its existence, illustrates its basic goals and values, provides an orientation for citizens and voters, and promotes membership. Therefore, the parties usually have general political programs and special programs that express the party's views on various economic issues, reforms, etc.<sup>1</sup>. However, they all agree that, a strong political party system is a necessary condition for democracy and that the stability of the democratic system is closely related to the stability of the political party system. That is why the degree of democratic progress of countries in transition is much better measured by analyzing and evaluating the system of political parties.

The skepticism and distrust of the population for parties and political leaders is a timely phenomenon that will soon be replaced by the necessity for even more qualitative solutions. They are the basis for high poverty and high unemployment, which is expected to be the most temporary occurrence of political and economic transition.

## 2. Methodology

We have thoroughly reviewed all domestic and foreign literature on political parties, as well as the relevant legal framework in Albania, starting with the Constitution of the Republic of Albania of 1998.

The political and electoral programs of each party have been studied in detail, and also the results of their election or political coalitions.

To clarify the perception of the public on political parties, an on-line survey was conducted with direct questions, to create opportunities for each to respond without spending time. The average number of responses to each question was over

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<sup>1</sup> Hofmeister, W., Graliov, K., Krasniqi, A., *Political parties: function and organization, Foundation Konrad Adenauer, 2017.*



5000, most young people, given that young people are thought to be massively frequented by social networks. According to the data, the largest number of responses and explanations (87%) were given by young people under the age of 30.

### 3. Analysis of Results

The opinion of the majority who answered the questionnaire were of the opinion that political parties in Albania are unconstitutional. Over 85% of responses from 5763 responses correspond to this opinion and only about 5% of them have a positive opinion about them (see Figure 1)

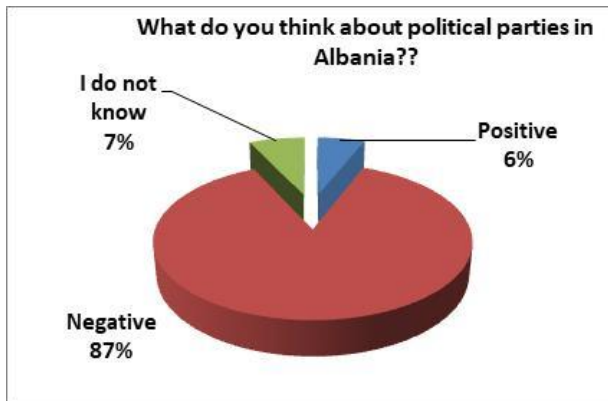


Figure 1: Negative majority opinion on political parties

We tried to deepen on this clearly disbelieving response to the political parties and we think that this mistrust is not only Albanian, but at least in the Balkan. It comes from the concrete activity of these parties and, secondly, by the mistrust of the political elites of the country (see Figure 1).

The concrete activity of the parties is related to their disrespect of political programs, because in Albania no one is surprised if the "right" parties are left to the left. The former ask for taxation, while the latter require their establishment and further growth. This is common in Albania, where it is enough to be reformed from the political standpoint and immediately the political opposition opposes it, without any particular amalgies whether this is a right or a left reform.

In fact, in transition countries such as Albania, it is required to consider a package of reforms necessary to transform the system into a democratic system and economy in a market economy. These are necessary reforms already accepted since the system was changed, so they should not be considered either right or left. So, the opposing spaces of the political parties remain limited.

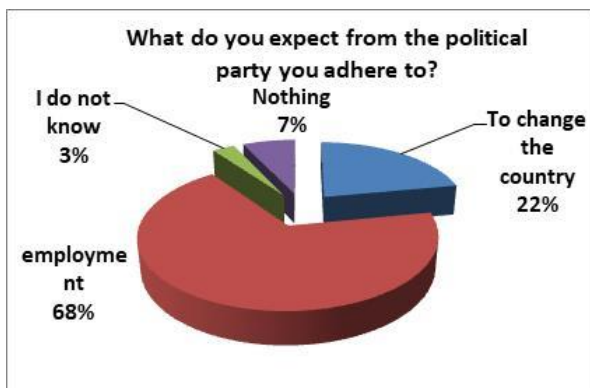
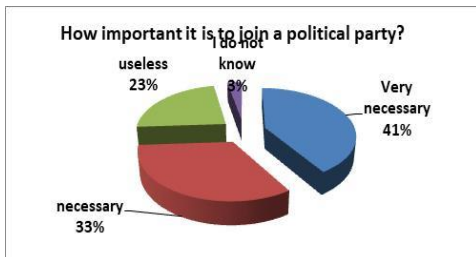


Figure 2: The main expectation is employment

The employment is another very important aspect of interest to join a political party. The principle "Party Equal to Employment",<sup>1</sup> has now become a genuine theory of expectation. Employment after the election victory is considered a normal thing as something that belongs to you because of that you have participated in any political action of your "party". It is now the party's turn to reward you with at least an appropriate job this contribution you have given to.<sup>2</sup> It seems surprising to us that only 22% of the 5128 responses are "idealistic" because they seek the coming of their "party" party with the claim to change the country. Because the expectation of 68% of people is employment (see Figure 2). Employment has become the subject of life and political choices in Albania. Three in every four people who have responded to the relevant question consider it necessary to adhere to a political party. Even about 41% of people, out of 5364 answers in total, consider this to be very necessary. But one in every four people does not value membership at all in the party, as it calls in vain this membership (see Figure 3).



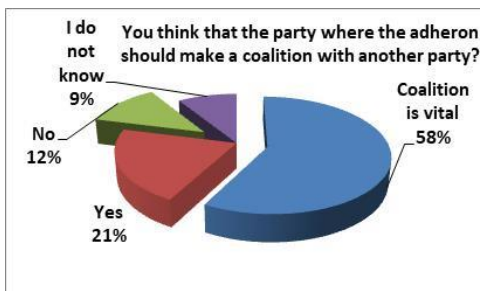
**Figure 3:** Necessity of adherence to a political party.

If we answer this question with the answers to the foregoing question on the expectation of adherence to a political party, it is obvious that the same level of response: to be employed it is imperative to adhere to a political party. The pragmatism of the members is clearly seen. Because, on the one hand, most have no faith in the political parties, on the other hand, most people adhere, because they consider this to be the only employment opportunity in the case of his "party" victory. So, this little by little is turning into law in Albania, the controversial measures being taken and the reform of the civil service.

We also have a lot of interest in the opinion given to the group of questions related to political coalitions. In fact, political coalitions should be based on two pillars:

- (i) *Number of voters or votes they win.*
- (ii) *Party Political Programs.*

A political coalition can not be done, on the bases of words. Only program coalitions can last longer. So, there is no need for political coalitions simply to win a "coup" vote more. This opinion is clear in the answers to Questions 4 and 5 of the Survey, where 5624 and 5431 responses were received (see Figure 4 and Figure 5).



**Figure 4:** The coalition is indispensable

<sup>1</sup> Cabiri. Y., *Shqipëria mund të bëhet . Me Qeverisje të vërtetë. Onufri, 2018, (publishing process).*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

This is a matter of fact because around 58% of the responses consider the coalition as vital and there are some 21% of the respondents who say yes, it seems that the coalition is recognized by about 79% of the responses and is opposed by only about 12% of them. The large number of positive responses shows that the word is more about partisans, who can not cross the electoral threshold without the "help" of big parties.

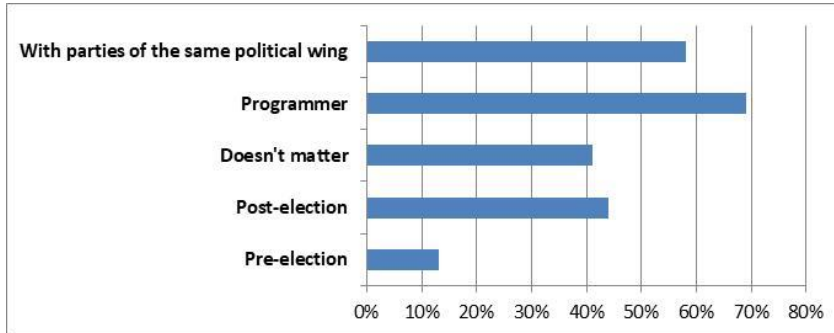


Figure 5: "Pragmatic" Opinion on Coalitions

A significant number of responses, about 41% (see Figure 5), are of the opinion that they earn quite a lot, regardless of which party becomes a coalition. This mentality is typical of the members of the partisans, who know that they can not win single. This "pragmatism" is also related to the answer to question 2: the expectation of the majority is employment in state structures. People join in to hire. The "Pragmatism" is further emphasized given the answers to question 6 regarding the responsibility of governance (see Figure 6). Party members do not think that while they are in government they are responsible for how they have done their duties.

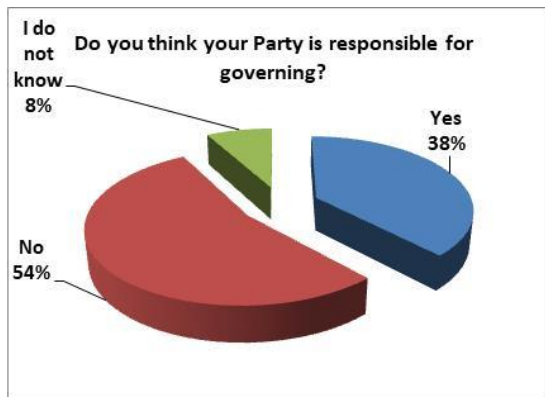


Figure 6: There is no responsibility for the past

#### 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

*The level of democracy* It is unfair that the level of democracy of "new" democratic countries be measured by the level of "old" countries and with consolidated democracies such as the United States, France, Germany, Great Britain, etc. Moreover, the path that the "new" countries had to follow after the political changes they made was clearly unknown to anyone, even to the "old" countries. A two-grading grouping of countries, would be more realistic for determining any calculated indicator. So, the progress of democracy in the "new" democratic countries will be measured within the list of these countries.

*The "right" and the "left"* In Albania, the right-wing parties are considered left-wing than left-wing and vice-versa. This is related to the fact that there is still no absolute agreement on the types of reforms that need to be undertaken to meet the

political and economic transition. Consequently, political opposition parties oppose any political majority initiative, while the latter undertook reforms in line with its position in the Albanian political spectrum, often dictated by international institutions. A political agreement on Albania's integration reforms in the European Union will have to be put in place to never contradict their substance. Political debate should focus more on the process of implementing reforms, as well as on secondary issues of political and economic transition.

*Election of the President of the Republic* Today's way of electing the President of the Republic, even though it is under the Constitution of Albania, it's a clear appointment of the President and not his choice. On the other hand, this appointment focuses everything on the chairman of the ruling coalition's main party. That is why the wrong change of the Constitution should be done boldly. Changing the basic constitutional law should be made even with a popular Referendum.

*Coalitions of parties* Coalitions of parties should be within the spectrum, where political parties are involved. They should be selective, rely on party political programs, and give up once and again from theories of the value of parties in exchange for parties with a considerable number of voters. This should also be the basic criterion of a political coalition. Political parties involved in coalitions should feel equally responsible for the problems of government. They should remain responsible even later.

*The party equal to employment* The problematic system of "party equal to employment" has its source in political coalitions. This system unknowingly creates "playmaker" parties, without which it would be impossible to become the number in the Parliament for the creation of the government. Coalition parties require positions in government because they have "values", not votes. So, it is true that in the last parliamentary elections the "condition" of the partisans to be included in the opposition coalition was that their mayors were on the safe list of candidates for deputies of the main opposition party.

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## The Extent of Italy's Military Control in Northern Albania and the Crystallization of Contradictions with France (1917-1918)

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### Abstract

The paper reflects the moment with the interests of the history of the first world war in the Albanian territory, it is about the military movement of Italy to the north of Albania, to put it under its administrative and political control. This moment intertwines and crystallizes at the same time the withdrawal of Serbia from Middle Albania and its control by Italy and the emergence of Esat Toptani, who seems to withdraw from his political activity at the request of French politics in Albania, to be reactivated by France at the Peace Conference which would take place a year later in Paris. France, on the other hand, was interested in Esati making political divorce with Italy so that he would be politically used by Ke D'Orseja (French Foreign Ministry). This political movement essentially had strategic implications through the resurrection of the Secret Traktate of London, in the service of its own interests France.

**Keywords:** treaty, military control, politics, diplomacy, contradictions, influence

### Introduction

The Italian invaders largely maintained the part of southern Albania that they had conquered in 1916-17. They even temporarily preserved (until the end of 1919) the occupation of a part of Greek land, that of the triangle Kakavi-Kalibaq-Perat, to secure the Saranda-Korça road. With the designation of the Middle East as an operation area for the Italian troops, and with the withdrawal of the French from Elbasan, the Italian-French contradictions, which were born in October 1918 on this issue, were flattened. The invasion of Middle Albania by Italian troops was completed by October 20, 1918<sup>1</sup>. Another controversy was born between the two signatory powers of the secret treaty of London, between Italy and France. Would Italian invasion be extended only to Middle East, as the French side thought, or would it include North Albania as the Italians demanded? For Italy's strategy, it seemed important to master the important roads along the east "along with the Roman road Egnatia, which extended to the lake of Macedonia. This was of great importance, almost capital for us, while from our Adriatic we had only the west coast of the sea<sup>2</sup>. " So it seems very obvious that Italy's greed to securely master the main arteries in Middle Albania, with a look to the north.

With the instructions given by the Allied High Council on 7 October, it seemed that this contradiction was solved for the benefit of the Italians. In these guidelines, by requiring French troops not to continue their progress in the north of Albania, and specifically in the direction of Lezha and Shkodra, underlined: "Italian troops can continue their progress in these directions" (implied, towards Lezha and Shkodra).

These instructions were referred to by the Italians as diplomatic success. But they did not match the intentions of the French diplomacy, which reacted immediately. That is why Ke D'Orseja (French Foreign Ministry<sup>3</sup>) soon approached the clauses of the treaty of 26 April 1915 and urged Rome to extend the forces of Serbia and not Italians in Northern Albania. The northernmost border of Middle Albania, to which the Italians had the right to advance, was the Massi River because, according to French diplomats, there should be the border of the "Muslim" Albanian state envisaged in the bargaining of April 1915. "In the north of this river, the entire Catholic part of the Albanian state stretching to the borders of Montenegro

<sup>1</sup>- Archives of the History Institute, Vienna Archives Fund, 1918, file no. 28/5, p. 87

<sup>2</sup>-The Work of Italian Soldiers in Albania during the War. Ten. General Giacinto Ferrero, Publications of the Institute for Eastern Europe in Rome, Second Series: Politics. History. Economy, Naples, Ricardo Ricardo Publisher, -MCMXXIII, f. 8 (Italian).

<sup>3</sup>- Muin Chamli, Historical Studies No.4, 1986, p. 54.art "Albania in international relations".

on the one hand, and Serbia on the other, should be considered outside the Italian area of action. There is therefore no obstacle for the Serbs to be allowed to enter this part, "said the elaborate material at Ke D'Orse on October 8, 1917.

This is also reflected through the observations made by the Austrian military, who, seeing the rival power movements at the end of World War I in the Albanian lands, noted that there were disagreements between the France and Italy regarding the areas of influence. "Between Italy and France there are strong disagreements over Albania. The French want to divide Albania between Greece and Serbia. While Italy will create an independent Albania under its protectorate<sup>1</sup>". But Italy had a greater advantage than France for the fact that these protectoral interests were also supported by the power politics which had an influence that was to be admired at the end of the Great War, "this is the opinion of both England and America<sup>2</sup>".

But on the other hand, the rulers of Rome based their plans in Albania on the terms of the Treaty of London of 1915. It is well known that it was the leader of Italian diplomacy, S. Sonino, who sought to preserve it as the most expensive thing he had achieved during the war for post-war purposes. It was only his implementation that every party wanted to do now according to their own interests, by interpreting it in different ways. It was in October 1918 that Austrian diplomacy did not spare charges against Italy's foreign policy, considering it as treacherous and charlatan, led by Sonino. To vindicate the unfaithfulness of the Italian government's "sneaky way of thinking behind the front<sup>3</sup>" of the Central Powers, this foreign minister had managed to build the phrase "sacred selfishness"<sup>4</sup>. This, according to Austro-Hungarian diplomacy, was the desire of the charlatan man to strike for the war, and the covetous "for the sake of others, is sacred selfishness<sup>5</sup>". The irony of Austro-Hungarian politics went even further. She compared the politics of the Italian state's war with that of a man who was conquered by love and "kidnapping another's wife whom he likes<sup>6</sup>".

Representatives of France demanded that the invasion of northern Albania by the Serbs (as a first annexation measure) be implemented now, without waiting for the opening of the Peace Conference and consideration of the issue at this conference. And the representatives of Italy felt differently. According to them, the right to partition of Albania under this treaty belonged only to the conference. In addition, the very application of specific treaty clauses is, as we have seen, with certain conditions.

Such is the point VII. According to this point, Italy was obliged to accept the wish of the other signatories of this treaty to divide Albania with the Balkan neighbors only when it first provided for those territories in the northern and eastern Adriatic that the treaty in question gave to Italy. This was a condition that helped Italian diplomats to maneuver for the separation of Albania with two Balkan neighbors. Therefore, the governors of Rome sought to extend the invasion of Italian forces throughout Northern Albania in order to have them, in the peace treaties, in their hands.

The decision of the High Council of War on October 7 came to them more or less to help. At a conference held in Ke d'Orse, after a discussion between Klemansos, Llojd George and Soninos, the French president agreed to send orders to General Franse d'Esperay that two French divisions who were invading Albania to retreat without replacement and that the troops Italians to continue their advancement to Albania. "This decision was interpreted by Sonino as a reservation for the invasion by Italy of all Albania and for a year and a half, so next year Italy justified the right to invade Albania with this decision<sup>7</sup>." The French disagreed with this view, and this seemed even more apparent when Italian General Ferrero refused to allow Serbian troops to operate in northern Albania because of his claim that the region was reserved for Italy. General Franse d'Esperay complained to Paris that Italian claims and lack of co-operation were hampering military operations.

French Foreign Minister Pesson in talks with Bonin Longere, Italian ambassador to Paris, insisted that although Italian troops were allowed to invade Albania, "this had not prevented Serb forces to conquer Northern Albania. Italy should be

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<sup>1</sup> - A I, *Vienna Archives Fund*, D. 28/6/619. N.16.206, *Telegram 7 October 1918: Reporting. 1-A Kral. ddt of Shkodra October 9, 1918, p. 30, nr. 111, given 5.50 pm afternoon, arrived at 1am the next day.*

<sup>2</sup> -the same

<sup>3</sup> - A H. *Vienna Archives Fund*, Viti 1918, D.No.28 / 6, "Here are the strange policies of your government, Italy," October 1918, the transcribed page, 144.

<sup>4</sup> -there pg.145

<sup>5</sup> -there pg.146

<sup>6</sup> - A I H. *Vienna Archives Fund*. Year 1918, D. no.25 / 6, f. 130.

<sup>7</sup> - Woodall, Robert Larry, "The Albanian Problem During The Peacemaking 1919-1920", *Memfis State University, PH.D. 1978, F. 25 (7909423).*

allowed to operate in central Albania, "but when General Ferrero, the Italian commander, would cross the Mat River, he would be put under the command of General Franse d'Esperrey. The Italian ambassador rejected the request that all operations in Albania be reserved for the Italians, as agreed during the October 7th conference. He insisted that Shkodra and Lezha were also reserved for the Italian invasion, but agreed "to refuse Serbian troops"<sup>1</sup>.

However, two commands of the powers of the Antant powers operating in the Balkans were sent two different guidelines. The command of Italian troops in Albania was forwarded on October 8 to the instruction of the 7 October War Council, according to which the Italian troops would operate in the north of Albania, and on October 10, Parisi conveyed to the command of the East Army its instruction that was based on the elaborate platform at Ke D'Orse on October 8, according to which the northern boundary of Italian troops would be the river of Mat, north of which Serb troops would operate.

However, with the withdrawal of French troops from central Albania, the initiative of military action would take the Italians not only in this part of our country but also in the north. The French authorities did not come to the aid of Serbian troops, a contingent of which broke into Middle Albania sooner (to cross Mat to the north), and occupied Tirana on 10 October before the Italian forces arrived. Paris could not demand that Serbian forces stay in Middle Albania, which had been recognized by Italian forces, but demanded that the advanced army column of the Serbian army that had entered Tirana be allowed to cross north to the Mat River in the direction of Lezha to drive from there Austro-Hungarian forces.

Despite the repeated interventions of French diplomacy with the Italian side on this issue, there was no result. The Serbs were not allowed to cross to the north and were forced to retreat from middle Albania towards Dibra. However, the French government and the command of the Eastern Army tried to find other political and military ways to prevent the spread of Italian forces in northern Albania and to help Serbian forces. The Italians rejected again.

At the end of the tenth second of October (when Italian troops crossed the north of the Mat River), the French came up with two proposals:

First, they demanded that the invasion of Albania in the north of Mat be made with common Italian forces and other allies. This mixed invasion was dictated, according to the French, by military factors, by the successful and rapid development of the struggle against numerous Austro-Hungarian forces. Upon completion of this joint operation, Italian forces would no longer stay in northern Albania but should retreat back south of the Mat River. "We will not hinder the progress of Italian troops in the north of Mat," - the telegraph on October 19th, the head of French diplomacy, S. Pishon, his ambassador to Rome. "But it should be made clear to the Italian government," he further underlined, "that immediately after military operations will no longer justify this advance, these troops should be drawn back to the south of Mat in order to leave it inexpensive those parts of the Albanian territory and coastline, which, according to the London treaty, are expressly reserved for both Serbia and Montenegro<sup>2</sup>."

This proposal, which was presented to Rome on 21 October, was not approved by Italian governors. For the Italian foreign minister, the question of return could not be extended either. On the contrary, according to the instructions of October 7, the Allied High Council, the invasion of all northern Albania was reserved only to the Italians and, therefore, were the Serbs, he thought, those who should not enter or stay in northern Albania; not Italians.

Second, in this case, according to him, the Treaty of 26 April 1915 did not even come in the middle, after the treaty concerned "related matters to be settled upon the end of the war in the peace treaty".

After rejecting the first proposal, Paris came out with the second, according to which the contingents of Italian troops crossing north of Mat should not operate independently but should be under the command of the Eastern Army<sup>3</sup>. So they would be disconnected from the Italian army's supreme command, from which the Italian troops depended on Albania. If he did not do so, then: "No one can stop the progress of General Ferrero when he has no enemies in front of him. Its

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<sup>1</sup> - Woodall, Robert Larry, "The Albanian Problem During The Peacemaking 1919-1920", *Memfis State University, PH.D.* 1978, F. 26 (7909423)

<sup>2</sup> - *Boston's "Sun" newspaper, Boston, May 1918, no. 67, f.38.art "Italy and Austria "*

<sup>3</sup> - A I H. *Vienna Archives Fund, D 28/5/610, No 26.206, Telegram 7 October 1918. Reporting 1-A. Kral ddt. Shkodër, October 9, 1918, no. 111, f. 39.*

immediate achievement with Shkodra has to be predicted, as the Austrians are retreating before the threats I am exercising on their left wing<sup>1</sup>. " Thus telegraphed the commander of the East Army, General F. d'Esperey, Paris, October 22, 1918.

The deployment of all allied troops operating in the north of Albania under its subordination, the French Armed Forces Command, who made this proposal, and then the French Foreign Ministry, which approved it, introduced it as a necessary condition for co-ordination of combat actions and for the avoidance of possible conflicts between the two rivals: Italians and Serbs. But the real purpose of this proposal could not be concealed. He intended to curb the actions of the Italian army in this part of Albania and to limit as far as possible their extension. So even this proposal the representatives of Rome rejected it.

Even the Italian government was preparing to extend its conquests to other parts of the Balkans which would soon be released from central power troops, especially in areas where its intentions and interests were extending. For this reason, Rome also raised a special command, the supreme command of Italian troops in the Balkans, which depended on the Italian troops in Albania. At the top of this command, which settled in Vlora, General Seres<sup>2</sup> was arrested.

Thus, the diplomatic struggle between Paris and Rome did not stop the progress of the Italian army to the north of Albania. She passed Mat and, on October 27, entered Lezha, where she replaced the Austro-Hungarians who had just retired<sup>3</sup>. Now when Italian forces were at the door of Shkodra, Paris diplomacy came up with a new proposal.

Thirdly, it set another, more advanced, boundary to where the Italian forces could stretch; this border was the Drin River. This river could only be crossed by the Italians in a place along the coast to go to Shkodra and allowed to pass only a small unit, which would be part of Shkodra's garrison<sup>4</sup>.

This third proposal was made by the French government on 26 October, apparently in order to push the Italian government to accept another proposal. The proposal, which we will talk about below, was aimed at putting Shkodra under an ally garrison.

In these political circumstances, the invasion of central Albania and of a part of northern Albania was carried out by the Italian army, which on 1 November 1918 also entered Shkodra. In addition, it also captured some other territories north of the Drin River. With the expansion even in these parts of the country, the Italians occupy most of the Albanian territory.

The withdrawal of French and Serbian troops from Middle Albania and its invasion by Italian armies made another contradiction between Rome and Paris a solution. It is about the support that French diplomacy has given and continued to give Esad Pasha Toptani since August 1916, contrary to the will of Italian diplomacy. Italian invaders looked at pashai toptana as a tool of France and their two Balkan rivals fighting for the partition of Albania. Therefore, Paris tried to hide the political side of the case<sup>5</sup> and tried to cling to the "military" benefits that supposedly would have from the followers of this Jewish warrior who would fight against the forces of central powers, Austro-Hungarians and Bulgarians. This "benefit", according to French representatives, would increase when Allied troops would enter Middle East where "France had attempted to restore the relationship between Esad Toptani and Italy, by which Esad would run a small state in central Albania, which would be under an Italian<sup>6</sup> protectorate. " But the Consultation had refused this approach.

At the time of the Balkan penetration, Esad traveled to Paris in the hope of receiving French support for his Albanian government in emigration. His mission failed. Rather, the French, trying to show their indifference to Albania, withdrew their de facto recognition and support for Esad. Both French actions, in the abandonment of Esad and in allowing the invasion of all Albania, encouraged Sonin to come to terms with his plans for a "wide-controlled independence from Italy".

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<sup>1</sup> -there pg.15

<sup>2</sup> - A I H. *Fund of the Rome Archives*. D. nr.28 / 5, 1918, f. 65.

<sup>3</sup> - *The newspaper "The Sun" Boston, May 1918, no. 34, f. 5.*

<sup>4</sup> - *US, FP Dodaj: Ditar i tij, 1918, f. 34.*

<sup>5</sup> - *In view of the fact that the secret treaty of London knew Italy as an advantage in the Albanian problem, yet in the coming months it would have become clear that the treaty foundations were dim and they served only as a starting point for further mediation. During these mediations, the current territorial ownership was important. Italy was allowed to conquer all of Albania until Drin, and soon it would extend its invasion beyond this line.*

<sup>6</sup> - *The Albanian Problem During The Peacemaking, 1919-1920, vep e përmd, PH.D. 1978, f. 67.*



After the establishment of Italian invaders in central Albania, the problem of the official attitude they had to hold to the mercenaries of Esad Pasha was the problem for the French, because the Pasha forces could no longer serve the French. They had had these forces as a guide and as a vanguard to Middle Albania, as they withdrew from there.

In these circumstances, the Eastern Armed Forces command in October ordered the deployment of Esad Pasha's armed forces. They were ordered to go to their villages with "leave" indefinitely. Under these circumstances, France's position on Esad Pasha's "government" had to be revisited, with which she continued to hold a plenipotentiary minister, recently Leon Kraevski.

The one who put the problem first was the French Ambassador to Rome, K. Barer, who was under the constant pressure of Italian diplomacy and, in addition, at first did not agree with this political action of the center. By mid-October he noted Paris that: "The Italian government does not want Esad Pasha to go to Albania and not authorize him to pass through Italy<sup>1</sup> ...".

And K. Barer was reluctant to give Esad Toptani no support. He gave Ke D'Orses the question: "The Italian government has told us in a very clear way that she keeps Esad for her opponent and she will not see it in any way in Albania. The point here is not whether she is right or not. The London Treaty of 26 April 1915 foresees the establishment in the middle Albania of a Balkan state, whose diplomatic representation will be provided by the Italians. This is a privilege that constitutes the main protectorate node. We have therefore recognized Italy in a medium-sized Albania implicitly as a privileged situation, equivalent to that of the protective power. Therefore, "said K. Barer further," the circumstances advise us and our commitments impose on us ... to put an end to the patronage of whose harm I have pointed out since this patronage was accorded to us and the evolution of events proved his futility. "

The withdrawal of its diplomatic representative to the government of E. Toptani and his call to Paris, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided at the end of October, while the actions took place during November. How did Ke D'Ors's argument in this telegram to L. Kraevski argued: "Because of the provisions that include all of the middle Albania in the Italian area of operations and deriving from our commitments to Italy, there is fears that the Italian government will again raise difficulties in your presence at Esad and his government. On the other hand, since we have no interest in giving the Consultation a pretext to violate the commitments it has made to us, please inform Esad Pasha that I have called you back to France<sup>2</sup>. "

It is quite clear that Italy's commitments to France and its other allies, spoken by S. Pishon, were nothing but the ones related to the secret treaty of London. That is why S. Powon was told to tell the Pope toptana to give up attempts to return to Albania until the fighting had ended and the conditions of peace had not been determined, at least in their general lines.

Thus, at the time of the ceasefire, the French government was forced to distance itself from Esad Pasha formally, for in fact, she did not even spare her moral and material support (by granting any subsidy in hand). At this time there was another contradiction to the invasion of Shkodra. This issue was resolved by placing there an interracial garrison, which would be temporary, until it settled for its political future.

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<sup>1</sup> - Magazine "The Adriatic", Boston, 1918, no. 2, f. 12. art "Unemployment of Bulgaria"

<sup>2</sup> - *The Albanian Problem During The peacemaking, 1919- 1920, vep e përmd, Woodall, 1979 (phd).*

## The Great Political Rotation in Albania (March 1992)

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### Abstract

From all former communist countries, Albania was less prepared for the transition from dictatorship to pluralistic democracies and trade economy. The historical heritage of authoritarian and centralized rules and of weak economy development, was a major obstacle to a quick and easy rotation of Albania society. Political instability in Albania in early 1990s had led to the change of four governments within a period of one year (march 1991-1992). This aggravated situation among the political forces paralyzed normal state activity, showing negative effects in all directions including economy direction. Consequently, at this time, the overall economic situation was characterized by a number of negative parametres. Albania had already dropped not only in a difficult economic but even political, moral and spiritual crisis, where a good part of the people had lost hope in the future of the country. The members of the Albanian right were without the proper experience of a democratic politics. Faced with this difficult situation, the country was moving towards early elections of March 22, 1992. These elections were held under a new electoral law which were adopted on February 4, 1992. The political parties agreed on a mixed election system, reflecting criticism of the electoral procedures pursued up to that time. With all of the major historical, political and socio-economic obstacles, the elections developed smoothly and according to international observers they were regular. The result of these elections marked the absolute victory of the Democratic Party. Socialist Party became the second main force, but with a drastic contraction of the electorate. These elections marked the political rotation in Albania and the coming of a democratic government in power, after nearly 50 years of the communist regime. The greatest victory of the Democratic Party created Albania the best opportunity to strive for the creation of a true democracy, a stable economy and a social and legal justice to respond to the demands of its citizens. Thus, Albania under the leadership of the Democrats embarked on the long and troublesome path of the country's multifaceted transformations. On the path of a long and difficult transition to the establishment and consolidation of a sustainable democratic system.

**Keywords:** Election, Politics, Rotation, Democracy

### 1. Introduction

If the Labor Party will want to continue to be one of the countries main political actors, it needed to be fully reformed and cut off from its Stalinist past. For this reason, prior to her leadership, she become a major party reformer. In the bosom of the Labor Party, there were two currents of conservatives and that of reformers, where the reformers triumphed. In the post of party leader, who was left behind/empty, after Ramiz Alise's resignation, after being elected president, was elected former Prime Minister Fatos Nano, who was known as one of the main reformers representatives. The Central Committee was merged and in its place a new steering committee was established. Members of the Political Bureau were either expelled from the party or resigned. The PPSH was renamed and renamed the Albanian Socialist Party.

Changes were also made even in its program. She got distanced from the communist past and the Marxist-Leninist ideology and embraced the principles of European social democracy. She also declared herself a progressive and modern party that would fight for democracy, social justice and economic reforms that would enable the implementation of a market economy. But despite these, the Albanians still did not believe that the Socialist Party was a very young party in comparison to the PPSH, so the support given to it continued to fall. The developments within the PPSH have also marked the fall of importance of Ramiz Alise. The leadership of the PPSH, which sought to avoid identifying with its predecessors, tried to cut off more and more with the communist leader.

Now Ramiz Alia had no previous force in either party or state affairs, as the law "on the main constitutional provisions" had limited his powers.

Political instability had led to the change of four governments within one year (March 1991-1992). This aggravated situation among the political forces paralyzed normal state activity, showing negative effects in any economic and economic direction. As the researcher Muco states, "political instability is definitely a strong determinant of the economic transition path".

Even in the case of Albania, this correlation is obviously linked to the lack of a clear political strategy and stability, which further aggravated the situation.

Consequently, at this time, the overall economic situation was characterized by a number of negative parameters. Budget deficit reached alarming figures. Inflation has turned into a worrying phenomenon. The data showed a very pronounced reduction in industrial output. Meanwhile, entire branches of the industry were completely paralyzed. In the agricultural sector, production had experienced a significant decline. This decline was a consequence of the degradation of the state supply system for raw materials and trade in agricultural products. This decline was also affected by the collapse of state-owned cooperatives. As a result of paralysis of manufacturing sectors, in 1991, unemployment grew alarmingly.

## **2. The Great Political Rotation in Albania (March 1992)**

The fragile political, economic and institutional situation created negative predispositions for the emergence of a number of illegal activities and various negative phenomena, among which we can mention unemployment, clandestine migration, trafficking, rape and theft of state property.

Faced with this difficult situation, the country was heading towards early elections. During the electoral campaign of March 22, 1992, a united opposition anti-communist group was formed, which was part of the Republican Party, the Social Democratic Party, the Independent Union, under the leadership of the Democratic Party.

During this election campaign, unlike what had happened a year ago, Sali Berisha did not only focus on the city but also paid attention to the village where most of the population lived and where the Communists had had a great deal of support stable. Berisha continued to campaign through large rallies in which he promised to Albanians that the country would emerge from the crisis only if the Democratic Party came to power, as the West was ready to help Albania only if they were removed from the communist power.

On the other hand, the opposition leader promised that if the Democrats came to power, they would not retaliate against the Communists and would not commit revanchistic policies against them. In this campaign, the opposition had broad support from diplomatic representatives of Western countries, particularly the US. Also, the opposition now had more monetary and propaganda tools to carry out an effective campaign. The bureaucracy of the Interior Ministry gave it the freedom and security to conduct a normal campaign. The Socialists, who understood that they had lost the battle, were in full swing.

Democratic Party and other opposition parties had criticized the majority election system implemented on March 31, which had given the communist a great number of seats than their share in the total number of votes. Initially Democratic Party had insisted in the implementing the propotional system, but when the popular support for the opposition was increased, the Democratic Party changed its stance, now supporting the majority system. Even the Socialist Party changed attitude. As the number of their supporters was diminishing, socialist believed that the propotional system would be better for the Party. Even the smaller parties required the propotional system. Wishing the elections to be held as soon as possible, Democratic Party made compromises and as a result a mixed system emerged. The parties agreed on this new electoral law to reflect criticism of the electoral procedures pursued up to that time. The new electoral law was adopted on 4 February 1992. It envisioned a mixed electoral system, based on the German model. The Law divided the country into 100 electoral districts, from which 100 deputies will be directly elected, while 40 deputies, will be elected by the voted gathered nationwide.

The electoral zones would have almost equal number of candidates. The law envisaged that the parliament representation should reflect the percentage of votes each party would win at national level. The first 100 seats would be allocated according to the majority system in the electoral zones that would each have one place, while the other part of the seats would be divided according to a propotional representation system at national level.

In the elections zones with a single- candidates, the candidate would win at least 50 percent of the votes in the first round or majoritz in the second round. For the seats allocated by the propotional system, voters cast more ballots for the party

that for the candidates. Each party that participated in the election had a list of candidates. Party leaders were at the top of the list and thus automatically secured seats in parliament if their party were to win at least 4% of the country's vote.

The situation in Albania had undergone dramatic changes since the first plenary elections in 1991. Whatever the rights as a procedure, it was thought that the 1991 elections did not reflect the true will of the Albanian people. The Communist that were in power had not been heavily engaged in the democratic process, and election observation by international observers had been accepted with the inebriation and hope to secure international legitimacy. On the other hand, the opposition was not given the opportunity to exploit the media and campaign freely throughout the country. But in March 1992 communist were worse, as there was a lot of added pressure, both internally and externally, for pressure to reform.

Although the Socialist Party remained strong, it had suffered heavy defeats. There was no doubt that the opposition parties were in better position than the socialist, having gained significant political experience since the first multiparty elections.

The Embassy of the United States, openly helped in the process of democratization of Albania, exerting strong diplomatic pressure on the communist. US support was crucial to the conduct of electoral reform, the organization of regular elections and the placement of the political game. Two US organizations, The National Democratic Institution and International Republic Institution played an important role by providing Albanian political forces with pre-election assistance, civic education, party training, and technical support. With funds of the United States Agency for International Development, these two institutes worked closely with the government and the opposition to prepare the country for free and fair elections.

US assistance was focused on promoting and strengthening newly-established institutions and democratic culture. Its programs aimed at strengthening parliament and developing impartiality in the functioning of the political system. In the framework of the civic education work, they helped to create the Albanian Association for Free Elections and Democratic Culture, a group of independent observers who stood over political parties. The group engaged in formal and informal civic education, and on election day, played an important role in observing and verifying election results. The National Democratic Institute, chaired several pre-election missions in Albania, holding discussions with party leaders, government officials and journalists about international standards for free and fair elections.

The Republican International Institute, worked closely with the opposition parties to develop the spirit of cooperation between them and to eradicate the communist era power of the 1991 elections.

This Institute was focused on the mechanism of organizing and funding political parties and the development of effective election campaign. He taught leaders and opposition activists the methods of mobilizing the base and drafting the spread of messages of local and international significance, as well as material assistance.

With all the difficult situation, the elections of 1992 were much more regular than those of the previous year and perhaps the only truly free elections in the history of Albania. The opposition had learned lessons from the 1991 elections, had been organized much better, had more resources and had managed to secure the neutrality of the armed forces and the police. Unlike the 1991 campaign, which had been frightened by police activists and supporters of the opposition, in 1992 the police forces either remained neutral or took the opposition.

Even the media attitude had changed to the opposition. The communist influence on radio and television had fallen far after the replacement of the State Broadcasting Directorate in December 1991. In this way, conditions were created for political forces to make fair use of radio and television during the election campaign. Communists had also lost control of most of the local newspapers.

The electorate had undergone major changes after the 1991 elections. The country which previously had many doubts and in general was not familiar with the opposition program, was largely blown up by the opposition. After the collapse of the agricultural cooperatives and after the peasantry independence that came as a result of this disintegration, the communists could not rely on local officials to frighten the villagers. Many intellectuals were in support of the opposition. They came up with a statement calling on voters not to repeat the mistake of 31 March 1991 and vote for the opposition, pointing out that the Socialist Party was no longer able to rule the country.

In its electoral program, the Democratic Party called for the implementation of radical political and economic reforms and for restoring order and peace. The Democratic Party pledged to establish democracy based on human rights and fundamental freedoms, welfare through freedom and social justice, and the integration of our country into the new developments in Europe. The party pledged to draft a contemporary democratic constitution and implement radical

government reforms, to break the state out of the party, and to achieve a depoliticise of the military, security, and state-controlled media. Promising genuine economic reform to create a market economy, the Democratic Party pledged to work on the full privatization.

The Democratic Party promised to review the law on land, to allow the land to be sold to Albanian citizens, to repudiate former landowners for the communist-nationalized land, and to provide tractor peasants, dry fertilizers and seedlings. In foreign policy, it ensured the country's rapid integration into European developments.

With such a comprehensive political agenda that took into account the broader interests of the society, the Democratic Party assured broad support in the nation, marking a rapid increase in its popularity, with the conviction that it would represent the interests of the whole society. The leader of the Democrats crossed the cross-country by spreading the message of national reconciliation and a new era for Albania. In his public statements, he presented the Democratic Party as the only political force that could turn the country out of the difficult situation in which it was and tried to dispel the fear of a post-election clash with the Communists, pointing out that it would not have revenge.

In this election campaign, the Democratic Party was more united and in coalition with other opposition forces, facing the demoralized and disenchanted Socialist Party. Although the Socialist Party, at the end of 1991, was reformed in an attempt to fix the image. In an important speech at the first party conference in November 1991, Fatos Nano stressed that the Socialist Party was a whole new party and not a continuation of the Labor Party. He said his party did not support Marxist-Leninist ideology and was completely distanced from the Labor Party and its policy. The Socialist Party promised to work for a true democracy, based on the rule of law and the market economy. The Socialist Party tried to convince the voters that it had cut all ties with communism and that it had pervaded a social philosophy based on democratic principles. But with all Nano's statements, the Socialists could not convince voters that their party had become democratic. During this campaign, the socialists were under the pressure of internal and external pressure, and therefore, they could not hold a strong campaign.

In total, 11 political parties participated in the elections with 516 candidates. In addition, there were 5 independent candidates. Only 5 parties: the Democratic Party, the Socialist Party, the Social Democratic Party, the Republican Party and the Agrarian Party are candidates in at least 33 electoral districts, while other parties include the Democratic Party, the Union for Human Rights, the Ecological Party, the People's Alliance, Communist Party and the Universal Party, had introduced constituencies to a limited number of electoral zones and did not lift up weight.

Election results surpassed any expectations and expectations. The Democratic Party reaped a sensational victory. Its candidates won 90 out of 100 electoral districts. The Socialist Party had a fatal outcome by winning in 6 election zones.

In these elections, PD received 92 out of 140 seats in parliament, the Socialists -38 seats, the Social Democrats -7 seats, Republican -1 seats, PDNJ -2 seats. The March 22, 1992 elections marked the political rotation and the coming of the ruling right. The victory of the Democrats was an absolute majority. Socialist Party became the second main force, but with a drastic contraction of the electorate.

The turnout was over 90%. Despite the abnormal situation in which they developed, "the 1992 elections were far more regular than the previous year and perhaps the only truly free election in Albanian history. Even according to international observers, they were quiet and regular.

The election result also affected the departure of President Alia's political scene, which resigned on 4 April 1992. The new parliament on April 9 chose President Sali Berisha.

With this act ended the almost 50 years of Communist rule. Thus, Albania under the leadership of the Democrats embarked on the long and troublesome path of the country's multifaceted transformations.

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## At the Borders between Islam and Christianity: A Modern Reading on an Identity Cycle in Albanian Literature

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### Abstract

Albanian literature, as randomly happens with the literature of small countries, can be defined closely related to the internal cultural processes of identity cultivation. The Albanian case, moreover, relates the specific nature of this literature, as the border literature between the two main religious, cultural and political entities: Christianity and Islam. There have continually been identity crashes and identity reformatting processes, yet building a core of incomparable identity with no other European country where every similar conglomerate is unimaginable. We have tried to explore the nature of this platform as a cyclical process over time through its appearances in the texts of Ismail Kadare (The Bringer of Misfortune) and Ben Blush (Living on an Island), based on a hybrid reading model Eco (Umberto) - Fish (Stanley), through The Possible Reader, as a kind of structuralist and phenomenological compromise. The discovery of the syntony/asyntony relationship of the structural meaning of texts with a Dominant Meaning Matrix in today's Albanian literature helps to understand the poetic contours produced by one of the most important integrals influencing the respective literature, that of Identity which has conditioned the Albanian literature, as much as being itself its aftereffect, under the conditions of an exceptionally institutional role of literature relatively unknown in the Balkan and European cultural context.

**Keywords:** Albanian literature, the possible reader, literature border, Islam, Christianity, identity

### 1. Introduction

Albanian literature was born as a literature border. In time, its first text, Meshari (The Missal) appears in 1555 between Protestant Reformation and Counter-Reformation or The Catholic Revival as their direct consequence and disappears in the eve of mass conversion in Islam which has reached its peak at the beginning of the XVII century, to reappear at the beginning of the 20th century when Albanian Renaissance primarily turned its attention toward the Albanian identity issues.

This cultural tension between East and West, Islam and Christianity has associated Albanian literature (Çabej, 1994), despite relatively liberal and dogmatic periods (i.e. socialist realism) in its history. Generally speaking, the identity of this literature is constructed on a narrow ground where East and West, Islam and Christianity, coexist, advance, and reverse each other by centuries.

But how has this process of identity shifting defined during the last decades the internal process of Albanian literature, especially the prose fiction? What structural changes have been produced by the *Possible Reader*<sup>1</sup> for some of the texts

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<sup>1</sup> Eco's model was chosen mainly for structural accomplishment of the text. That model formulates in poetical terms what happens between the text and the reader in time. Eco sees its meaning to be closed in interpretative relations text-reader, where the first's status remaining objective is, in the same time, open to the reader cooperation, who tries a number of interpretative choices, which even though being textually limited, still remains not exactly defined within a semantic model in the form of an encyclopedia, which fulfills the conditions for a textual pragmatism. It removes the meaning from the textual frame to offer a moving model, where meaning is not discovered, but materialized in the reader-text relation. The reader takes part in the form of using an encyclopedia, through which a possible view of the text can be built. Fish, also, explains that undoubtedly the words are meaningful or that the reader isn't free from the textual constraints. The kind of experience allowed from the text is controlled from linguistic and literary competence of the individual reader. The reader reacts in a way not in another to words because he acts supported by the same rules used by the author to generate them – at this point Fish reuses the gist of the interactive activity of the reader according to Eco. For both of them meaning isn't anymore a feature of the literary text, but a product of the reader's activity, forced and limited from the text. The question looking for an answer isn't what is the meaning of the text but how do the readers make the meaning in time? From this point of view Eco's time meaning appears as a function of the reader's competence under the constraints of the text to take interpretative decisions to construct a structure, which for Fish meaning is an

involved, entirely on issues of identity? In this regard, can we speak of a phenomenon of specific weight, visible to today's Albanian prose, in a relatively complicated context of cultural, global, and local encounters?

## 2. Methodology and Background of the Phenomena: Is *Identity* a Main Issue for Today's Albanian literature?

In order to discover a possible structural dynamics because of psycho-cultural identity reasons, we have tried to construct an explaining context over the nature of the basic processes in today's Albanian prose. Further, we have tried to study their connection to a possible *Identity* platform. We have compared the objects obtained from Text-Possible Reader interaction (Xhindi 2015), in two representative cases, based on the Possible Reader's actions, as a critical instrument through an interval when the socialist realism literature was surpassed by the new literature of '90s.

Our point of view is that any structural change is of *value* when perceived as such; therefore, more precisely we are consistent with the judgment of a potential contemporary reader.

In constructing a descriptive view on the nature of today's Albanian prose, we think that there is a hierarchy of issues: *firstly*, the question of the prose relationship of this period to the previous one, respectively the socialist realism; *secondly*, the question of the physiognomy which the somewhat structured tendencies of today's prose are represented, in relation either to the previous structural influences or to the various constraints imposed by a new relationship regime; and *finally*, the corresponding critical reflection on new tendencies.

We can rely on the views of some of the most important voices of Albanian theoretic and literary criticism: Prof. Dado (Dado, 2007) notes that, in relation to the previous period: "the '90s literature relations generally involve a conflict, an opposing position". The reason, according to Dado (Dado, 2007), lies in: "...the fact that through new and effective aesthetic-emotional forms is aimed another type of freedom in the content and in the artistic illusion of the relationship between our human reality and the convective ways of its imagination.

The conception of relations between the *reality* and *imaginary* has shown that in the literature of these years, the dominant tendency of the overwhelming majority of writers, especially novelists, is more a reaction to the tradition than the influence from its forms. To the younger authors this reaction appears more aggressive, to the extravagance of artistic structures. It is known that Modernism and Postmodernism as two sides of Modernity (where the phenomenon of opposition to traditional forms appears not only and simply as opposing, but also as a challenge to new structural shapes) become attractive aesthetic programs for many of the authors of these years".

Critics generally believe that the artistic identification process of authors who wrote after the 90s has come more than a normal personal evolution as a *reaction to traditional ideologies and of relevant artistic structures*, which has led to some kind of aesthetic radicalization, sometimes displayed as their only creation purpose (Hamiti, 2002): "What would literature do in a new context, that literature so much constrained by socio-political contexts and social structures...? It will take a paradoxically inverse direction. In Albania, this literature which invented the assertion of collective freedom now finds this plot in his body and quickly seeks compensation by creating a new plot, of the new Absolute, for the freedom of the individual".

This program – it can be defined as a 'program' - essentially individualist, would integrate various creative profiles, often "genetically" opposite. Dado (2007) notes that: "the freedom of creation as expression of individual freedom came as an undeniable occurrence, but also bearing a series of problems that create this tendency towards the new forms and ways of artistic creation. The Albanian prose was involved in various new tendencies, of symbolism and existentialism types, etc., but not rarely in unspecified directions, where it is difficult to follow the specifics of the author's artistic vision. Of course, this is a normal occurrence when authors are in the process of artistic creation".

Dado (2007) says that: "the writers of new generation tended towards to another conception and sensitivity, both in tackled problems and in structural visionary, in the deeply allegorical way of artistic evocation. Being a generation that didn't create in the period of socialist realism, this group of young people tended to deny the preceding literature and with their works aim to bring about a completely different literature that didn't simply oppose the literary tradition of the second half of the

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*order of preliminary impulses motivated by text's signals and which in Fish's practice can be interpreted. The meaning to Eco is a structural function of the text, while to Fish it is a function, if it can be defined this way, pre-structural, an immediate impulse, meaning of the first level. The models have compatibility in spite of the debate about text centrism.*



XX century but had to prove that a new generation was bringing in a different literature, influenced by the modernist literature of the century, which the relationship between reality and artistic fiction doesn't envision as realistic literature".

### 3. Modernism as a New Unifying Feature

Important names of Albanian Literary Criticism are involved on this issue: Prof. Qose (2006) asserts that: "... in criticism and in general in literary science today is being dealt the issue of the relation between realism and modernism, videlicet between tradition and the novel, which in the literature and the literary criticism of the European peoples or even in the Balkans peoples was dealt with at the beginning of the 20th century. XX - in the first case, and after the Second World War - in the second case".

More specifically, Dado (2007) notes that: "The interpretation of literature of this decennia should also be directed in finding the trends of literature dynamics regarding the stylistics formats, where literature appears to have manifested a variety of structures and artistic conventions. What is happening to the Albanian literary process when the denial of the literature of socialist realism brought freedom of creation without restrictions? In general the period in question is defined by critical opinion as a period where the poetics of modernism is ruling (dado 2007): "Researches in the field of narration, in terms of the inner and outer structure of the text, in modernist elements of poetics, are associated in the literature of the last 15 years not just dealing with the realities of the dictatorship period, but also with the utmost insights: in the essence of man, in the problems of his existence". This phenomenon pervades works of I. Kadare, F. Kongoli, V. Koreshi, Zela Cela, A. Tufa, V. Graçi, A. Leka.

This stage of integration, in view of the respective trend towards a modernist poetics, is seen mostly as a result of a spontaneous process (Jakllari, 2004): "modernist and postmodernist models, or even currents and other schools have their main source in the existence of particular texts, rather than the existence of literary circles that are founded on clearly aesthetic platforms ... the avangardist novel has been written over the years by authors formed as such during communist dictatorship... and a generation of highly talented new authors, emerging as such after the 90s".

This modern novel becomes the field where are applied (Qose, 2006): "new techniques, changes in ways of using time, exchanges of different perspectives of confession, mainly fragmenting or neglecting fabula, the influence of film technique and psychoanalysis, ... where inner monologue and solikok are involved, ...are mixed traits of all three literary genres, ambiguity is sought. In the modern novel, also the special concentration of *Evil* happens, the absolutization of the imagination, the spreading of polysemantic mythological and archaic structures, the abandoning of the reader". This kind of novel, modernist novel, has reached its integration phase (Jakllari 2004): "has realized a great shift, from actuality stacking to the eternal universes of man ..."

On the whole, today's Albanian fictional prose has entered a stage of modernity where it is difficult to exclude any author. It's obvious the process of fermentation of a movement that has articulated almost entirely its structural syntax: maybe a possible classification of the fictional prose may be based on thematic criteria rather than on the conventional criteria, although this remains very relative. We can talk about the different levels of the identity platform: in a first group, are included works in which are considered fairly identity issues, a second group of works deals mainly with cases of historical and psycho-moral explanation of Albanian identity.

### 4. Why Modernism?

If we agree on the value of the specific presence of *Identity* platform in today's Albanian prose, the immediate question that arises is: what is the cause of the virtually affirmed modernism by literary critics?

One may argue with the conclusion that the roots of this process should be sought in the changes that occurred with the authors during the 90s. As Jakllari (2004) notes: "The Albanian creative subject begins to consume, sometimes intuitively and at other times consciously, elements of avant-garde and anarchist aesthetics, which put him in direct contact with Western culture".

Of course, this is a process of individual content, but apparently the differences between the new and old groups aren't dramatic: the authors react almost the same. At least, with the authors still in process, coming from the old tradition, has worked the opposition of the overly stylistic tradition that emerges as a common conventional tendency for all authors. Modernist poetics offers the same comfort to the creative subject with the relative independence given to the latter in relation to the reader.

Following the concept expressed by Jakllari (2004) can be seen the common, gradual, cyclical change of the status of the creative subject, which in the context of modernist poetics changes entirely its relationship with the discourse. In some cases, this subject using freely his creative ego sees the discourse as a purpose rather than as a mean. The creative subject's relation with the text tends to be closed: the text is offered in reading as a puzzle of the author *alter ego* which the reader has to decode, thus reaching the edge of the aesthetic maximization of the text (Dado, 2007): "... this kind of literature comes through stranger forms, through relations and structures, which in the first sight seem to have slipped the writer".

The possible links between structural modernity of texts and their identity platform are generally explained as issues of authors, their moral, mental and stylistic evolution, an insufficient critic pose, in our opinion.

A possible less relativist perspective in explaining modernism, might be from the reader's perspective, as a structural consequence of the reader's specific relationship with the texts, during an interval that includes the last two decades of socialist realism literature and the first two decades of literature in the 90s, when it finishes a traditional identity - romantic and post-romantic - cycle to start a new cycle. As an argument to describe the characteristics of this process, as a dynamics towards modernism determined by the reader, we chose to present the 'objects' constructed by interaction between the reader of the novels "The Bringer of Misfortune" (Kadare, 1974, 2008) and "Living on the Island" (Ben Blushi 2008).

## 5. Describing 'Objects'

### 5.1 Kadare, "The Bringer of Misfortune"

For a highly dense text of reference indicators, there is a low interaction activity, related with a low number reference indicators, mainly signifying material of everyday life. Reference indicators become meaningful only at the margins of the story, while the reference network as a whole presents a very small number of reference indicators of religious type of signifying, mainly of the material kind. Readers interact to build the story, in the absence of religious indicators - readers divide religious facts from the story corpus. For the majority of readers there are signs that the story is set in analogy with the reader's own experience, in the relative lack of stylistic and intertextual competence and even more of religious competence.

The reader is inclined towards a non-complex network understanding or even network rejection. The consequence of a poor referential network, owned by personal experience, is the discourse structure of the text, which in the vast majority of cases is built on the static discourse isotopies. The selective activity for discourse topics and discourse isotopies doesn't use the factors of ideological (religious) competence. There is a sort of coincidence between the low topic and isotopic interaction and the low intensity of the components of ideological (religious) competence. Only a few readers who manage to use religious sensitive discourse topics are able to construct systematic discourse isotopies, therefore, to construct a plot structure of the text - most of readers are reluctant to put into motion factors of ideological competence without realizing the plot structure of text. In fact, the discourse structure represents a hard dialogist for the reader.

All this gets sense when narrative isotopie is constructed. During that process there is a noticeable increase in the intensity of the reader's activity. Almost all readers construct structures: the difference lies in the mechanisms used for its construction. Only a minor stable group, builds the isotopie on the religious component of competence. The rest uses religious components in their neutral, static state. For the vast majority of readers with the construction of the narrative isotopie, the purpose of reading has also been reached. With this can be explained somewhat readers' passivity in the narrative isotopie interpretation: the same minor group makes interpretation using the ideological components of competence.

The rest, even doesn't enter the interpretation or merely repeat the narrative isotopie – seems that there rules the construction of a depthless story. The protagonist for most readers acts without any ideological impetus, but for the needs of a human routine, which is no need to be explained. The nature of the impulses on it becomes more understandable when readers build 'the possible worlds'. Not a religious stimulus affects any possible world: Haxhi Milet, the *bringer of feredjes* in the Balkans, continues to exist in a world outside off any reader system. He is guided by his essential needs of

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<sup>1</sup> The data used in this case is produced by a survey on the construction of meaning by a number of students, as empirical readers. Xhindi, E. (2015, 28th August). *The Initiation of Religion in Literature*. In Paçarizi, Rr. (Ed), *The XXXIV International Seminar for Albanian Language, Literature and Culture*. Paper presented at the *Proceedings of The XXXIV International Seminar for Albanian Language, Literature and Culture*, 34/2 (pp. 136-147). Prishtinë: Fakulteti i Filologjisë, Prishtinë.

life, it responds to the immediate circumstances, the other systematic-situations do not affect him - and to do so in a story rich with referential religious indicators for readers, it is really worth to be noted .

In conclusion, for what we have analyzed the data, we conclude that the overwhelming number of respondents almost do not use the religious components of competence, because as the questionnaire proves, they do not possess those mechanisms. Structures made by them are mainly narrative isotopes in the absence of religious factors of competence, even of any of its ideological factors; the meaning of the structure is depthless, built on a pure state of action, where the impulses are produced the mere logic of the immediateness interaction of the isotopie, outside the influence of the system of religious values. Readers tend to keep the structure in its minimum meaning, even when the text encourages more.

About the text in question: the religion is a doctrinal norm that is only applicable to a low number of readers; where it appears, becomes present with low intensity, unstructured, outside organic interaction with other factors of competence, a kind of protracted cultural clichés, not well-understood by readers. At least, as a text of socialist realism it is a text about a state of 'Bare Identity' in the absence of official ideology.

### 5.2 Ben Blushi: "*Living on the Island*"<sup>1</sup>

From the discourse's macro-structural view this text belongs to the classical manoeuse, a kind of classical conservatism in the narrative that has often been recaptured, recently, in the European and world literary process: discourse isotopies of the syntagmatic order (Eco, 2006) at the point of division/union between them (chapters) are carried out among themselves as isotopies of the paradigmatic order for the reader.

The reader has to utilize, even to exhaust his encyclopedia even at the limit of its reconstruction. The first chapter of the book, the first conversion in Islam, i.e., is an example of multilateral disorder of competence. This complication becomes the cause for the low isotopic intensity that accompanies the construction of the structure. Reconstruction of competence requires justifying oneself.

In this respect, the syntagmatics joint nods are just intermediary units for the new isotopic sequences in function of the predecessor units, of the isotopic's structure intensity increasing and of the rebuilding of the reader's competence, a tool which is offered as an architrave for the structure. The reader, therefore, has to build a structure over the isotopic units that condition one another, seemingly linearly, but on the uncertainty and the unclear nature of the syntagmatic nodes. Are they, the real points of the structural joint of text, so less significant compared to the units they bind?

In reading this is equivalent with a kind of structural concession, the same concession the book does to the reader, who must rebuild his encyclopedia to perform the text. Almost all the encyclopaedia of the reader is now being tested, facing new references, urging new isotopic substances, new isotopies.

In this regard - the narrative structure is characterized by the need for a relatively broad dynamics of the starting point: the low isotopic intensity of the initial discourse units must necessarily increase - the reader's indecision must be avoided, otherwise the structure can't be build. Simple syntagmatic joints of discourse isotopies at the limits of the chapters while on the one hand attracts the reader to continue to carry the structure also bear the risk of even more noticeable decline in the low isotopic discourse intensity for a good part of the novel.

The text solves this simply: on the one hand, by adding the mass of the discourse units and on the other hand by adding the mass of new reference indicators (a kind of narrative arithmetic in the function of a reference math). While on the one hand, the isotopic mass is augmented, on the other hand, signals of coherence are given to the reader's ability to indirectly ensure the increasing of the isotopic intensity, so the structure conception.

The text gradually frees the reader, so much as to fully entrusts him not only its architecture but also the relevant stability. The story as a narrative isotopie is entirely a reader's issue, of the text's 'confidence' in his rebuilded competence. However, Blushi's novel faces not a little difficulty: the new reference indicators are so revolutionary that predictive actions of the reader over the possible reference worlds become really difficult. Moreover, there isn't rarely an apparent asymmetry between ritual and alternative reference indicators in terms of coherence, which shakes the reference world between the reader's experience as a whole and its cultural and fictional dimension. It is during on this phase, that is, during the

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<sup>1</sup> See the footnote 1. This time Eco-Fish model is used as equivalent with an integral of empiric readers

construction of the possible worlds, the reconstructed competence is in crisis: it has undergone such a repression of the necessity to build new isotopies/new story that it loses its ability to including the world of text in a reference world - the text gives the reader the independence he can't use - .

Actions on the actantial and ideological structure are, to a large extent, a consequence of the internal conflict characterizing the building of the story as the basic narrative text isotopie: while the ritual indicators go down to the parodist level of competence, the alternative indicators go to a deeply rebuilt level of the experience, almost fictional. A strange process has been carried out: the low isotopic intensity endangered the structure's future; its (intensity) growth provides it (the future of the structure), but it undermines its sustainability. In this sense, the text is independent of the reader, who is free to do nothing.

Object Obtained. The object obtained still contains the reader's periodic displacements between the present and the past - this second, in view of the isotopic orientation of the structure by the reader, but this time in the boundaries of large units involved linearly to each other, either as discourse or narrative isotopies. In the modernist way it gives the illusion of a simple structure and in the same time it gives a massive renewable unknown reference indicators. Reading the text is equivalent with the rebuilding of competence.

## 6. Conclusions

The objects produced by the Possible Reader show a process entirely influenced by the essential changes in its encyclopedia. As a result of interaction with the reader, the Kadare's text is presented as a closed unity of a simplified and unfinished fable.

The doctrinal (religious) inadequacy of reading leads the text to the reduction in a mischievous, secular sentimental intrigue, entirely contrary to the cultural pathos that accompanies today the clashes between Christianity and Islam. Poetically, this text of socialist realism tends to deplete the peculiar fate of that literature: structural monotony.

There is a discrepancy between the large number of reference indicators offered to the reader and their low exploitation, quite the opposite of modernism practice.

Blushi's text represents an opposite, often reverse case with that of Kadare: the passive encyclopedia of the reader is encouraged to change, to be enriched, even to create its own text, independent of textural structures, achieving although the conservative perception of the text's poetics, in one of the typical states of modernity: the object's multidimensionality and uncertainty.

The meaning of the prominent identity cycle in the Albanian prose, at least for these two cases, is the need for reconstruction of identity, on new historical, cultural, moral and social data, which are accepted not unquestionably when they are offered by the literature, which leads to the reader's need for 'extrication from constraints of literature' and to the literature tendency to use this 'freedom' strengthening the modernist inclination.

In modern reading an identity cycle goes from the constructivist, ideological, post romantic tendency to deconstructivism, culturalism and psychology, toward a kind of a new romanticism of identity in a global context of being. Respectively, it is about overcoming from monocentric identity to a multicentric one.

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## The Dynamics of the Name Issue of the Republic of Macedonia

Dorentina Asani

### Abstract

The name dispute mainly with Greece, which does not accept the simple name "Republic of Macedonia" with the claim that there is an area named Macedonia with Thessaloniki as a capital, have continued since the break-up of Yugoslavia and up to this day with Greece. The name issue is one of the biggest obstacles for the Republic of Macedonia to join the EU and NATO. Many negotiations have failed for finding names, ranging as the Republic of Skopje, the Republic of North Macedonia, and to the idea of disintegration of the country. It was expected that solving the contest name with Greece to take on a new dynamism after the elections when Prime Minister Zaev stated that this issue will end very soon and will be decided by referendum, but still the issue of Macedonia's name is nor in the east nor in the west. On the other hand, the citizens generally express their revolt to the governmental policies that this issue and many others are used by political parties during the electoral campaign accusing each other which of the political parties has done more for the national interests. So, this segment continues to be considered only on political parties agendas and platforms for years and accusing each other of not realizing it. The Prime Minister Zaev said that the country is closer than ever before, in order to resolve this problem, where negotiations are continuing to be held in order to achieve a mutually acceptable solution for both countries. The pressures of the international factor are in the direction of strengthening internal stability and preventing any possible conflict in Macedonia. This pressure is evident, but the question is how much it will work?!

**Keywords:** population, negotiations, proposals, identity, collision, choice

### 1. Introduction

The problem of the name of FYROM (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) is issued since Macedonia separation from the Former Yugoslavia and emerged as a separate state, but with the strange name FYROM, with the idea that it could regulate the name later. This new state was first recognized by Albania, considering that about 35% of the population of the Republic of FYROM are the Albanian but there were restrictions regarding human rights and freedom. Macedonia's biggest opponent was Greece, which has a part of its territory in the north, an area named Greek Macedonia with the capital city of Thessaloniki. The Republic of Macedonia has never agreed with the Greek proposals about the name change.

The Albanian politicians of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) have not made any serious statements in the name dispute, having in mind that this Republic can also be divided in the future between neighboring states such as Bulgaria, Serbia and Albania. The Bulgarians claim that today's Macedonians are Bulgarians, but for creating a distinct identity (that of Vardar) they use a Cyrillic alphabet but slightly different from the Bulgarian one, but the Macedonian words and phrases are the same.

The name issue with Greece dates back to Macedonia's independence almost 27 years ago. Athens wants Skopje to change its name and Macedonians to not claim that they are descendants of ancient Macedonians. This dispute has caused Greece to block Macedonia's NATO membership for several years and the opening of EU membership talks. This problematic issue was expected to take on a new dynamic after the local elections, but actually it did not have any results. In this context the contacts are also established with the Greek government, but also the moves of UN mediator, Matthew Nimetz, that there may be rapprochement of the positions between the parties to close the 30-year-long dispute with the name of Macedonia.

On the other hand, a group of Albanian intellectuals in Macedonia have begun to sign a seven- point memorandum, where among the demands is the country's constitution change, insisting that the interests of Albanians not to be held as a hostage to "stability and peace" and national integration as a priority to the EU.

## 2. Results and Discussions

Analysts estimate that without serious intervention from abroad there will not be any solution. It will be a success if Macedonia is invited to become a NATO member, as well as the date for launching EU membership talks. These two processes come along in parallel with the settlement of the name dispute.

Those that are well-known in international affairs say that besides the problem of the issue of Macedonia's name, there are other issues that slow the process such as the functioning of the state as a multiethnic and a democratic state. There are other social and political issues that slow down this process and any attempt to overthrow them will further deepen the crisis in society.

If we base on such statements, especially on the Macedonian side, but also those statement on the Greek side, international experts acknowledge that this dispute can hardly have a quick solution.

Some analysts are of the opinion that the name Paeoni does not express and does not include the whole of the current name Macedonia, this solution is thought to confuse the situation even worse and cause dissatisfaction both within Macedonia and its neighbors, mainly Bulgarians and less the Serbs.

On the other hand, the group of Albanian intellectuals have signed a memorandum with seven requests based on the constitutional change. First, they range the deep and the wide crisis of the Albanians in Macedonia, the constant setbacks and the exclusion from decision-making on important issues for the future of the country. They demand in any case to change the Constitution in order the country to show the reality of a multiethnic society.

It is in the interest of our country to move the issue on the basis of a common and acceptable solution for general use, with a name registered in the constitution and with a broad agreement that will certify, guarantee and encourage a new era of new relations of peoples, not only in the economy but also in all issues that concerns them.

## 3. The Evaluation

It presents a very important part of the study because it shows how much we reached understanding the problematic in question; how widespread it is in the society; how it affects and how to treat it, and ultimately choosing the alternative for solving the issue that seems to be reasonable for us. In order to assess this problem, I have decided to conduct a survey. In this way, we can clearly see the attitudes of citizens about this issue which might affect them. The survey results and public opinion attitudes are expressed in the following tables:

*Demographic characteristics of respondents*

		Number	Percentage	Total
Gender	Female	80	50%	160
	Male	80	50%	
Age	18- 25 age	24	15%	160
	26-35 age	56	35 %	
	36-45 age	32	20%	
	46-55 age	32	20%	
	56-65 age	16	10%	
Education	Elementary school	24	15%	160
	Secondary school	40	25%	
	Faculty	72	45%	
	Master of science	16	10%	
	Doctor of science	8	5%	
Economic status	employed	112	70%	160
	unemployed	48	30%	
Ethicity	Albanian	112	70%	160
	Macedonian	40	25%	
	Others	8	5%	

Respondents' answers are the following:	Completely agree	Somehow agree	Do not agree	Do not have ideas
The Republic of Macedonia is on a political and social crisis	72%	14%	6%	8%
The impact on the emergence of the crisis is the disregard of the multinational character of the state	41%	25%	20%	14%
All communities in Macedonia are treated equally	21%	8%	68%	3%
Macedonia functions on the bases of demographic features	6%	6%	70%	18%
Democracy ruling is not respected in Macedonia	74%	13%	5%	8%
All citizens are equal in front the law and judiciary based on constitution.	81%	12%	4%	3%
Macedonia gradually and positively marches the way to EU and Nato	23%	7%	66%	4%
Macedonia is not on the right path for reaching the mebership in Euroatlantic structures	78%	14%	5%	3%
The interethnic problems and the lack of equal representation of ethnicities are one of the main obstacles to the EU	89%	11%	8%	2%
The issue of Macedonia's name is a political problem	52%	17%	27%	4%
The case of changing the name of Macedonia has to do with its own state identity	24%	22%	33%	21%
The deepening crisis in Macedonia can be solved by joining the country in the EU	66%	4%	22%	8%
Macedonia will continue to stay in such a crisis situation until fair functioning as a multiethnic democratic state is regulated	81%	8%	8%	3%

#### 4. Conclusions

Based on the survey data and in general, the hypothesis was proved that the citizens are realistically those who feel and experience any political and social change that was expressed by the majority who see the international factor to help the escape from the crisis and the current undesired state. A considerable number of people support the fact that the reason for lasting the name dispute so long is the fear of losing the identity of the Macedonian people.

The political crisis has influenced the growth of migration among citizens. Its longing for the direct risk of the citizens' economy for most of them is worrying. Citizens consider that before the state interests, the political crisis has initially transformed the living in Macedonia to a survival one.

Regarding fair democratic and multi- ethnic functionality, the results conclude that inter-ethnic relations have never been established on a basis of mutual trust and respect in Macedonia. This relationship has been steadily decreasing without ever stabilizing, where key factors of this state are the wrong policies of the government that have put the country in a difficult economic and social crisis and are continually deepening it with pretexts that they fight for equal rights, but the ethno-centric character continues to remain of conquering character. The corruption affairs and criminality which are used to control political forces reveal a realistic approach of functioning the state illegally.

Instead of prioritizing citizens' lives and European integration, the everyday politics nurtures hate speech and has poisoned the society, fueling a terrible ethnic nationalism. However, even in this mood neither in heaven nor in earth, people find the rescue and confidence in the international factor as the last variant, otherwise most of them are already oriented towards migration to European countries.

According to the survey, any change of the name with adjectives such as: the Upper, Northern, and Vardar would fail in the referendum. But even from the Greek side, if we judge according to surveys, any name containing the name Macedonia will be unacceptable to the Greek people.

In Macedonia, the referendum would probably succeed, but it is ethically correct that a so sensitive issue for Macedonians to pass with the help of the non-Macedonian vote, especially the Albanians as a large body of voters. In that way, inter-ethnic relations can also be drastically broken. Then, in this case why we need the integration in the EU and NATO ?! Meanwhile, if the Greek side insists on an untranslated name, then even Albanians in the referendum would vote against.

The name of compromise should be something that will enable us to live together. Why not find something that is acceptable to both parties?



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## Elements of the Bektashi Order

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### Abstract

All this analysis is based on documented data as well as record data from conversation with dervishes during the time this research paper is realized in protection of the dissertation topic. This text is focused on the theme of Albanians' religious beliefs, mainly the Bektashi faith. The Bektashi faith is considered equally with other religions and Albania is the Bektashi World Headquarters. Bektashi is often described as the right religion for Albanians, as a bridge between Christians and Muslims. One of the religious communities in Albania is Bektashi, which has its own history in the Albanian land that should be called the Torch Land of this belief. Haji Bektash Veli, the founder of Bektashism, predicted that the fire of this belief would flicker strongly during the history of humanity but would never be extinguished. Today, the Bektashi community of Albania has its statute, and the first article states: "The Bektashi community is an independent, non-political community consisting of the Bektashi clergy of all levels, and the faith in their belief and worshipping of the Creator find inspiration in the doctrine, traditions, rituals and holy religious, moral and philosophical rules of Bektashism."

**Keywords:** dervish, bektashi, tekke, elements, practices

### 1. Introduction

This mystical school of Islam was established by the Sufi mystic Haji Bektash Veli. From the time he was little, Haji Bektash displayed qualities seldom found in children, and when he reached the age of maturity, he began his spiritual studies with the eminent Sufi mystics of his region. After some time, the saintly master Ahmad Yasawi directed Haji Bektash to go to Anatolia and propagate spiritual awareness. In 1282 CE he established a Sufi center, a tekke in the small central Anatolian town of Karahuyuk, a town that now bears his name, Hacibektas. From here Haji Bektash Veli sent his missionaries far and wide, so that Bektashi path expanded to throughout Anatolia and the Balkans, gathering countless clergymen and adherents.

As the Bektashi order spread throughout the lands of the nascent Ottoman Empire there was a need to reform its organization and regulation. This task was entrusted to Balim Sultan, who is commonly called the order's Pir-i Thani or the "Second Founder". It was him who gave the Bektashi order the structure, rituals and litanies by which it is recognizable today. Balim Sultan gave the order a well-defined organizational structure, which encompassed the laity "ashiks", initiates "muhib", "dervish", "father" (*Alb. baba*), "grandfather" (*Alb. gjysh; Turkish dede*), "great dede" (*Alb. kryegjysh; Turkish dedebaba*) who heads the Headquarters.

He saw to it that the widely-dispersed Bektashi tekkes were regulated through dedeliks (*Alb. gjyshat*) that were to oversee different geographical regions. Unique among Sufi brotherhoods, Balim Sultan also instituted the practice of celibacy, a path many Bektashi dervishes have chosen. Although for nearly four centuries the leader (*called dedebaba*) of the Bektashi order had sat in the mother tekke in Hacibektas, in 1930 the sacred seat of the dedebaba was moved to Tirana, Albania, where it has been located ever since. The current head of the Bektashi World Community is Haji Dedebaba Edmond Brahimaj, a man whose efforts and tremendous organizational skills have greatly enhanced the spiritual influence of the community.

Bektashis are to love their neighbours as they would their own selves, whether they be Muslims, Christians, Jewish or something else, they treat all with respect, thereby presenting themselves as one with all upright people. Bektashi tekkes and turbes were not only places of prayer and supplication for Muslims, but they were visited by Christians as well. These places were generally known as centres of harmonious spiritual and charitable activities. One can look at the example of

the pilgrimage up Mount Tomorr in Albania, where thousands of people come every late August regardless of race, region, religion, and nationality.

## 2. Literature Review

The Bektashi order is hierarchical in character. In this hierarchy, based on the pyramid stands ashik. Ashik means someone who loves the Bektashi religion. It refers to him who is attracted and feels some loyalty to Bektashi principles and activities, but has not yet received a nasip or has not entered into the order. This is the moment when ashik are in the process of drawing from the order. They visit tekke, talk to father and their regular members, listen to Bektashi music, and sing at the feasts of this faith.

Muhibs in the initial sense it is not different from the ashik and it means someone who loves or friend spiritually connected. The technical use of this word refers to someone who has passed through the rite of acceptance, has received nasip and is worthy to sit at the religious ceremonies of the order. The ceremony under which someone becomes a muhib is called Ikrarayini ceremony of declaration of faith or Aynicem, gathering ceremony (Birge, J.K., 2008: 186- 188).

Dervishes, this position requires a greater devotion to religious life. After attending the necessary ceremonies, the dervish can wear the taj (Alb. taxh) or hat of the order and tekke becomes his home where he serves until the end of his life. A Muhib, before becoming dervish, has served 10-15 years in tekke. In fact there is no any determined time when muhib may be ready to become dervish. This is determined by the ability to approach his teacher (Birge, J.K., 2008: 189). Following this period, if the baba of tekke determines the muhib spiritually fit, aceremony can be performed that can raise him to the rank of dervish, (women cannot be dressed as dervishes, but nothing stops her in gaining an even higher spiritual rank). At that point, the newly elevated dervish must decide to undertake a life of celibacy or marriage. Needless to say those who choose celibacy gain a much more esteemed rank in eyes of the community in recognition of their commitment and sacrifice.

The Bektashi clergy attire is a symbol, an inherited gift from ancient times, after the Prophet Adam. This habiliment is honored and sanctified by all the prophets. Also Prophet Muhammad himself it was communicated this holy habiliment from angel Gabriel in Mirage's night. And the Prophet Muhammad entrusted this to Ali the Great in a special ceremony. After Great Ali, he was held by Imam Hasan, Imam Husain and all the Imams, hand in hand, until to the one who arrived at the Pir Haji Bektash Holy. According to Bektashi norms, the religious attire is eternal and invariable. This attire is an indication of dogma, not a sign of youth and belonging to a discipline. The religious attire summarizes mainly Taxh (taj), Hirka and Lintel (Kallajxhi, Xh., 1964: 36). As for Taxh, the Albanian Bektashi dervishes wear the taxh with 12 pairs. These are called terke, a name of Arab origin that namely, "leaves", because the taxh symbolizes abandonment from the vices and all the wickedness of the people's world.

Hirka is the body cover from neck to ankle. It symbolizes the removal of dirty clothing of this world and wearing the white garment of moral purity. For this reason, the traditionally used hirka is always white because it has the meaning of generosity and purity. Hirka also symbolizes the first mantle of Adam's prophet, and in this case, has the meaning of covering mistakes and human vices. (Kallajxhi, Xh., 1964: 37).

Babas (*fathers*) are all those dervishes elected from Bektashi people by the circle of a tekke and are decreed by dede (grandfather) and dedebaba (great dede). Babas lead the tekkes and enjoy the right to perform the delivery ceremonies for Muhibs and Dervishes (Kallajxhi, Xh., 1964: 35). A worthy dervish can raise in standing and becomes baba, taking over the direction of the tekke and becoming a friend, religious cleric and counselor inside the Bektashi order (Birge, J.K., 2008, 190). Also in Article 46 of the Statute of the Bektashi community in 1924, "In every tekke, baba is the one who leads, the dervishes are his employees".

Dede (*grandfather*), are the fathers who see the last Bektashi delivery ceremony and head the dedeliiks, which are the centers of the entire district's Tekke (Kallajxhi, Xh., 1964: 36).

Dedebaba (*great baba*), is the highest spiritual authority of Bektashism, who heads the Headquarters and represents the morality of Bektashi element. (Ibidem)

### 3. Methodology

This research uses a qualitative methodology. Data were collected through the instrument of in-depth qualitative interview with dervishes during the working time. In addition, the research uses the technique of text analysis and the content analysis of the documents, the statutes of the Bektashi community and the various books that complement this work.

### 4. Main Elements

#### 4.1 Conversation

The Turkish word "muhabet" comes from the Arabic word which means "love", "affection", "connection" and "friendship". In Albanian, the muhabet (eng. conversation) has got a different meaning of "discussion", surely as a result of what this term implied for the Albanian dervishes who used it, because the conversation in the Albanian Bektashis was a gathering "friendly" during which it was discussed, talked, sang, but especially during which the baba or a dervish explained to believers the doctrine of the order (Rossi, E., 1942: 72-73).

This table talk was therefore of special importance. In every tekke it was assigned the room of conversation (hall of conversation). Such meetings could be made every week, every two weeks or every month, according to population opportunities (especially in the function of field work). So frequency was not constant. The number of participants varied according to tekkes. Men and women were present without distinction and without separation. During the meeting it was customary to drink brandy (Alb. raki). Most of the time, baba recited or sang, then explained to them by teaching to believers Bektashi dogmas.

As for drinks, alcohol in general was not forbidden, including drinking in tekke, as alcohol consumption was part of the conversation sessions. Most of the Bektashi believers remain muhibs which frequented the tekke for conversation, for ceremonies and celebrations that marked the life of the community. The life of the Bektashis in tekke and Bektashi wealth has been transmitted in the queue of the people. Nefeses are singing in every case: during the ceremonies, during the concerts for ashik (Melikoff, I., 2010: 18). Nefeses for Bektashi traditions are present in every significant case of life. Throughout the various religious ceremonies they try to recall the events of the afterlife through songs and dances. But it is pleasing that in the Bektashi conversations every muhib brings with it ashiks and talibs to learn and clarify the way of Bektashism, for embedded to them the love for this Islamic sect and consequently to prepare the talib to see erkan (Kalçani, Baba Selim., 2000: 98).

Tekke or the assembly where they gather and talks, there are these separate divisions, but similar to that of Pirevi, with no changes such as: Meydan or the place of mystical pray, chimney coffee paved with hassock where it usually takes place in Bektashis conversation, hashef or kitchens where food is prepared, the guesthouse of the clerics and muhibs sleeping, bakery, slaughterhouse where sacrificial animal meat is cut, stables for keeping livestock and any other (Kalçani, Baba Selim., 2000: 99).

#### 4.2 Practices

Outside the ritual we have just described, Albanian Bektashis observed in their lives some practices that were removed from the strict Muslim observation. Unlike the practice of the five daily prayers of the Sunni Muslims, they did only two prayers a day:

*"Once at dawn of the day and once at night, in these prayers, prayed to God to make progress, peace and brotherhood in the world and in the people."*

These prayers were made without turning to Mecca, and ablution was practiced only once in a lifetime when entered in the tariqat. Women who had the grade of muhib attended the meetings with men, which provoked many criticisms and accusations of bad habits over the Bektashi during the times.

In the statute of 1924 signify that a woman could become muhib only if she was married. Bektashis also had some special nutritional practices from those of Sunni Muslims: they eat pork meat, but did not touch snakes, turtles, dogs, and especially rabbits. As for beverages, alcohol in general was not forbidden, including drinking in tekke because it was part of the conversation sessions.

The practice of numerous pilgrimages are realized by Bektashis in holy places not only in Mecca, but also in Karbala and in Albanian cities, such as Mount Tomorr, etc.

#### 4.3 Dervishes moral reports

Dervishes are believers, are capable of interpreting reality and occurrences from human life. They appreciate their human and whatever work and profession of their. Among them are individuals who deal with trade, with agriculture and different crafts. Among them are writers, intellectuals belonging to educational and cultural fields. For dervishes as a special religious social category it is characteristic that they mostly care for the moral image and faithfully respect the tekkes norms.

Dervishes are known as charitable people. Everyone who knocks at the shelter of dervishes in tekke to find food or refuge is sure to encounter a good hospitality and no one asks for name and surname, nor to what religious belief belongs.

One of the greatest Sufi Iranian poets, Farid ud-Din Attar, in his work *Pand-nama* or "Book of Counsels.", in chapter XIII, for the life and work of dervishes writes:

*If you have mind and knowledge,*

*Be Dervish and with them associate.*

All dedes, babas and dervishes, as well as in the middle of the night to come in Tirana, will address to the Bektashi World Headquarters, because the tekkes are everywhere home of the clerics and believers. It is haram and unlike for clerics to sit in the club and sleep in hotels, being surrounded there by many servile, making wasteful spending because it is sweat of people. Him cleric who violates these rules will be judged at the Supreme Council (Kalçani, Baba Selim., 2000: 22).

Dervishes are dedicated and are devoted with a chaste soul and clean to their faith. Many are dervishes who have left great works in Bektashism and humanity. Dervish Ali Mehmet, a man educated in religious schools that he had since the Ottoman Empire, who has served in the tekkes of Frasher and Pristina. He had gained the trust and hearts of people, he knew to keep his figure of a believer and exalt his moral figure. This magical force of this dervish attracted people. Dervish knew to keep the people connected around Bektashism even when the religion was persecuted (Artistic, social, religious magazine "Wisdom" "Alb. Urtësia", No. 43, 2005:20). The dervish figure was very important, they honor the village chambers. In joys, family celebration they added the joy, in misfortune they diminished the soreness (Ibidem). These calming elements for humanity show the great and white soul, the wisdom, maturity, and the justice that characterize dervishes.

#### 5. Tolerance of Bektashism

The presence of such moral norms, such as love, brotherhood, unity, wisdom, tolerance and others, Bektashism did not regard them as a necessity within a religion, but between Albanian Muslims and Christians, by playing a soft and conciliatory role in conflicts between religions.

In the book, "Through the ramifications of Albanian culture," contemporary sociologist Zyhdi Dervishi claims that the Bektashis become more acceptable not only because they are more flexible, more liberal and tolerant in preaching and realizing the rules of religious rituals, but also because they manifest the most prominent altruism spirit (2013:111-112).

The contribution of the Bektashis is big in the history of our nation: As Roberto Morozzo della Rocca says, in the book "Nation and Religion in Albania 1920-1944", consolidated the symbiosis of Albanians with Bektashi faith. Religion in Albania was not a criterion for dividing people. Religious beliefs have not stimulated them in war against each other.

In the period 1887-1910, the Bektashi tekkes turned into illegal schools and assisted by patriots, babas and dervishes for spreading the primer, newspapers and journals and also different books in Albanian language. This is shown by many babas and dervishes activities. Particular is the mission of baba Meleq Staravecka (Shëmbërdenj), in distributing books in Albanian language throughout Albania and the Balkans (Çuni, N., 2006:28).

Bektashism spread rapidly in our lands from the beginning of the 16th century, when they started to rise and tekkes. However, persistent conflicts had with the Ottoman theocratic power since the Bektashists constantly preached: "people regardless of religious affiliation, are equal before the God, people have the right to have their own homeland and to cultivate their spoken and written language", rights which were not suitable for the invaders (Sula, Z; Lila, Q; Biçaku, A., 2005:45). Bektashism managed to overcome these difficulties.

A spokesman for Bektashism wrote:

*"We do not want fanaticism and religious disagreement. Our doctrine teaches us love for all, brotherhood and unity" (Sula, Z; Lila, Q; Biçaku, A., 2005:47).*

*"We all have a God religion and mother of that Albania" (Ibidem).*

All these sermons aim at the presence of moral norms as love and tolerance, which Bektashism sees as a necessity not only within religious beliefs, but between Muslims and Christians.

## 6. Conclusions

Bektashism has played and plays an important role in Albania, with social and national influence. Bektashism in Albania has marked and continues to mark important successes in all directions. With the wisdom and spirit of tolerance, it has contributed to the creation of a warm climate of cooperation with other religions, targeting a unique front, in the struggle against the evils that stain the society. One of the motives which has followed the Bektashis is the fact that have adapted with time but always by removing people from evil and to purify their spiritual world with those values that ennoble human.

Bektashis are to love their neighbors as they would their own selves, whether they be Muslims, Christians etc., they treat all with respect, thereby presenting themselves as one with all upright people. Bektashi tekkes and turbes were not only places of prayer and supplication for Muslims, but they were visited by Christians as well.

Haxhi Dede Baba Edmond Brahimaj, the leader of the Bektashi community said: "The door of Bektashi tekke is open to all regardless of religion, nation, gender, language, etc.

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## Albania's Challenges to European Aspiration, Bringing the Justice System to Justice

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### Abstract

Albania has always aspired to be part of the European family and for this purpose has constantly experienced different challenges. EU has monitored Albanian progress and in each case has provided its recommendations. Since the signature of the Stabilization and Association Agreement, one of the main challenges that Albania had to face was justice reform and fight against corruption and organized crime, which of course were closely related to each other. A great number of international organizations have been present in Albania, providing expertise and support to achieve the integration key priorities among which one of the most important was the justice system. However corruption and incompetence were very spread among prosecutors and judges. Consequently, following the insistence of international actors as well as the increased awareness of local actors, it was concluded that a deep reform in justice was necessary, which would finally clear justice system and would enable it to perform its task of doing justice. As rare as ever, with the unanimous vote of all Albanian parliamentarians, the constitutional changes were approved and additional laws for the reform in justice were adopted too. This legal package initially included asset assessment, a background assessment and a proficiency assessment and then the regulation of the procedure of appointment, disciplinary measures and control during the assignment, and the verification of complaints, for each judge and prosecutor in Albania. This reform is expected to open Albanian road toward EU integration.

**Keywords:** European Integration, aspiration, key priorities, justice reform, corruption

### 1. Introduction

From the first democratic elections in 1991, Albania has faced a transition period to change its economy, political system, organization and also its mentality, from a dictatorial regime toward a democratic system, thus it has experienced a great number of difficult challenges in order to achieve its aspirations. Of course, due to its geographical position, the main target was to become part of the European Union. Since many years now, political leaders often have declared that the main aspiration was the integration into EU structures. Also Albanians had and still have the same aspiration, often merely following the politicians and often for their economic reasons, human rights and rule of law and any other democratic principles. On the other side also the European Community has had the scope to involve Albania in the big Euro-Atlantic family. A significant number of requirements, tasks, obligations and targets have been continuously addressed to Albania.

The European Council met in Santa Maria da Feira on 19 and 20 June 2000 and decided that for the Mediterranean Region, where Albania is part of, a Common Strategy of the European Union was necessary. Then, at the Zagreb Summit, held on 24 November 2000, was confirmed that the Stabilization and Association Process was the road that led to the EU membership, which different from regional cooperation agreements policies, it offered better contractual relations with the EU. The Stabilization and Association Process, which was designed in the first year of CARDS program, was firstly recommended for Albania in 2001 and was adopted in October 2002, and in January 2003 the negotiations for a SAA between the EU and Albania were officially launched.

In the Albania Stabilization and Association Report 2003 it was highlighted that despite the efforts of Albanian government, there were still too many fields to be improved in order to become part of that Agreement. More specifically this report outlined the priority areas needing attention in Albania, among which were mentioned:

- Full commitment and determined action by the Government to combat organized crime, with concrete initiatives, properly coordinated with international partners, and tangible results.

- Full implementation of the 2002-2003 anti-corruption plans. Increased institutional capacity to investigate and prosecute corruption. Adoption of effective measures against bribery.
- Increased capacity and improved functioning of the Judiciary and other law enforcement bodies.
- Further progress in enforcement of court rulings. Ensuring the independence of the judicial system. (Albania Stabilization and Association Report 2003)

In the following year the Stabilization and Association Report outlined that Albania was undertaking some initiatives regarding the main key areas however;

- the rule of law in Albania remained deficient;
- Albanian law enforcement entities did not yet guarantee international standards in domestic law enforcement;
- corruption and organized crime continued to be serious threats to the country progress;
- judicial system remained weak;
- professional capacities of judges, prosecutors, judicial police and administrative staff remain limited;

During 2004, in Albania were held five Consultative Task Force meetings, having as main targets the key European priorities such as fighting organized crime, parliamentary elections, human and minority rights, compensation of land, freedom of media, migration, human trafficking victims, education reform etc. As a result, Albania made several improvements on legislation and procedures related with above mentioned issues. (Albania 2005 Progress Report, 9 November 2005).

After EU persistence and government's efforts, the Albania Progress Report 2005 outlined that despite of having a lot of work ahead Albania has made some progress towards meeting European standards. There were some improvements, *inter alia*, in the fight against organized crime and terrorism, adopting a targeted package of laws, in the implementation of the specific action-oriented measures against organized crime, the police intelligence analysis has improved, initial implementing legislation on an agency for the confiscation of assets has been approved, etc. (Albania 2005 Progress Report, 9 November 2005).

After this progress in some key sectors, Albania signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU on 12 June 2006 which provided a framework of mutual commitments on a wide range of political, trade and economic issues. Still the Albanian European aspiration had a lot of "home works" to be delivered on time, a process which continued until April 2009 when the SAA entered into force.

It seemed like the first phase was accomplished and the European aspiration was closer. Having this approach, on 28 April 2009, Albania presented its application for membership of the European Union. Following a request by the Council, the Commission submitted its Opinion on Albania's application in November 2010. In December 2010, the Council endorsed the Commission Opinion's recommendations. In its conclusions, the Council noted that the opening of accession negotiations would be considered by the European Council, in line with the established practice, once the Commission had assessed that the country had achieved the necessary degree of compliance with the membership criteria and, in particular, had met the key priorities set out in the Commission's Opinion. (Albania 2011 Progress Report, 12.10.2011)

It seemed that Albania was not fully meeting the key priorities set by the EU. Some modest progress was made as regarded Parliament proceedings, the development of election process, public administration reform, the government's policies to fight corruption, the issue of incrimination and political party financing, and was reported limited progress in relation to the judicial reform, the professionalism of the judiciary, the evaluation system for judges etc.

During the following two years Albanian government tried to fulfill, somewhere partially and somewhere fully, the priorities set by the EU Commission. In October 2012, the Commission recommended that Albania be granted EU candidate status, subject to completion of key measures in the areas of judicial and public administration reform and revision of the parliamentary rules of procedures. Based on the legal amendments and improvements of several political and legal aspects, on 23 June 2014, under the Greek EU Presidency, the Council of the European Union agreed to grant Albania the candidate



status, which a few days later was endorsed by the European Council. (European Neighborhood Policy And Enlargement Negotiations, 2016 ).

Referring to Albania Progress Report 2014, the European Commission stated:

Albania has made progress over the past year. Further steps were taken towards the reform of the judiciary. The government has shown political will to act decisively in the prevention and fight against corruption. The legislative framework was strengthened and policy coordination and monitoring at central level improved. The fight against organized crime shows a positive trend in a number of areas, with an intensification of law enforcement activities, notably on drug seizures and drug-related crimes, and on economic crime and trafficking of human beings.

However, many shortcomings remained, in particular in the rule of law field. Much work lies ahead. Fighting corruption and organized crime are significant challenges (Albania 2014 Progress Report, October 2014).

After a long and ongoing perseverance from European Community and after the continuous pressure from EU and from US representatives, Albania was at a decisive moment for its future. Of course as it was mentioned above, one of the European Integration key priorities was the Justice Reform and corruption within the judiciary system.

## **2. Was Justice Reform Really Necessary in Albania?**

Definitely Yes! Reports and surveys, carried out from international and local organizations, revealed that Albanians had no trust in the Justice system. Moreover, judges and prosecutors themselves expressed that corruption and incompetence existed within the system. Lack of professionalism, integrity and accountability, was very spread and thus dysfunction, power abuse, inequality in front of law and lack of transparency were observed in the justice system.

Several factors have had an impact on the aggravated state of our justice system. Among them can be mentioned the widespread phenomenon of corruption. For the sake of the truth, corruption was spread also in other sectors of public administration but of course in the justice system it was much more harmful. In criminal cases corruption led to non-prosecution and non-punishment of criminals who continued their activity being convinced that having some "cash" on hands they could either escape imprisonment or get the minimum possible sentence for that crime. In civil cases, corruption led to assets and properties loss of legitimate owners and gave rise to the concept that "there was no right in front of rich people".

Another important factor was the weak legislation, which was imported from abroad or was adopted according to a non-professional opinion and which brought contradictions between provisions. That contradiction gave the possibility to both prosecutors and judges to use the provision which suited them better for each specific case. As a result, due to incompetence and/or corruption, prosecutors and judges, on similar cases had different decisions.

Justice Reform was very necessary to make radical changes to the legislation and especially to the professional behavior of justice system's actors, their mentality, the procedure of their selection and also the punishments against them. This reform should provide an efficient justice system with European Standards. In this way citizens would be satisfied with the rule of law, fight against corruption and organized crime would be more effective and of course it would fulfill one of the EU key priorities.

Among many declarations and opinions regarding the importance of Justice Reform in Albania, the British Ambassador to Albania, H.E Nicholas Cannon OBE, in his speech during public consultation forum on the judicial reform, outlined: "The European Commission has identified corruption in the judiciary as the No 1 obstacle to progress towards Albanian accession to the European Union. Without judicial reform, the accession process will be blocked indefinitely. There is no way that any Member State, however sympathetic to Albania's European aspirations, could support serious progress on accession with an unreformed judiciary" (Nicholas Cannon OBE speech, 13 July 2015).

On 23 October 2015, MEP Mr. Knut Fleckenstein, rapporteur for Albania in the European Parliament, stated that the adoption of Justice Reform and start of its implementation would open the road to start membership negotiations. "The judiciary reform is probably the most ambitious and most important reform that Albania has seen during the last 25 years" (MEP Mr. Knut Fleckenstein, 23 October 2015 )

OSCE presence in Albania, regarding the Judicial System in Albania, on 8 June 2015 highlighted "This is a milestone in democratic reform; Corruption is one of the main impediments to progress in Albania; A judicial system for a just society, in which all citizens – from the most vulnerable to the most powerful – are accountable for their actions and can receive justice."( OSCE Presence in Albania, 8 June 2015 ).

At local level: the Special Parliamentary Commission on Justice Sector Reform, the High Levels Expert Group, in June 2015 analyzed the Albanian Justice System and, *inter alia*, highlighted that based on the general public opinion there were doubts that prosecutors and judges, through bribery were assigned to preferred job positions; judiciary police through bribery destroyed evidences; prosecutors through bribery closed criminal cases and judges who exceeded legal deadlines while waiting for bribery. Another worrying situation was also the low professional level of justice system key actors, resulting from the legal education which did not provide the right level of formation regarding their legal rights and obligations. After this analyze, the unanimous idea of the Albanian political class that the Justice system had serious problems and needed to be reformed gave hope to Albanians. ( Komisioni i posaçëm parlamentar për reformën në sistemin e drejtësisë, june 2015 ).

International actors, on the other side, continued their pressure by highlighting the importance of Justice Reform. They had been present in Albania to enable this reform, providing financial support and high level expertise. Some of the key international actors, being present in Albania through several years, relating also to the Justice Reform and Law enforcement, are mentioned as follows:

- Since 2003, the OSCE Presence in Albania has assisted the Albanian authorities in its justice reform efforts, *inter alia*, by assessing whether court proceedings are in compliance with international fair trial standards.
- There are two programs sponsored by US Department of Justice. OPDAT, the Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance and Training Program, with the main scope to assist the Albanian Government to develop criminal justice and law enforcement structures, with particular emphasis on public corruption, organized crime and human trafficking and ICITAP, International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program, which since 1998 has assisted the Albanian Government to develop the capacity to provide professional law enforcement services based on best policing practices, respect for human rights and the rule of law.
- In 2001 Albania joined GRECO, the Group of States against Corruption, established in 1999 by the Council of Europe to monitor States compliance with the organization's anti-corruption standards, being subject to evaluation in the framework of its Evaluation Rounds in April 2002, October 2004 and November 2008.
- The PAMECA projects have started in 2002 and have operated in the framework of the assistance that the EU has given to Albania in the area of law enforcement and security and public order.
- The Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) is the means by which the EU supports reforms in the 'enlargement countries' with financial and technical help. The IPA funds build up the capacities of the countries throughout the accession process, resulting in progressive, positive developments in the region, having as a priority sectors, *inter alia*, Rule of law & fundamental rights (Independent, efficient judiciary; helping police fight organized crime; tackling corruption; respecting human rights conventions).
- The Programme: "Increase the efficiency of the Albanian justice system, in line with European standards" under European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), which officially started in Albanian with the first visit of CEPEJ experts and members of the Secretariat, on 27 January 2014, had the overall objective to improve the efficiency and the quality of the public service of justice delivered to the Albanian citizens by the court system in accordance with European standards.
- The PHARE programme is one of the three pre-accession instruments financed by the European Union to assist the applicant countries of Central and Eastern Europe in their preparations for joining the European Union. Until 2000, Albania together with Western Balkans countries was beneficiaries of PHARE. However, as of 2001 the CARDS programme (Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stability in the Balkans) has provided financial assistance to these countries.

- The CARDS programme, (Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilization), is the EU's main instrument of financial assistance to the Western Balkans, including Albania. Created in 2000 and became operative in 2001, it is the main financial instrument of EU's Stabilization and Association process (SAP).

- To consolidate the justice in Albania and to strengthen the transparency, efficiency and the public trust in the Albanian justice system, the EU funded the EURALIUS project, with its missions EURALIUS I (June 2005- November 2007), EURALIUS II 2007-2010, EURALIUS III September 2010 – June 2013. The current EURALIUS IV mission (2014-2017) having as the main objective to assist the Albanian justice institutions to bring their enactment closer to the EU standards.

With the view to harmonize the current national practices with Council of Europe and European standards, the above mentioned organizations/programs, with the presence of international experts, have continuously developed events, meetings, workshops, round tables, seminars, trainings, analysis, reports and recommendations with and for the key actors of Albanian justice system.

Having the support of all the above mentioned international organizations, after 18 months of efforts, with the assistance of EU and U.S. experts, finally all 140 parliamentarians voted unanimously for the judicial reform package, which was considered fundamental to convincing the European Union to launch membership negotiations. In the night between 21 and 22 July 2016 the Parliament approved the constitutional amendments related to the justice reform, which entered into force on 11 August 2016, which would give rise to the adoption of 7 laws to implement the constitutional amendments, which, *inter alia*, represent the implementation of the Vetting Law, known as the temporary re-evaluation of the Albanian judges and prosecutors. This re-evaluation shall include asset assessment, a background assessment and a proficiency assessment and shall be carried out by limiting them some constitutional rights. Subject to this re-evaluation shall be Albanian prosecutors, including the General Prosecutor, judges, including judges of the Constitutional Court and of the High Court and legal advisers of the High Council of Judges, of the Constitutional Court and of the High Court. In any case they will have the burden of proof to verify the source of their assets.

Beside the reorganization of actual institutions, based on the new adopted constitution and laws, some other new institutions, which shall enable the Justice Reform, were established.

- The Independent Qualification Commission shall carry out the re-evaluation of all judges, including judges of the Constitutional Court and High Court, all prosecutors, including the Prosecutor General, the Chief Inspector and the other inspectors of the High Council of Justice shall *ex officio* be re-evaluated. (Constitution of the Republic of Albania ).

- The Appeal Chamber, which is organized near Constitutional Court, is the only judicial body that considers appeals against the decisions of the Independent Qualification Commission. (Constitution of the Republic of Albania ).

- Special Prosecution Office under which is subordinate the Special Investigation Unit, which are independent from General Prosecutor and shall be competent to adjudicate corruption and organized crime, as well as criminal charges against the President of the Republic, Speaker of the Assembly, Prime minister, the member of the Council of Ministers, the judge of the Constitutional Court and High Court, the Prosecutor General, High Justice Inspector, the Mayor, Deputy of the Assembly, deputy minister, the member of the High Judicial Council and High Prosecutorial Council, and heads of central or independent institutions as defined by the Constitution or by law, as well as charges against former officials as mentioned above. (Constitution of the Republic of Albania ).

- Specialized courts shall be competent to adjudicate corruption and organized crime, as well as criminal charges of corruption and organized crime committed by the above mentioned persons. (Constitution of the Republic of Albania ).

- High Judicial Council which ensures the independence, accountability and appropriate functionality of the judicial power in the Republic of Albania, appoints, evaluates, promotes and transfers judges of all levels and also decides on disciplinary measures on judges of all levels. (Constitution of the Republic of Albania ).

- The High Prosecutorial Council which guarantees the independence, accountability, discipline, status and career of Prosecutors in the Republic of Albania and which appoints, evaluates, promotes and transfers all prosecutors of all levels and also decides on disciplinary measures against them. (Constitution of the Republic of Albania ).

- The High Justice Inspector shall be responsible for the verification of complaints, investigation of violations on its own initiative and the initiation of disciplinary proceedings against judges and prosecutors of all levels, members of the High

Judicial Council, High Prosecutorial Council and the Prosecutor General, in accordance with the procedure defined by law. (Constitution of the Republic of Albania ).

- The Justice Appointments Council is responsible for verifying the fulfillment of legal requirements and assessment of professional and moral criteria of the candidates for the High Justice Inspector, as well as for the members of the Constitutional Court. (Constitution of the Republic of Albania ).

These institutions will be monitored by an International Monitoring Operation, composed by judges and prosecutors selected by different EU member states. According to this procedure, international observers do not hold a decision-making role in the vetting process, holding more of a monitoring and supporting role in the overall process.

Finally Albania opened the way to Justice Reform, which is very important to clean the Justice system once and forever, in order that the system itself can be able to be impartial and professional regarding Albania's wounds, such as corruption and organized crime.

Justice reform was welcomed by many international actors, diplomats and media.

US Ambassador Donald Lu, added in a statement after the package passed: The United States was proud to have supported the drafting and negotiation "*of this strong reform package*". "*Your commitment has made Albania a more just and democratic country*". (U.S. Ambassador Donald Lu, 22 July, 2016 )

The OSCE Presence in Albania: "*welcomes the Assembly's adoption today of the set of constitutional amendments aimed at reforming the justice sector. We commend the Assembly for this fundamental achievement, which was supported tangibly by many international experts and diplomats.*" (The OSCE Presence in Albania, 22 July, 2016).

### 3. Conclusions

In front of its European aspiration Albania, over the years, has faced constant remarks from EU with regard to the justice situation. Often the justice system did not provide justice. Corruption and incompetence within this system has led to an increase of corruption also in other public administration bodies and has significantly increased the level of organized crime in Albania, due to non-prosecution and non-punishment of criminals. As a result, anyone faced to justice had necessarily to think about bribery otherwise would lose his property, while on the other side the one who paid money was not sentenced even if he was guilty or benefited assets not belonging to him (unjustly). Problems were so frequent that the whole system was considered as such, to the point that even those honest and professional judges and prosecutors often became part of unfair accusations.

Consequently, it was necessary to make a re-evaluation of asset assessment, a background assessment and a proficiency assessment among justice ranks, considered as the Vetting process. This re-evaluation would verify corruption and professional ability of each prosecutor and judge. Albanian parliamentarians, convinced on the necessity of this justice reform, by unanimous vote, approved constitutional changes and a supplementary legal package for this reform, which is recommended and approved by international organizations. This reform is considered as one of the most important reforms that Albania has ever undertaken in these 27 years of democracy. Now the system itself can bring the Albanian justice in front of justice.

Taking in consideration that this reform has been a key priority for Albanian integration into EU, now we remain hopeful that this year we will have an unconditional recommendation from European Commission.

In addition, since this reform is based on European principles and standards and it is also approved by European organizations, it may be easily applied in other region countries, which have problems with the justice and that aspire to become part of the big European family.

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