

FINAL REPORT

of the research project

**ALBANIA IN TRANSITION:
ELITE'S ROLE AND PERSPECTIVE**

carried out during September 1996 - June 1998

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1. Forward

I started to work on the project “Albania in transition: elite’s role and perspective” in September 1996. It was that time that I finished the necessary arrangements with the NATO Academic Affairs Office.

In compliance with the proposed schedule, the activity of the research project started with its preparatory phase, which due to the problems of communication with the NATO Academic Affairs Office, has been reduced from three (as foretold in the initial schedule) to one month. So, finally the preparatory phase of the research covered the period 1-30 September 1996.

The proposed schedule of the research has been as follows:

Preparatory phase (1 July 1996-30 September 1996);

Field work (1 October 1996-31 December 1997);

Data analysis (1 January 1998-31 March 1998);

Academic report (1 April 1998-30 June 1998).

The schedule of the research has in general been respected, with the difference that, due to the 1997 crisis of the country, I modified the field work’s schedule and moved for some months to Italy. Due to the schedule of the research, the period on which I am reporting used to be the final phase.

The research activity for carrying out the project “Albania in transition: elite’s role and perspective” has been focused in the following aspects:

2. Documentation’s studies

During the period 1 October 1996 - 31 December 1996 I worked in the Archive Office of the Parliament of Albania, for gathering information and materials on the social, political, and cultural indicators of the Albanian political elite (PM s) during 1945-1995.

I intended to give evidence to the social composition (by age, profession, gender, social origin, religion, education level etc.) of the parliaments, governments, and higher organs of the system of Justice in Albania during 1945-1995.

3. Methods and technics of research: interviews

Some of the interviews done during 1993-1996 intended to collect information on the political affiliations of Albanian elite, cultural background and cultural orientations, judgment on the past and on the situation in Albania, the mentality of Albanians, religious feelings and belonging, women political and social participation, affiliations, connections and experiences with the Western culture, countries, peoples and civilizations, expectations on the perspective and the future of Albania, the continuities and discontinuities of the development of the country etc.

Some of the hypothesis stressed below derive from the findings of the above mentioned interviews. 90 members of the new Albanian elite have been interviewed. Among them were 25 leaders of the political parties, members of government, and parliament members, 20 university professors, 15 artists and writers, 15 journalists, 15 military, local and religious functionaries.

In early 1997 I decided to interview some top leaders of Government and Albanian political parties once the economic, social and political situation in Albania rapidly changed, the Government of National Reconciliation was established and new anticipated political elections scheduled. Through the interviews I intended to give evidence to:

a. Elite's opinions on the existence and fall of pyramids in Albania, the rapid transformation of peaceful manifestations (December 1996) in an armed rebellion (February 1997), the role and the capacity or/and incapacity of political elite and political class to express, orient, modify and control the feelings and reactions of population, their relations and motivations against political and social institutions, as well as their revolt against state's structures. My hypothesis is that what happened in Albania during the Spring 1997 (the crisis and armed rebellion) is explained partly by the political and human indifference of the Government and state's institutions to the consequences of the fall of pyramids, and the economic, political and social chaos the country experienced after that, and partly by the incapacity of the political parties of the opposition to control the situation, to orient and shape the popular revolt through democratic modes and instruments of expressing their pressure, for finding a political solution by re delegating the political power, through fair and free elections.

b. Elite's opinions and expectations on the reciprocal relations between institutions, central government, local government, political parties and rebellion's structures (Committees of Public Salvation), set up in different districts of the country, the reciprocal recognition and/or non recognition between political institutions and rebellion's structures as options for national and political reconciliation and pacification of the country.

c. The regional, territorial, ethnic and religious connotation granted to the rebellion, as well as to developments in the country and the real role of regional, ethnic and religious factors in the recent developments in Albania.

d. The possible scenarios of the Albanian political elite on the near future and perspective of Albania after the scheduled elections of 29 June 1997.

4. Collaboration with foreign and international academic institutions

In January 1997 I moved to Greece, (National Capodistrian University of Athens, Department of Communication and Mass-media, and Greek Association for Atlantic and European Cooperation), for establishing contacts and collaboration with the above mentioned institutions, especially on the role of elite and mass-media in the construction of reality and the image of the future.

In February 1997 I moved to Italy, intending to continue my research collaborating with my Italian colleagues at academic institutions: University of Trieste, (Faculty of Political Sciences, Department of Human Sciences, Department of International and Diplomatic Sciences), ISIG, Institute of International sociology of Gorizia, University of Trento, (Faculty of Sociology), University of Lecce, (Chair of Sociology of Cultural Processes). Another reason was that in Italy I expected to find the necessary bibliography for carrying out the research.. I stayed in Italy from February until July 1997, spending most of the time at ISIG, Institute of International Sociology of Gorizia, which is well known for its experience and tradition in studying the developments in Eastern and Central European countries.

In Trieste, Gorizia, Trento, Lecce I used the bibliographical sources on the role of elite in the developing countries, and during the transition of Eastern European countries from Totalitarianism to Democracy, the background and cultural formation of elite, elite's attitudes towards ethnic, regional and religious problems of transition, elite's strategies on the economic and political developments and perspectives of the countries etc.

5. Participation and presentation of papers in international activities

1998- **Cambiamenti tramite catastrofi: mutamento sociale in Albania** , paper presented in the “Seminari di Marzo”, Round table “Albania: tra mutamento, continuita’ ed emigrazione”, Alberobello, Italia, 29 March.

1998- **L’emigrazione: conseguenza e promotore degli sviluppi economici, politici e sociali in Albania**, paper presented in the “Seminari di Marzo”, Seminar “Il mosaico della pace nei Balcani”, Alberobello, Italia, 30 March.

1997-**Elections and democratic process in Albania**, paper presented in the “Elections and Democratic Process in Eastern and Central Europe”, International Conference organized by WZB, Wissenschafts Zentrum Berlin fur Sozialforschung, Berlin-Germany, 19-21 December.

1997-**Vlahs, Roma and Gypsies in Albania: which political and social participation?** , paper presented in the Conference " The Southern-Eastern Europe social sciences and social reality", organised by EUROPEEN and French Center for European Culture, Strasbourg-France, 12 -14 December.

1997- **Albania in un nuovo contesto politico: quale ruolo dell'Italia?**, Paper presented in the "Albania, Italia, Europa", Tavola Rotonda, organised by Forum per i Problemi dell Pace e della Guerra, Florence, Italy, 8 May.

1997- **L'emigrazione albanese in Italia il nuovo contesto economico, politico e sociale**, Paper presented in "La Crisi Albanese", Giornata di Studi, organised by Università di Studi di Milano, Dipartimento di Sociologia, Laboratorio per lo Studio delle Società Metropolitane Avanzate, Milano - Italy, 28 April.

1997- **La ribellione ed i nuovi flussi migratori degli albanesi in Italia**, Paper presented in "i Profughi albanesi quale accoglienza ", Giornata di Studi, organised by Ret Nazionale Antirazista, Bologna - Italy, 18 April.

1997 - **La Ribellione Albanese. Origini, Interpretazioni, Conseguenze**, Paper presented in the Conference "La Ribellione Albanese. Origini, Interpretazioni Conseguenze", organised by ISIG, Istituto di Sociologia Internazionale di Gorizia, Gorizia - Italy, 16 April.

1997 - **NATO e FUTURIBILI nel nuovo contesto Balcanico**, Paper presented in the VII th International Conference "The Future of the NATO in the New Geopolitical Environment", organised by ASSID, E.R.Di.S.U., LOGOS, in collaboration with Presidenza del Corso di Laurea delle Scienze Internazionali e Diplomatiche, Università di Trieste, Gorizia - Italy, 9-11 April.

1997 - **Da clandestini a "displaced people" l'Evoluzione dei fattori dell'espulsione dell'emigrazione albanese in Italia**, Paper presented in the Forum "Albania e Albanesi una prova per la nostra democrazia", organised by "Africa Insieme" & Università degli Studi di Pisa, Pisa- Italy, 4 April.

1997- **The reconstruction of ethnicity and minority's situation in Albania and Albanian Diaspora**, Paper presented in the Seminar "Albania ed Europa Meridionale", organized by ISIG, Istituto di Sociologia Internazionale di Gorizia- Italy, 6 March.

1996 - **La presenza degli immigrati albanesi in Italia e in Grecia. Un confronto**, Paper presented in the "Albania, oltre l'emigrazione", Dibattito, organised by IRES, Istituto della Ricerca Economica e Sociale del Piemonte, Torino, 12 December.

1996 - **l'Europa nell'immaginario collettivo dell'élite e degli albanesi**, Paper presented in the Conference "Albania verso l'Europa quale prospettiva dell' integrazione?", organised by Università degli Studi di Trento, Trento- Italy, 1 December.

1996 - **Youth in Albania Avenue to Integration**, Paper presented in the Conference "Giovani Italiani ed Albanesi a confronto per una conoscenza europea", organised by Università degli Studi di Trento, Trento-Italy, 30 November.

1996 - **Youth and Sociology in the social, political and educational context of Albania**, Paper presented in the Conference "The Southern-Eastern Europe social sciences and social reality", organised by EUROPEEN and French Center for European Culture, Strasbourg-France, 11-12 November.

6. Publications: books, contributions to books, journal articles

Books

* Barjaba, K. (a cura di) 1997 **Albania. Tutta d'un pezzo in mille pezzi... e dopo?**, FUTURIBILI, 2-3, 1996, *Franco Angeli, Milano*

* Barjaba, K., Lapassade, G., Perrone, L. 1996 **Naufrazi Albanesi**, *Sensibili alle Foglie, Roma*.

Contribution to Books

* Del Re, E.C. 1997, **Albania. Punto e a capo. Percorsi di Lettura**, *SEAM, Roma*.

- La ribellione albanese: conotazioni politiche o etniche-regionali

* Bregantini, L. (a cura di) 1997 **Le Minoranze Etniche dall'Atlantico al Pacifico**, *FUTURIBILI, 1-2, 1997, Franco Angeli, Milano*.

- La ricostruzione dell'identità etnica in Albania: con particolare riferimento ad etnicità e migrazione.

Journal Articles

* **Immigration and the strategy of recovery**, Balkan Review, *Salonika, Greece, 12, 1997.*

* **Nga klandestine ne “displaced people”. Emigrimi ne kontesktin e zhvillimeve ekonomike, politike dhe sociale ne Shqiperi. (From clandestine to “displaced people”. Migration in the economic, political and social context of Albania)**
Perpjekja, Tirane, 3/ 1997

* **Chi sono i ribelli**, Guerra & Pace, *Milano, 41, Luglio 1997.*

* **Albania, questa sconosciuta**, Guerra & Pace, *Milano, 39/40, Maggio/Giugno 1997*, (with Perrone, L.)

* **Problems of social integration of Albanian immigrants in Greece**, Balkan Review, *Salonika, Greece, 12, 1996.*

* **Albania Filosofia, Sociologia e Burocrazia**, Studi e Ricerche, *Universita' degli Studi di Lecce, 1/ 1996.*

7. Hypothesis and arguments

The principal hypothesis and arguments of the research are separately presented and attached to the final report.

8. Special considerations

I would like to express my gratitude to **NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION**, especially to the **Fellowship's Selecting Committee**, for granting t me the research project "Albania in transition: elite's role and perspective" and to the **Academic Affairs Office** (Dr. Spyros C. Philippos & Mrs. Ana Verscheure) for their kindness in helping me to make the necessary arrangements for carrying out the research.

NATO scholarship holder

Dr. Kosta BARJABA

Tirana, June 22, 1998.

**ALBANIA IN TRANSITION:
ELITE'S ROLE AND PERSPECTIVE**

1. The failure of first transition: history of a disaster foretold

The tormented history of the Albanian people gave no grounds for expecting developments very different from the present ones. From the Illyrians to the Byzantines, from the Bulgarians to the Ottomans, from the Turkish revolts to the Balkan wars, from King Zog to Enver Hoxha, from Ramiz Alia to Sali Berisha, the history of Albania has been the history of disaster foretold. The chronology of political events, particularly the most recent ones, could not project a bright future for Albania. The crucial moments of the last crisis: the rebellion, negotiations with the “rebels”, the threats to reconciliation, consensus and disagreement on the various questions in the international community, have demonstrated the incapacity of the political class to control and direct the political developments in the country as well as the incapacity and the weakness of international community to impose a normal and democratic development.

Albania was supposed to have (formally) the greatest rates of economic growth during the last years, (+8.6 % in 1995). This is explained by a kind of survival of the agriculture sector and, of course, the incomes by migration, estimated about 380 million US\$ in 1995. We have to add here some reservations on the accuracy of the statistics on economic development of the country, considering the continuous efforts of Albanian official institutions to present this country as the most dynamic one of Eastern Europe. Even the findings of public opinion's surveys on economic, political and social development of the

country, done in the framework of Central and Eastern Euro-barometer, which had discovered that Albanians were the most satisfied, optimistic and successful people of Central and Eastern Europe, used to be considered with reservations, knowing that most of the above mentioned surveys have been done by people or institution very linked and influenced by government and political power. The deep economic, political and social crisis, which involved Albania during 1997 is, of course, an argument for our reservations.

Though the very optimistic figures reported, Albania has remained in the situation of an extreme poverty. The country has experienced, during the time considered, a weak establishment of the financial and bank structures. The stability of national currency, lek, has been artificial and not supported by the stability of national, industrial and agricultural production.

The elections of 26 May 1996 have been very disputable and only partially recognized by the international community and institutions. Due to their results, the Democratic Party of Albania, PDSH, sized 122 seats, The Republican Party of Albania, PRSH, 3 seats, the Party of Democratic Union for the Human Rights, PDNJ, sized 3 seats, the Party of National Front, PBK, sized 2 seats and the Socialist Party of Albania, PSSH, won formally 9 seats. The socialists joined the Albanian Parliament only in early April 1997, one month after the Government of National Reconciliation has been established. Albanian government formed after 26 May elections was composed by members of Democratic Party (heavily), Republican Party and Social Democrat Union Party.

On 20 October 1996 the administrative elections were organized and the PDSH won the majority of local governments district's councils, mayors and Municipal councils. Because of the implications of political elections, a great number of populations, officially about 25%, but really more than 40%, didn't go to the ballots.

The fall of pyramids, some informal financial institutions, functioning in Albania from 1993, which seem to have been important amortizators, softening the internal economic,

social and political conflicts in the country, caused firstly some pacifist manifestations and then an armed rebellion involved the country, mainly the Central and Southern Albania. State political institutions have been accused to have established the pyramids and used their money for their own interests. Manifestations asked Government and President to resign and anticipated political elections in 45 days. On 1 March 1997 an agreement between the President of the Republic and the political parties have been signed, deciding the formation of a new coalition government, called the Government of National Reconciliation, and anticipated political election by June 1997. Armed rebellion caused hundreds of human victims. These conflicts led the country to a similar (even more problematic) collapse with 1990-1991 and forced the international community to think again for humanitarian and medical assistance to Albania.

Albania has just started its second transition towards Democracy. New political elections have been held on 29 June 1997, heavily won by the Socialist Party and its allies, socialdemocrats and liberaldemocrats. A new coalition government has been established in July 1997, led by socialists and composed by socialdemocrats, liberal-democrats, agrarians and members from Party of Human Rights.

The victory of the Right (Democratic Party of Albania) during the second pluralistic elections (22 March 1992) was, of course, a historical necessity for the transition of the country from a leftist totalitarian system into a democratic one. Being immediately achieved after a temporary victory of the Left (Party of Labor, later transformed into the Socialist Party of Albania), it was expected that such a victory would open the way of transforming the country into a democratic society. The period between first two electoral elections (31 March 1991-22 March 1992) may be characterized as unstable and delicate. During less than one year Albania experienced a Communist government (April-May 1991), followed by a coalition government between communists, democrats, socialdemocrats, republicans, agrarians etc. (May-December 1991) and concluded with a technical government, composed by technocrats and supported by all political forces of the country (December 1991-March 1992).

Unfortunately, the Democratic Party of Albania, (first a Right wing and later defined as a party of the Middle-Right) didn't successfully satisfy its historical mission and the chance given by history. Its ruling was not surprisingly concluded by a popular rebellion. The popular rebellion may be considered, in a sense, a compensation on the lack of fair and free elections in Albania.

The victory of the Right wing political forces was first achieved in the most developed, industrialized and urban areas of the country. During the first electoral elections the Democratic Party of Albania won 32% of seats in the Albanian Parliament (by majority system) and 38% of total seats (by proportional one). This may be explained by several factors, such as: the difficulties in communication and access in information the opposition experienced during the electoral campaign; the urban and industrialized areas were, at the same time, the most emancipated ones in the country; the rural areas were more than urban ones, under the pressure of influences of the old society; the leading representatives of the opposition were not among the most leading intellectuals in the country etc.

Meanwhile, the influence and victory of Left wing political parties followed another curve: from rural to urban areas, from periphery to the center, from less developed to the most developed regions of the country. The final result of such amplitude was the victory of the Socialist Party of Albania in Tirana during the 29 June 1997 elections, where socialists sized 19 seats (in a total of 19 electoral zones).

The Albanian Right wing parties have firstly been mainly voted by young population. Meanwhile the main human and social base of Left wing parties have been the adult community. We have to note that the expansion of the Albanian Left has followed the curve from the adult community and third generation to the young generation.

The process of social stratification has not yet occurred in Albania. The political parties have not found yet their human resources and social basis. They seem to be group of interest, but mostly in the sense that they collect individuals or groups, mostly by feelings or ideological motivation. It is even due to this that Albanian citizens mostly vote against (the past or the past government) than for (the future or the coming alternatives). The Albanian electorate until now has mostly said “No” than “Yes”.

Due to the political elite’s mentality, the political pluralism in Albania has been considered by the political parties mostly as a domination of government upon the opposition than a cohabitation between political forces and share of power between legislative, executive and law institutions. In such a typology of tense cohabitation, the hangovers and influences of the traditional old political groups in the country during and immediately after the Second World War have found room to penetrate.

The number of political parties represented in the Parliament, it is continuously increased. From a Parliament composed mainly by two poles, that means two main political parties, Democrats and Socialists, the present parliament is composed by PM-s coming from political parties: Socialist Party, Democratic Party, Social-democratic Party, Party of Democratic Alliance, Party Democratic Union for the Human Rights, Republican Party Monarchist Party, Party of National Front, Party of National Unity, Demochristian Party, Party of Democratic Union, Party of Social-democratic Union. Two seats of the actual Parliament are sized by independent deputies, who appeared to Albanian Parliament only in 29 June 1997 elections.

2. Elite’s culture affiliations

In order to have a picture on cultural affiliations of the Albanian elite, as explained above, I interviewed a champion, composed by some representatives of political, cultural and

academic elite of the country. As a result, the following hierarchy is formed by the answers to the question: "Which civilization and culture you feel most affiliated to?":

<u>Culture</u>	<u>Priorities</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>First</u>	<u>Second</u>	<u>Third</u>	
Italian	38	30	12	80
German	16	26	16	58
America	14	12	18	44
French	8	8	14	30
Russian and East.	8	6	12	26
Scandinavian	2	2	8	12
Greek	2	8	12	22
British	6	2	4	12
Turkish	4	4	4	12
Benelux	4	2	4	10

If we would try to classify them by the priority accorded, the hierarchy will be as follow:

1. High values and standards of each culture and civilization	26
2. The cultural neighborhood	24
3. The national values	16
4. The standard of living in the respective countries	14
5. The cultural neighborhood	12
6. The professional and work interests and relations	10
7. The attitude different countries have adapted to Albania	6
8. The traditional relations with each culture and civilization	2

The affiliations with the above mentioned civilization or cultures are explained by the following motivations:

Italian culture:

- The spiritual, cultural and ideological neighborhood and affiliation of the Albanians to Italian people. The great diffusion of Italian language and Italian culture among Albanians and the great possibilities the Italian culture and society is offering to the emancipation of Albanian society and intellectuals. The recent effects of this influence, contribution, and neighborhood.

- The generous foreign policy applied by the Italian government during the transition is estimated as a special obligation the elite as well as the Albanian people must have towards Italy. The respondents particularly considered the role of Italy as a coordinator of the European Community humanitarian aids (during the first and the second transition) and the role of Italian society as a country of destination of the Albanian immigrants.

- The Italian culture and civilization are estimated by the new Albanian elite as one of the best models of the process of the Europeanization of Albania. The argument is that Albanian society can easier reach such a model because of the above mentioned similarities and affiliations. In the Italian model of culture, society and civilization they find the future of the Albanian society.

German culture:

- The contribution of the German people, culture and civilization in the development of world culture and civilization.

- The correctness and the very high discipline at work of Germans.- The realism and the very successful politics of Germany.

- The rationality in the development's rates and the very effective economic policy of Germany

- The solution Germans gave to their national question: unification of Germany and the effective integration of Eastern part of the country with the Western one. This because the Albania has the same problem with Kosovo, actually part of Serbia, but there is not anything hopeful concerned the reunification of Albania.

American culture:

- The very high standards of America society and culture, the values of America civilization.

- The pragmatism of foreign policy of the USA.

French culture:

- The very high standard in the application of the human rights in the French society.

- The cultural and civil values of French people and nation and its contribution to the world culture and civilization. The very distinguished role of French politic and diplomac in the current world developments.

- The French people are very optimistic

- The professional relations of Albanian academic, cultural and scientific elite with the respective academic, cultural and scientific French community. During the last three decades France has been one of the priorities of Albanian official policy in respect to cultural relations, qualification and training of Albanian scholars, scientists etc.

Russian and Eastern European culture:

- The revolutionary history of the peoples of these countries and their sacrifices during the past and particularly during the Second World War.
- The high price they are paying to their transition to democracy
- The common chance the Albanian people and peoples of Eastern European countries have had under the Communism and the very closed relations existed between them in the framework of the former socialist camp.
- The nostalgia a certain part of Albanian elite is actually demonstrating for the time they lived, studied or worked in the above mentioned countries and the reestablishment of the relations and interests towards the Eastern Europe.

Nordic culture:

- The very high standard of living and the model these countries are offering in respect to stability, welfare state and tranquillity.
- The high standards of politician's morality and their very scarce involvement in the economic, financial or moral scandals.
- The very rich spiritual life, the lack of stresses in the everyday life and the very high level of the organization of society.
- The unity of propagation and application of the principles, values and the standards of democracy in everyday life and human relations.

Greek culture:

- Greece is offering to Albania a model for the transition from dictatorship to democracy from economic backwardness to the prosperity, from isolation to the open policy and integration to international community. The Albanian elite consider the fact that Greece is the only Balkan country member of the European Union and the implications such a fact has had for the Albania and Balkans.

- The effective foreign policy of Greece and their devotion to the nationalism and national feelings and aspirations.

- The nobles and generosity Greek people and state has demonstrated towards the Albanian immigrants. As we see, there is a very clear distinction between the Albanian official policy and personal independent estimation of Albanian elite towards Greece. In respect to their personal feelings and affiliations, the Albanian politicians, academics, scholars, journalists etc. seem more closed and respectable to Greece and Greek culture.

3. Inertia of authoritarian mentality: fragmentation and radicalisation of elite

3.1. The absence of historical memory and of national ideology

The Albanian political elite has been characterised by a despotic and authoritarian mentality, which has always needed a “father figure”, sought, found and then betrayed him to go and look for another one as soon as the first no longer suited their interests. This archetype of government has prevailed every time the Albanians have had the chance to create a democratic state. The political class during the first transition, by Albanian analysts labelled as Berate period, demonstrated again the same mentality. The incapacity of Albanian elite to control and modify the feelings and reactions of population gave evidence and illustrated the salient features of the Albanian rebellion: student solidarity,

the weakness of the opposition parties, the “sermons” of the West and the responsibilities of the Albanian people.

3.2. The new political class: result of competition or product of selection?

The role of the old elite in the process of the creation of the new one has, in a sense, been visible in Albania. The press has often given evidence to the relations of new elite with the old one and some of the leaders of the new political parties have not been credible denying that. So, it happened that sometimes the political patronage and not the merit have determined the role and the status of the current Albanian politicians.

Such a strategy of establishing the new Albanian political elite has been used and justified as a barrier to obstacle the successors of traditional parties of the period of the Second World War to enter the Albanian political scene. So, it happened that the future of Albanian democracy has been conceptualized as a political prolixity of the past.

The idea that Albania, the democracy and their future depend on them was strongly rooted among the leaders of the new political parties. This led to a kind of partitocracy and to a tendency of political parties to totally monopolize the development of the process of transition. Such a tendency was mostly demonstrated by the two main parties, DP and SP. It was reflected in the process of elite's formation which, at the same time, has been and continues to be threatened by the danger of domination of two poles, democrats and socialists.

My hypothesis is that the formation of the new political elite in Albania was partly a spontaneous result of real competition of ideas, abilities and alternatives. But mostly it was a result of the selection and the preferences of the old political elite, in order to maintain its influence and prerogatives in the future developments of the country.

The very intensive participation of students, young intellectuals and in general of the young generation, was one of the main features of the democratic movement in Albania. It was too late, when the representatives of the old political class, who actually are enjoying very strong position in the Albanian political power, joined the democratic movement. Such an extension of their positions happened in parallel with the gradual exclusion of the representatives of the young generation. The exclusion of the young generation of the Albanian political elite has had as its complement the intrusion to the Albanian policy of the representatives of the old political class, the successors of the traditional Albanian parties, which during the Second World War openly collaborated with nazi-fascists.

3.3. The totalitarian language of political elite

Albania, like the other Balkan countries found themselves in a situation with a historical precedent - the Balkanisation of the populations and the fragmentation of their political and cultural space. Albania has been through and is again going through this experience, accompanied by domestic intolerance. A socio-linguistic analysis of the political communication of the Albanian leadership demonstrates the irresponsibility of the political class regarding the mission to lead the country to democracy. Violence emerged, firstly in a verbal form and later followed by real political violence, confirmed that in Albania there was no dialogue - only a monologue. The clear consequence is a lack of any real political communication through the parts which led to a strong fragmentation of elite.

3.4. The elite's fractures: caused by the segmentary model of the nation?

While Albania started to develop increasingly complex negotiations in a "completely free" market, democracy was guaranteed by the presence of weak institutions and from 1996 illegitim, where the social and political participation of opposition has been very scanty. Not surprisingly the ferocious conflict has overtaken everything, setting fire to souls and homes alike. The West, taken by surprise, finds itself devoid of the criteria needed for an

understanding of what is really happening in Albania, and it looks eastward in dismay and impotence. Across the Adriatic a game of international politics was being played, but the rules of the game belong to a specific Albanian quality unknown in the rest of the world. Life is lived in Albania in accordance with traditional models deeply rooted in an archaic past. The segmentary model seems to be, in a sense, an important regulating factor of most social relations. Segmentation derives from the kinship system, and influences social organisation as a whole, becoming a decoder of the mechanisms of conflict management and resolution.

3.5. The press as a reflection of the mentality of elite

Analysing the content of the Albanian press, it is easy to understand that the Albanian press and journalists had not understood the deception behind the pyramid investments and other deformations of democracy in the country. Sometimes, the collective enthusiasm that swept up the journalists themselves - the democratic fragility of the press and the economic advantages that it gained from carrying the finance companies' advertising obstructed the press to correctly inform the population. However, there were not the newspapers and journalists which caused the problematic developments of the country, particularly the 1997 crisis, but the involvement of state institutions and their behaviour following the explosion of the fall of pyramids.

3.6. New political elite: women participation or exception?

A very strong participation of intellectual women in political life was noted at the very beginning of the period of transition. But actually, they seem to be not as active as before. This, because most of them are actually coping with the consequences of the chaotic economic and social changes in Albania: unemployment, underestimation of intellectual work, very intensive rates of privatization, reduce of work capacities in social services, especially in schooling and education etc.

Albania is one of the few European countries, which for a long time has unfortunately established through its oral legislation, severe limitations to women's social participation. Such a limitation has been justified by social and biological arguments. The biological advantages of males, their different physical contribution to family life, their natural prerogatives for doing politics and war, the irreconcilability of women social role with the traditions and specifics of Albanian social life, as a very difficult one, realized between the boundaries of the possible and impossible, for a long time have been used as arguments motivating the discrimination of Albanian women, its weak social participation and exclusion from the elite.

The very low economic level of Albanian society has strongly influenced the features and specifics of its political and social organization. The Albanian society, even in recent centuries, has been a patriarchal society where the power of the man was absolute and the domination of authority has been accepted as a normal fact. Such a way of managing the familiar and kinship life has been transferred to the political circles and leadership. During the first decades of 20th century, women didn't appear to Albanian parliaments, demonstrating the fact that Albanian governmental mentality continued to remain a masculine one. Meanwhile, the presence of women in communist parliaments was accompanied by the diminution of their political and institutional role in the Albanian life. Gradually the parliaments have been transformed into a blind instrument of Communist Party, giving directives the formal legislative power to the party.

The increase of formal women participation is not an argument to prove their real effective participation in political life of the country. This not only because of formal role parliaments have had, but in the sense that numerical participation of women in legislative organs was more demonstrative than fruitful. During the totalitarianism not only the political concurrence was not allowed, but even the formal right of Communist Party to propose two or more candidates did not exist.

The logic of women's formal participation in the organs of legislative power was very simple: in the very beginning of communist regime, when its domination was not sure and guaranteed (the first Albanian parliament has its opposition, which was very soon attacked and distracted) women participation was very modest. During the first pluralist election neither the communist party, nor the opposition have had the courage to candidate women as parliament members. Both sides testified they knew very well the Albanian patriarchal mentality, which hardly would accept women leadership. The communists kept in mind the fact that during national-liberation war partisans and communists women have been accused from nationalistic circles as people dishonest, immoral, and not patriots. At the same time they were not totally free even from patriarchal concepts and mentality. In the meanwhile, the idea of leadership as a masculine one remained a constant of nationalistic political forces mentality.

In parallel with the strengthening of the positions of communists and the transformation of Communist Party into the unique political leadership of Albania, they tried to give a democratic and popular fronting to their domination. Aiming that, they intend to extend, as much as possible, the social base of legislative power by calculating and easily realizing to include into different levels of legislative institutions all social, ethnic, professional, cultural and age groups. Hard to find another parliament where the proportions and formal percentages of its members have been better calculated than in Albanian parliament. From this point of view, it was not so difficult to ensure the formal presence of women deputies, whose formality was part of general formality in the composition and activity of Albanian parliaments. During the 1962-1986 the percentage of women deputies goes from 19%-33%. The limit was achieved in 1974, when the women constituted 33% of members of Albanian parliament, that means 83 from 250 deputies!

Is this percentage casual or not? An analyst of the political life of Albania can easily investigate that during these years the political struggle in Albania, better to say in Marxist language, the class struggle, was very severe. A lot of important protagonists of political life and of high nomenclature, deputies, ministers, party functionaries etc., found

themselves out of game, some of them were punished, imprisoned, and even killed. A very high intensity of mandate's abolition was noted in the parliamentary life that time (over 15 in 2 years, 1974-1975.) To get rid of such dangerous situation, Albanian leadership found very convenient to substitute the deputies dismissed with women. The motive of such a substitution was that women would easier conform to the political platform of Communist Party. The extend of women's formal political participation was associated with the diminution of their effective role and participation. When the formal indicators showed the extend of their formal participation, the contrary happened: the influence of females in Albanian legislative power was mortified.

Such a blooming in women's executive and legislative participation had as its complement the extend of their participation in the judicial power. Up to 1966, among the 11 members of Supreme Court of Albania, was only 1 woman. Meanwhile, during the 1970-1982 among 23 members of Supreme Court has been 6 females, that means 27% of it members. The lack of women in the highest level of judicial power in Albania is justified even by professional requests of participation in this organ. But see how lightly the regime ignored that barrier, when it aimed at giving a democratic and popular polishing to the composition of judicial power forums.

It seems that mechanism of women's exception from high levels of political power is functioning even during the transition of Albanian society from totalitarianism to democracy. No woman results actually among the members of parties leadership in Albania. In the first pluralistic parliament (1991) only 9 of 250 deputies, that means 3.6% were women. In the next parliament the spontaneous selection is greater: only 4 from 140 deputies or 2.8% are women. Meantime, in the actual Albanian government one seat is occupied by woman.

What about the women participation in the judicial power? Here we can note another trend: women participation is considerable in the first and the second level of judicial power. I think this happens because of several reasons:

First, for a very long time the school of law has been destined to the elite. The students of law were originated from the higher strata of Albanian nomenclature and it was their preference to send there mainly females. The law faculty has been mostly a feminine one. It is because of this fact that amongst advocates, magistrates, and notaries most of them are women.

Second, because of the very intensive work of justice organs, it was impossible to send away, as it happened in other sectors, a multitude of employed people, by the argument of institutional reform. In cases they have been discarded from service as magistrates, are employed in the sector of advocacy.

Third, a lot of professionalists males from justice organs left their former job and are actually doing carrier in private sector, as juridical adviser or counselors of foreign companies or joint ventures. They have been substituted mostly by women.

Forth, the natural tendency of women and their preferences to work in these organs, is another reason of their considerable participation in the low levels of judicial power in Albania.

3.7. The rebels: an alternative to the political class?

A juridical analysis of documents and other information on the activities of the “rebels”, together with interviews with the heads of the Committees of Public Salvation in Saranda, Tepelena and Valona, are particularly interesting because the “rebels” are the least known of the forces active in Albania during the 1997 crisis. Some analysts have underlined that the real rebels had nothing to do with criminal gangs but acted, through dialogue, as a mouthpiece for popular protest. They were created where there was a need to support the population, since the state institutions had been inoperative for some time. Co-operation with the Committees was a worthy thing to do for people who wished to defeat crime and

restore peace. All Albanians should support these aims, irrespective of their political ideas. The decision to interview the direct leaders of the revolt was a result of the consideration that the mass media and the other institutions that dealt with the Albanian recent developments had rarely approached them on a clear and neutral basis.

3.8. The 1997 rebellion: a lecture for the political elite

The revolt has been a critical lesson for the entire Albanian political class. Through the rebellion the population attempted to achieve what the political class - in power or in opposition - had been unable to do in the post-Communist transition towards democracy. The Albanian state and society may be identified as a pyramid on the basis of the financial "pyramids". After their failure all the other institutions, also collapsed. It happens due to several reasons. Among them we may underline the mentality and the role of the state institutions, the weakness of the opposition, the inadequacy of the role and the behaviour of the international community and of the role and actions of the Albanian intellectuals.

4. The elite and political development

4.1. Political and parliamentary traditions in Albania

Albania is a country with not a long history of parliamentarism and parliamentary traditions. The first Albanian Parliament had been elected in January 1920, named the National Council and later being granted the attributes of the Parliament.

In spring 1921 the first parliamentary elections had been held and the elected Parliament was composed by two parliamentary groups: Popular Party and Parliamentarian Party. (in total 78 deputies).

In June 1925 the next parliamentary elections brought the new Parliament, composed by two chambers: Chamber of deputies (57 deputies) and Senate (18 deputies), in total deputies.

In September 1928 Albanian changed the form of the state: from Republic to the Constitutional Monarchy. The Parliament was composed by only 28 deputies.

In January 1945 the Constitutional Assembly was elected, after the first pluralist elections in Albania after the Second World War, held in December 1945. The Constitutional Assembly approved the new Constitution of the country. In March 1946 the Constitutional Assembly proclaimed itself the Parliament of Albania. (It was named the People Assembly).

From 1946 until 1991 Albania has had a formal Parliament, elected by formal elections. The Parliament intended to only apply and give legislative connotation to the political platform of the PLA (Communist Party).

The first pluralist elections after the fall of Communism have been held on 31 March 1991. The Albanian Parliament elected by this elections was composed by 250 PM. It was heavily dominated by the PLA.

On 22 March 1992 Albania hold the new anticipated Parliamentary elections. The Parliament formed by these elections was heavily dominated by the former opposition, Democratic Party

On 26 May 1996 new parliamentary elections have been held. The electoral process has been boycotted by the opposition parties: Socialist Party, Social-democratic Party and Democratic Alliance Party. The motivation of abandoning the voting was the violence used during the voting and the manipulation of electoral process during the ballot's day. As a consequence, the Parliament was wholly (92%) dominated by the Democratic Party

On 29 June 1997 the last parliamentary elections have been held and the Socialist Party won the 2/3 majority. Socialists and their allies (social-democrats and liberal-democrats) are at present dominating the Albanian Parliament.

4.2. Elite and transition towards Democracy

The part played by Albanian intellectual elite in the transition processes from a totalitarian towards a free market system has been vital. The cultural elite were in the front run of the efforts to lay the necessary spiritual grounds of the Albanian society for the forthcoming political and economic changes. Certain among them had the courage to appear in the press before the era of change had swept Albania and forwarded highly advanced opinions and ideas to support the need for initiation of change.

A more open stand was taken by Albanian intellectuals after the licensing of pluralism in Albania. The intellectual elite from the various circles in the country took over the leadership of the various political formations. The University of Tirana, but also other institutions provided the greatest number of leaders for the political parties. Those intellectuals who entirely and fully committed themselves to politics set the pace and the dynamics of the pluralistic processes in the country. However, a great many intellectuals adopted a more reserved stand and chose to follow the developments from more pragmatic and waiting positions. For a country in Albania's conditions such a behavior is to be considered normal. The independence of Albanian intellectuals was as much subject to their economic status as to the lack of clear orientations in the what turned out to be a populist movement sweeping Albania at the beginning of the nineties. It is quite understandable that economic constraints should inevitably entail conformism, clientship and political submission.

4.3. The elite's objections to the reality

In spite of their political and ideological allocations, the elite's members interviewed have expressed almost the same opinions as far as the main critical problems of Albanian society is concerned. The hierarchy of the most critical problems facing the Albanian society during 1996, according to their answers, has been as follows:

1. Economic problem , the lack of perspective of the development of the countr	28	31%
2. The very harsh political struggle between parties and the reminiscences of the former class struggle all over the society	20	22%
3. The corruption and the speculation with the national property during the process of privatization	16	18%
4. The avoidance of the intellectuals from social participation and the monopolization of and sources and uses of power by political parties and their servants, as a sort of political patronage	12	14%
5. The lack of the necessary legislation to suppor the political and economic refor	6	7%
6. The lack of real individual liberty and the very low standard of the application of the human rights	5	4.5%
7. The unstable foreign policy and a sort of political clientelis followed by the government and the other political institution	3	3.5%

If we compare the results of the above survey with the representatives of the new Albanian elite, with the findings of another survey realized at the same time, with a champion selected among Albanian common people, for the same question, we can see that elite's estimation and people's opinions are not so different

The answers to the question “ Which is the most important problems facing Albania today?” were as follow:

1. Economic problems	30 %
2. Unemployment	16%

3. Corruption	8%
4. Political instability	8%
5. Criminalit	6%
6. Property problem	4.5%
7. Revenge	2%
8. Emigration	3%
9. The lack of a real democrac	3%
10. Privatization	2%
11. Moral and spiritual crisis	2%
12. Land division problem	0.5%
13. Refused	15%

4.4. Political and institutional participation of intellectual elite

There have been four multi-party elections in post pluralistic Albania. The parliamentarians who won in these elections were not the best of the country's intellectuals. Many among them brought into the Albanian parliament an atmosphere of provincialism and old mentality. Parliamentary debate often took over a harsh and uncivilized tone and gave the worst example for national reconciliation by fostering intolerance in the place of tolerance, exclusion in stead of inclusion.

Despite the political trauma which the Albanian intellectual have been put through, their role, either direct or indirect, has been critical in the shaping of a climate of tolerance and democratic culture in the country. They managed to explore various forms and means to attain this end. Although limited in the scope of their activity, the Albanian intellectuals were successful in breaking the barriers set up by the government. The appearance in press of many intellectuals who were known for their equilibrium in politics has had an important part to play in the softening of political tensions. Their messages have been absorbed by the Albanian public. Such messages have been offered by Albanian writers

through the literature they created, visual arts, cultural events, etc. Most of university professors conveyed these messages to their students.

Although a lot of intellectuals opted towards creating a climate of tolerance especially on the brink of election campaigns, the tendency was not strong enough as to make its way into the public opinion and neutralize the propaganda of the ruling party. It was beyond any doubt that this mission could not be carried out through the Albanian electronic media. This type of media was totally in service of the government. In order to manipulate the public opinion and provide “reliable” facts, the government made use of a number of indoctrinated intellectuals from various spheres especially from the university. For instance, certain university professors who had undertaken to conduct polls on the forthcoming vote of the Albanians in the new parliamentary elections of 26 May 1996 supplied the media with fraudulent and fiction figures.

An important progressive role was played by a group of dissident intellectuals who had experienced the prisons of the totalitarian system for over 20 years. They could not bear the fraud and illusory image that the Government vested itself with. They were very active not only in propaganda by denouncing the violence and fraud, but they also led the crowds which demonstrated for free and democratic elections in Albania. These intellectuals cooperated successfully with the intellectuals of the opposition of that time and created, in early 1997, the Forum for democracy. This Forum which aligned intellectuals from 10 political parties from the entire political spectrum in Albania from the left to the right, was successful in shaping the public opinion towards the need for changes in Albania. The opposition intellectuals, irrespective of the political parties they represented, were successful in understanding that they could only reach the public opinion if only they made use of new means.

4.5. The political elite and the political parties

In spite of their multitude and heterogeneity only some tens of political parties have some influence in Albania.

4.5.1. The chronological order of the parties foundation

The chronological order of the parties foundation is like following :

1990 Democratic Party

1991 The Democratic Union Party of Albania (National Front), Demochristian Party, Independent Party, National Progress party, the Green party, Democratic prosperity party Ecological party, Republican party, National-Democratic party, Socialist Party, Universal Albanian Party, National Union Party, Social democratic party, Agrarian party, Liberal party, Albanian popular League party, Labor Social Albanian party,

1992 Democratic Alliance Albanian Party. The Human Rights Union, National Albanian party, Legalist movement party, Albanian National Democratic League, Albanian social reformer party, the Right republican party,

1993 The Albanian democratic union party, Alternative Republican party,

1994 The right Democratic party, Social Democratic Union party, Social Justice party, Popular Progress party,

1995 Party of Legality Triumph, Democratic Ideal party, National Rights party, Demochristian party, National Legality party

1996 National Renaissance, New Socialist party, National Community party,

1997 Movement for Democracy

As it results from the observation in Albania exist around forty-five political parties but it can be hardly said that they all exercise political activity. Contrary even from the point of view of the most alert and systematic analyst, the activity of the most political parties in Albania is in existent. In fact half the number of these ghost parties do not even mention the names of the leaders.

4.5.2. Some characteristics of the Albanian political parties.

Democratic party's born in the eruptive December of the student's protest. The charisma of its leaders in the big manifestations for PLA throw (communist party), in spite of the glamorous promises for a welfare achieved in a relatively short time were decisive of 1992 brought about a big victory of DP that assured an absolute majority in the Albanian parliament. From DP came later the major part of the founders which found other parties in opposition with their ex-party. The most famous were the so-called "motionists" who gave birth to another party, Democratic Alliance, and in 1997, another group of democratic deputies and leaders found The Movement for Democracy.

The National Front party: in reality, it is spoken about one of the oldest Albanian political parties born exactly in 1939, in the time of the antifascist war. After the suppression of the communists it is reformed into the heir of the Albanian nationalism. In spite of this, after its re-foundation, it remained a small party widely known in its historical regions like Vlora and Myzeqe. The analysts support the idea that without the DP help, the National Front could not take even a single seat in the Parliament

Demochristian party: After the disagreement with the leader of the Republican party of which he was the vice, Zef Bushati, the current leader of demochristians, found the demochristian party that had never supported the obstacle of entering the parliament. In the current legislature it has one deputy who entered from the proportional list of DP. It is a small party which remains in the right area

The party of Independents (central): its political activity is completely ignored, due to the point that the election statistics have not memorized any official date related to this union.

National Progress party: its activity is not known neither in national nor in local level.

The Green Party: considering from the name, it seems that it has to do with the environment.

Democratic prosperity party : its activity is ignored. Otherwise it is very obvious the analog formation amongst the Albanians of Macedonia.

Ecological party: in the previous elections it had no seat in the parliament. Its leader since the foundation is Namik Hoti, known to the public only for his interviews in the newspapers.

Republican Party: it is born like opposition party some days after DP. Often it becomes famous for some realistic activities taking part in the political situations of the country. I entered the governmental coalition with the Democratic party, but it got out of it immediately when it became obvious that DP wanted to monopolize the power. In the elections of 1997 it won one seat

National Democratic party: practically is unknown.

Socialist party: it is born in 1991. In the tenth congress of the Party of Labor (Communist Party) after the condemnation of its ex-leaders and their dismissal from the party, one group of reforming intellectuals wanted to change the party's name calling it the Socialist party, and the new party was inspired by the European democratic principles. The party's leader since the beginning is Fatos Nano.

After the famous election defeat of 1992, the socialists were rewarded with the victory of the executive elections around four months later.

When the socialist competition was becoming stronger, on July 1994, the parliamentary immunity was revoked to Fatos Nano, because he was accused for power abuses and immediately after this he was arrested. The socialist leader's arrest inspired the discontent of his supporters whose main motifs were political and who never stopped protesting even in the main squares. As a matter of fact, a lot of international organizations had considered the arrest of the socialist leader illegal due to the pure political motifs.

During the 1996 elections, the socialists, in spite of the fact that different sampling tests approved their victory, boycotted the elections some hours before the closing of the polling boxes due to the great blackmails exercised on them by their opponents. They never accepted the parliament that came out of the elections of May 1996. Only when the Government of the national reconciliation was established they decided to join the parliament in order to give their support to the government and for the preparation of the coming anticipated elections.

The last elections are won by the socialists while their moderate line brought the collaboration of some right and central forces that brought a higher level of emancipation of the Albanian politics and politicians. After the elections of June 1997 is established large scale government, invited it take part even central and right forces (Socialdemocratic party, Democratic Alliance, Human Rights Union, Agrarian party.)

Albanian Universal party: its activity is completely ignored.

National Unity party: a nationalist party that aims at the unity of all Albanian territories

Social Democratic party: as a central -left party it is accused for behavior favoring the right because of the governmental coalition with the DP. Its deputies represented the

balanced part of the parliament that came out of the 1992 elections because without the it could not be achieved the absolute majority. Even they got out of the governmental coalition for the same reasons as the Republican party. Ultimately it was a pure and strong opponent of DP. At the same time it is the member of the International Socialist. During the elections of June 29, it established an alliance with the socialists and it is a member of the parties coalition that have constituted the actual government.

Agrarian party: its modest political activity consists of its participation in the previous elections, but it took only some seats in the local governments. Its leader is a scientist, the ex-rector of Agricultural University, currently the agriculture's minister in the coalition government

Liberal party: its activity is ignored.

The Albanian Popular League: it is a small party which became known only for the fact that its leader, Bashkim Driza, was the chief of the pyramidal scheme "Populli" accused for cheating.

Labor Social Albanian party: practically unknown

Democratic Alliance party: is formed by the so - called "motionists", ex -DP founders expelled from DP. They were accused by Berisha as an "anti-party " group and after the expulsion they found the Democratic Alliance party inspired by democratic-liberal purposes in opposition with Berisha's party. In the 26 May elections they made a pre-election alliance with the Social-Democratic party, but later together with the socialists and other parties boycotted the elections. The leader of the party is Neritan Ceka. In the elections of June 29 1997 they won three seats in the Parliament and they take part in the coalition government

The Human Rights Union party: is born from Omonia organization that consist of Albanian citizens with Greek origin. It is known as a Greek and other ethnic minorities party in Albania and they have won some seats in the parliament, even because it has always won in the areas habituated by Greek minority. Its leader, Vasil Melo, has been criticized even from its own party because of some of his unclear behaviors in the politica life of Albania. Now it takes part in the coalition government headed by socialists.

Albanian nationalist party: its activity is ignored.

Legalist Movement party: it is a monarchic party whose final purpose remains the return of the king. It made an alliance with DP after they obliged Berisha to make the referendu on “the form of the Albanian state”. The arrival of the throne’s pretender for this campaign inn all the country gave new impulses despite of the fact that the chances for a monarchic regime were few. All other political parties are in favor of the Republic. In the constitutional referendum of June 29, the monarchy lost. Currently the monarchic party is experiencing an internal crises.

Ideal Democratic party: its activity is unknown.

Social Reformer party: its activity is ignored.

Right Republican party: it is an organization that was born from the Republican part but it remains out of the political life.

Albanian Democratic Union party: its activity is unknown.

Alternative Republican party: another organization which was born from the RP, but its activity is unknown.

Social Democratic Union party: it has come from the Social Democratic party after the separation with DP, it became an ally with the DP due to the choice of his chief Teodor Laco, in order to take some ministerial seats in the government. According to the sampling tests it results as a modest party.

Social Justice party; Popular progress, Legality triumph, National Right Defense, Albanian Demochristian Union, National Legality, National Prosperity, New Socialist Party and the **National community** do not have any political activity.

The Movement for Democracy party: it is the newest party because it was born during the unrest, spring 1997, when Albania experienced a complete collapse. Its founders were some ex-deputies and members of DP. The new party is positioned as a right one, in opposition with, as they declare, the autocratic Berisha's party. Its leaders are considered as moderators.

As one can see, it is quite obvious that the major part of the political forces in of the Albanian political scene do not have any activity, they remain as reliques in the registers o the Ministry of Justice. In the Albanian political scene the main parties are ten and two o them are the biggest ones: the Socialist and the Democratic Party

The programs of the Albanian political parties are very much alike each-other, few known by the public in the country. The Democratic party obviously aims at a separation from the current policies from the principles and promises made in the political and election programs. It's been practicing hesitating policies compared to the declared ones.

According to the analysts of the political life in Albania the left Albanian party, SP, presents more realistic and argued programs, and clearer visions for the role of Albanian in the International Community and relations. The Albanian right, due to some historical reasons, is leaving its infant days. Its road has a big obstacle: the deformation of democratic ideals from the government of DP during the last four years.

4.6. Elite, social and political institutions as estimated by the population

During the time considered, the credibility of political and social institutions has been very disputable. The tables below contain the findings of the answers to the question: "How much do you believe in the following institutions?", we addressed to a sample of more than 1 000 respondents (Albanians living in Albania and abroad as emigrants) in autumn 1996.

The coefficient of credibility for each institution, granted by each category of people interviewed (return emigrants, non emigrants, emigrants) is as follows:

Institutions	Return emigrants	Non emigrants	Emigrants
Public administration	0.9	1	0.5
Police	1.1	1.8	0.7
Educational system	3.4	11.9	1.5
Parliament	0.5	0.6	0.5
Political parties	0.7	0.7	0.8
Trade unions	0.7	1.6	0.4
Social insurance system	1.2	2.2	0.8
Health system	2.1	3.3	1.3
Press and RTV	1.3	2.8	0.6
Associations	0.9	0.7	0.6
Religious institutions	2.6	4.7	1.1
Big economic enterprises	2	2.6	0.6
Small economic enterprises	1.2	1.7	0.7
Government	0.8	1.1	0.6
Local power	0.7	0.8	0.5
Law system	1	2	0.4
Total	1.1	1.6	0.7

A brief look on the above findings shows that 7 from 16 social institutions tested, have been granted a negative coefficient of credibility. To significantly consider is that the majority of societal institutions being granted a negative coefficient, are among the most important institutions, mainly the political ones. This shows that people reservations, opponency and criticism to the new society remains still strong in the field of politics and political institutions.

If we consider migrancy as a variable, it easy to notify that non emigrants have granted a bigger coefficient, (that means more credibility) to social institutions. Such a coefficients seems becoming less significant in the case of return emigrants, and reaches its lowes level in the case of actual emigrants. We explain this by two reasons: non emigrants are more concerned and informed about the institutional life in their own country; emigrants or return emigrants use higher standards in estimating the political and institutional life i Albania. They "have borrowed" these higher standards from the host Western countries where they live and which have, of course, old democratic traditions.

If we see the institutions granted a higher coefficient of credibility, at the top are the educational, health care, and religious institutions. The fact that educational institution is the most credible one is not accidental. It shows the life's and interest's priorities of people. They see their further socialization and perspective mostly concerned to education and schooling.

Meanwhile, the credibility granted to health care institutions demonstrates people's human feelings and estimations to their traditional devotion to the people. Though the efficiency of health care institutions doesn't depend any more only to their role, as it did before, bu to a lot of social institutions and phenomena people still believe to their humanity

The high coefficient granted to religious institutions is meaningful. Their previous absence and the role they played during the transition makes people optimistic about the impact of religiosity to the developments of the country. People find in religious institutions a sort of consolatory, which help them to cope with the rigidity of everyday life, as well as the increasing dehumanization of human relations. The credibility of religious institutions is concerned even with another context: at present the conception on religion, especially the Christianity, is getting more and more moral and human significance. It is heavily diffused into groups of people who have nothing to do with religion and church. Affiliation to religions is transforming into a kind of morality and humanism, meanwhile in the European societies people belong to religious motivations more than they do to religious institutions.

As far as the institutions with a low coefficient of credibility is concerned, the findings show that Parliament, Government, Local Power (as institutions established after the elections), Political Parties, Public Administration, and Trade Unions are the less credible institutions. Such a low credibility is partly explained by the fact that people's expectations have been greater to them. Not being satisfied a lot of these expectations, this, of course, normally produces criticism and reaction. The low credibility of political institutions is explained, also, by an ontological factor. Focused mainly in political interests, it is quite difficult political institutions to guaranty their internal harmony and coherent functioning. One of characteristics of Albanian transition, as the political reality has demonstrated, is that the higher the social basis of institutions, more difficult their legitimacy and institutional functioning. This is proved by the scarce qualitative efficiency of Parliament, Local Power etc. The low credibility of political institutions like Parliament, Government Political Parties, Local Power etc. stems mostly by their political particularity. Such a characteristic is quite contradictory to the features of a normal pluralistic society.

As for the low credibility of Trade Unions, it is explained by that fact they are following the traditions of pluralistic, conflictive and politicized trade unions, (as in the countries like France, Italy), and not the tradition of centralized and cooperative ones (like in Germany,

Belgium etc.). Most of trade unions in Albania have openly been used and served as instruments of political parties.

4.7. The failure of establishing the attributes of Democracy

The Albanian transition has demonstrated even the failure of establishing a state of law, through creating a modern legislation, the independence of the powers, the autonomy of system of justice, market economy, the respect and implementation of human rights. The tragic events of January-May 1997 in Albania, which the Albanian people have had the misfortune to pay with their own blood, show that the achievement of the rule of law and modern legislation, the achievement of the separation of powers and the autonomy of the judiciary, a market economy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, known and recognised as international laws and principles without which order, peace and prosperity are impossible, were far from being realising in Albania. These events have shown that laws and fundamental principles cannot be used for propaganda and gambled with. Of course, the responsibility of elite in committing these errors is indisputable.

4.8. The military elite: which role in the army?

The Albanian army and its “fortune” in 1997 demonstrated the incapacity of the political class in constructing a modern army. The disintegration of the army happened due to the lack of any national ideology other than that of the officer class: get rich quick, at all costs and by any means. Despite this, when the revolt broke out the army did not fire on its own people, and this is what led to its destruction. Which will be the perspectives of the country and how Albania will be able to purify the army and its politics from the immoral and corrupted people? The military elite has demonstrated not to dispose the sufficient morality and professionalism. This has caused a very low level of the credibility of the army and of the military institutions.

4.9. “Who the angel is and who the devil is”? Elite’s alternatives for the solution of crisis of 1997.

During the crisis of 1997 a progressive radicalisation of Albanian elite and political parties by adopting increasingly extreme positions has clearly been noted. The Osce envoy, Franc Vranitsky, encountered many difficulties both in his attempts to forge an agreement and in giving it some sort of practical substance. The greatest problems in the period following the signing of the agreement by the political parties have derived from the often extreme interpretation given to what was signed by the Albanian parties and politicians. This is why Vranitsky, during his mission in Tirana, said: “I can no longer tell who the angel is and who the devil is in this country”.

5. National question: which fractures between political elite?

After the fall of former Yugoslavia and the decline of former League of Communist of Kosovo, several Albanian political parties have been established in Kosovo. Most of them are Right Wing parties, except to the Social Democratic Party of Kosovo, a small Middle Left Wing party. The Democratic League of Kosovo is the largest political party, dominating the political, social and institutional life of Kosovo. It may be considered as a special case when a Right Wing party has been established, based on the old structures of a former communist party. There do not exist at present any communist party in Kosovo, whose absence is compensated by the activity of a radical movement, which several times has had a wide support among the different strata of Kosovo's population.

After 1991 there have been often and tense relations between political parties of Kosovo and Albania. Both sides have established a typology of having preferred relations with certain parties, often refusing to have even formally contacts with other ones. Privileged relations have existed between the Democratic League of Kosovo, LDK, and Albanian Right Wing parties, especially the Democratic Party of Albania, which governed the

country from 1992 to early 1997, where the Government of National reconciliation has been formed. It took not a short period that contacts and relations between the Socialist Party of Albania and the Democratic League of Kosovo have been established. Privileged relations have been applied even by Albania's side. Most of its political parties have intended to maintain relations mainly with the Democratic League of Kosovo, which, as a matter of fact, the major part of political and institutional representatives in Kosovo, government and the President of the Republic included, belong to.

The privileged relations of Kosovo's parties with the Albanian Democratic Party, PDSH, and its government have been demonstrated during the most important political happenings in Albania. On the eve of 22 March (political) and 26 July 1992 (administrative) elections, the political parties of Kosovo openly supported the PDSH, totally ignoring other political forces descended in the political scene of Albania. This happened, also, during the constitutional referendum of 6 November 1994. That time the fracture between Kosovo's leadership and Albanian population increased meanwhile the majority of Albanians were contradicting the Constitution's project presented by government of PDSH, the Kosovo's politicians didn't hesitate to openly glorifying it, often appearing to referendary tribunes, accompanying top Albanian authorities. When the voters refuted the constitutional project, Kosovo's elite found itself placed against the political will of Albanian population, expressed in Constitution's refusal. The same happened during 1996's political and administrative elections. The Kosovo's political class has been unable or has not intended to understand what was happening to Albania even on the eve of 1997 after the fall of financial pyramids, when the change of status-quo and the need of a political solution in Albania was on the agenda, only messages supporting the PDSH, the Government and the President, arrived in Albania from Kosovo and European residences of its politicians.

The attitudes Kosovo's politicians applied towards Albania led to a sort of softening of Kosovo's sentiments among Albanian population. It happened not only thanks to the political behaviour of Kosovo's elite, but even due to the fact that, meantime, a lot of

Kosovars reached Albania and got key positions in economic and business concurrence. It was noted that people from Kosovo were among the firsts opening private shops and bars in Tirana or having access to other private enterprises. By poor Albanians, living in their misery and not familiar with the mechanisms and prices of free market, such a phenomena has been experienced as a sort of “economic invasion” of Kosovars, which, according to them, “will postpone the Albanian citizens to the periphery of economic development in their country”. The integration of Kosovo's people into the economic life of Albania has been promoted even by legislative and political measures. Meantime, a law on the double-citizenship of Kosovo's people, granting them the same possibility and access to economic activity as to Albanian citizens, had passed.

These fractures between Albania and Kosovo has, of course, hindered or at least made difficult, the coherence of Albanian internal integration. It was very late when the Albanian political parties, both of Albania and Kosovo, realized that integration and coherence between Albanians is an indisputable condition to realize the coherence of their demands and attitudes to the international community, as far as Kosovo's perspective is concerned.

The most distinguished point of Kosovo' movement towards its independence has been and the so-called Gandism of Kosovo's President, Ibrahim Rugova, recently substituted/compensated by the active presentation in the political scene of UCK(LAK, Liberation Army of Kosovo). Being simultaneously Chair of the Democratic League of Kosovo, Chair of the Consultative Committee of Albanian political parties and President of the Republic, Rugova continue to apply his platform of the peaceful resistance of Kosovo's population versus Serbian repression. In late 1996 and early 1997 Rugova's Gandism has been strongly criticised by different political circles of Kosovo, mostly coming from outside LDK, by other small political parties, NGOs and independent intellectuals.

Why this happened? After 26 May 1996 elections in Albania and the criticism of US, European and international institutions towards the electoral process in Albania, a change of Albanian policy towards Kosovo's perspective has been noted. Being conscious that

international support was granted to Albanian government and Democratic Party for softening the idea of separation from Serbia, or ensuring the international community on the limitation of Kosovo population's demands to its autonomy in the framework of Serbia, and for blocking the migratory flows towards Italy and other Western European countries, the government of Tirana started to play the card of nationalism, by encouraging the radical ideas and movements in order to solve the Kosovo's problem. The government of Tirana started to have often contacts with oppositarians of Rugova from other Albanian political parties of Kosovo, promoting them to openly contradict Rugova's Gandism. During the December 1996-January 1997's manifestations of Serbian opposition, the official Tirana appealed Kosovo's population to join these manifestations, not considering, but ignoring their nationalistic and monarchic affiliations.

Therefore, the political parties of Kosovo have succeeded in arriving a consensus for presenting their respective perspectives on Kosovo's future, the independent Kosovo, during the meeting with Serbian counterpart in early April 1997, in New York, where Serbs have been presented only by oppositarian parties.

6. Greece and Albania: people's and elite's neighborhood?

The first steps of establishing democracy in Albania found the Greek-Albanian relations in hopeful levels. Greece has been among the European states, directly contributing to the promotion of the democratic processes in Albania, through their contacts with the Albanian opposition of that time.

During the 90s the relations between Greece and Albania have recognized, except their traditional typology, even the influence of several new elements, such as mass migration of Albanians in Greece, spontaneous articulations on the presence of an Albanian community in Greece, or as they are called, Arvanites, as well as the pretensions raised by Albanian government on the property of çams in Greece. According to the answers to the question

“Which is the most important problem of the Albanian-Greek relations during 1996, the hierarchy of most important topics was the following: Albanian immigrants in Greece, (37.4%) Greek minority in Albania, (21.7%) the properties of çams in Greece, (7%) other problems (7%).

Have the relations with Greece been a priority of Albanian foreign policy? We can't say that Albanian governments after 1990, in spite of their political orientations and affiliations, have not considered the question of relations with Greece. Therefore, the question is not to consider, but to establish the priorities of the foreign policy of Albania. Formally it has often been affirmed, but practically it had remained a disputable topic. It is not so easy to grasp the reality of Greek-Albanian relations, knowing that Albanian political elite considers Greece as one of the most decisive factors for maintaining and promoting the stability of the region. Due to the judgments of several Albanian high politicians, the states most devoted and determining the stability of Balkan region are Greece (58.3%), USA (57.4%), Germany (46.1%), Turkey (36.5%) etc.

The amplitude of Greek-Albanian relations has recognized often modifications, due to a sort of Islamic affiliation and orientation of Albanian official foreign policy during 1992-1995. One can't deny that Albanian-Greek relations remained for a long period limited, far from being excellent, as the Albanian top authorities have usually preferred to label the Albanian-Turkish relations. The Albanian-Greek relations remained, for a certain period, limited to routine problems between two countries. Neither Albanian-Greek, nor Albanian-Italian relations have never been considered by the government of Berisha "traditional relations". The two closest neighbors of Albania, Italy and Greece, had surprisingly resulted indirectly excluded from the priorities of Albanian foreign policy.

The preference of Albanians and Greeks to establish privileged relations with each other have been often sabotaged by the lack of will, better to say bad will, of their governments, politicians and state institutions. Such an institutional and state indifference has not been

experienced without causing some implications on the relations between Albanians and Greeks, in spite of their efforts to ignore and not to consider state or government attitudes. The Albanian government has not tried to cover a sort of ethnocentrism, though unbiased and not necessary, in its relations with Greece.

Of course, the sense of superiority is not the first time appearing to Albania. But such a sense, has had a historical connotation, being impelled to Albanians from their elite, and in special circumstances of their history, as it was, for example, the experience of Albanian National Renaissance, on the eve of their independence from Ottoman Empire. But such a pretended national dignity and proud has never intended to place Albanians in a superior position, compared to other people or their neighbors.

The same has been done by the communists, who added to racial superiority of Albanians an ideological connotation and motivation. They didn't feel tired to proclaim the political and ideological Orthodoxy of Albania and Albanians and, closely linked with the above mentioned feelings, their respective superior moral features.

The Berisha's government intended the same the glorification, not only racial, but even political, of Albanians compared to other people of Eastern Europe. Due to this logic, Albanians are distinguished by some people of Eastern Europe, not only for not being Slavs, but even for having the highest rates and rhythms of economic, social and political developments. Albania has been propagated last five years as having the highest rates of economic development, compared to other Eastern European countries.

Such a pretended situation has taken even a scientific and sociological justification. We can see that through carefully investigating the findings of Eastern and Central Eurobarometer, which have permanently shown that Albania has often been the most successful country in its progress towards economic, social and political prosperity and the Albanians, of course, the most satisfied from the progress of their own country. What

happened in early 1997, (the armed rebellion) demonstrated the contrary: the supposed falsity of economic and political progress of the country.

In giving evidence to their traditional problems and conflicts with Greeks, being not able to find any historical or political motivation, Albanians have often been justified by good relations Greeks have always had with Serbs, especially by considering the old Albanian-Serbian conflicts. Considering, also, that traditional Greek-Serbian friendship has had a sort of religious Orthodox connotation and, of course, the Muslim majority of Albanian population, these lasts have not hesitated to express their criticism and reservations towards their Southern neighbors, Greeks. Such reservation has been demonstrated during the last two centuries, when, due to the risks coming from their Slav-Orthodox neighbors, Albanians have been forced to change their former religion, through being converted from Christians into Muslims. The separation of Albanian territories once the new independent Albanian state was established, seems to have proved the prophecy of Albanians on nationalistic and chauvinistic ambitions of their Northern neighbors, Slavis was expected to present a very critical danger to Albanians and Albania.

The policy of reservations towards Greece, due to different motivations considered by Albanian recent governments, has not passed without causing reactions among Albanians themselves. Due to the findings of a survey done in 1996 in Albania, only 37% of people asked, have been declared to support the policy of Albanian government versus Greece. Considering the role of migration in economic, political and cultural reconstruction of Albanian society, it is normal that Albanian official foreign policy didn't have the consensus of the public opinion of Albanians. The fact that the repeated idea of several top Albanian politicians, (of Democratic Party), to construct in the Southern part of Albania a memorial devoted to displacement of çams from Greeks after the Second World War, didn't find the support of the population of the small Albanian border town of Konispol, where such a symbol was supposed to be placed. The population of this area considered such a proposal a provocation to the friendship sentiments of Albanian and Greek population, sharing the same border.

The expectations of Albanian political elite towards Greece have not been satisfied, in several cases, by the status of Albania-Greece relations. Due to the opinions of some representatives of Albanian political elite, interviewed in 1996, the best imagined economic partners of Albania were estimated to be Greece (33.1%), Turkey (22.4%), Bulgaria (16.7%), Croatia (9%), Slovenia (6.9%), Romania (4.5%), FYROM (3.9%), Montenegro (2.4%), Serbia (0.9%). As a first economic partner for Albania, Greece has been considered by 81.7% of the respondents, followed by Turkey (7.8%) and Bulgaria (3.5%).

The situation has been as above described, even due to different expectations and predisposition among political parties in Albania towards the privileged economic partnership with Greece. Meanwhile 100% of the socialist politicians interviewed consider Greece as the first economic partner of Albania, only 72% of the politicians of Democratic Party think the same way, meanwhile others consider Turkey (11.8%), Bulgaria and Croatia (5.3%), FYROM (2.6%) and Slovenia (1.3%). Meanwhile, from the Greek side we do not find the same feeling of friendship, neighborhood and hospitality according to the findings of a pan-Hellenic survey, done in Greece, the following report of coefficients of sympathy and antipathy of Greeks towards different peoples has resulted Serbs 3.6; peoples of European Union in general 3.1; French 2.1; Russians 1.3; Americans -1.1, Bulgarians -0.9; Germans -1.9, British -6.3; Albanians -0.07; Macedonians -0.05; Turks -0.03.

Due to these investments, there are some clear feelings of Albanian politicians towards Greece, considering it as a main factor of the stability in the Balkans. These feelings are evident especially among the Albanian socialist politicians, 72% of whose interviewed considered Greece as a positive factor for the stability of the region.

7. Interviews

7.1. An irresponsible political elite: dialogue with Ismail Kadar

This dialogue with one of the most eminent figures in Albanian culture highlights the critical attitude of an intellectual who, never abandoning the vigour of his convictions, unflinchingly identifies the responsibilities of a political class that has been unable to guide Albania towards democracy.

7.2. Elite's scenarios to the future: round table with the leaders of Albanian political parties.

The Round Table was organised with the participation of Albanian political party leaders: Sabit Brokaj (that time member of the Presidential Office of the Socialist Party, Minister of Defence, July 1997-April 1998), Neritan Ceka, (President of the Democratic Alliance Party, Minister of Internal Affairs, July 1997-April 1998), Skënder Gjinushi (President of the Social Democratic Party, at present President of the Albanian Parliament), Sabri Godo (that time President of Republican Party, at present President of the Parliamentary Commission for Foreign Affairs), Vasil Melo (President of the Human Rights Party, at present President of the Parliamentary Commission for Human Rights) and Tritan Shehu (that time President of the Democratic Party). The interviews were held in May and June 1997, immediately before the elections of June 29th. The main themes discussed in the Round Table were: the transformation into a full-blown armed rebellion of what were initially only peaceful demonstrations; the interpretation of what was the role of the Committees of Public Salvation; the process of "national reconciliation"; ethnic, religious and regional factors and their role in Albania's political and social development; the armed gangs and organised crime; the presence of the multinational peace force; political scenarios for the future of the country etc.

7.3. Towards a responsible political class: interview with Bashkim Fino, premier of the Government of National Reconciliation

This interview with the Albanian premier Bashkim Fino, at the head of a “government of national reconciliation”, deals with some of Albania’s biggest problems. The salient points of the interview concern the causes and the consequences of the armed rebellion; mutual recognition (or non-recognition) between “rebel” groups, political parties and institutions, the concept of “national reconciliation”; the presence of a multinational peace force in Albania. The interview also contains a number of scenarios for Albania’s future put forward by premier Fino, at present vice premier of Albania.