The features of political culture in post-communist Albania

Matilda Pajo[*]

Abstract

Studying the political culture of a country plays an explanatory role in understanding the dynamics of the political system, the birth and consolidation of democratic institutions in certain societies. The purpose of this paper is to argue that political culture in post-communist Albania is not congruent with the formal democratic institutions of the country, because this political culture has inherited many influences during the communist totalitarian system for nearly five decades. The impacts and consequences of totalitarianism remain untreated by Albanian society, and therefore it is of particular interest to research these topics. Through the analysis of the components of political culture we can explain the stage of democratic consolidation of a society, the level of citizen participation in democracy and the performance of institutions, in this case of Albania. The main assumption of this paper is that post-communist political culture in Albania has delayed the process of democratic consolidation in the country, during an unfinished transition phase, from the totalitarian system to the system of liberal-democratic states. The methodology used in this paper is of a qualitative nature with an interpretative and analytical approach. The theoretical framework of the paper on which it is interpreted, analyzed and typified by the post-communist Albanian political culture relies on theorists such as Almond, Verba, Inglehart and others.

Keywords: *political culture, totalitarianism, democracy, transition, political system.*

[*] Matilda Pajo, PhD Candidate at the University of Tirana. Teaching assistant at AAB College. Email: matilda.pajo@aab-edu.net

Introduction

The analysis of the features of political culture in post-communist Albania helps to understand the dynamics of the Albanian political system during the transition phase and 'shed light' on the decisive role that political culture has in democratization processes. The concept of political culture was first used by Gabriel Almond in the mid-1950s[102] and later appeared as an extended study in the book 'The civic culture' of the authors Almond and Verba[103]. However, the curiosity and interest in studying national changes in politics is the earliest, from ancient Greek philosophers such as Herodotus to philosophers and scholars such as Tokëvil[104], Fromm[105], Inglehart[106] and many others. On the other hand, studies of Albanian political culture in certain historical stages are rather limited, as there is a lack of scientific work on the impacts and consequences of Albanian totalitarianism in the transition period.

If regional states emerged from dictatorial systems such as Romania and Bulgaria have opened up special university courses for studies, institutes, and literary publications about communism, investigating thecauses and consequences, in Albania these studies have been missing. Knowing the facts, causes, consequences and the communist legacy is still an

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[102] Gabriel Almond, "Comparative political systems*"*, (*The journal of Politics,* vol. 18, no.3, august 1956, Southern Political Science Association), p. 391-409.

[103] Gabriel Almond & Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture* (Princeton University Press, 1963)

[104] See: Aleksis De Tokvil, *On Democracy in America*, (Dukagjini, Peja, 1998)

[105] See: Erich Fromm, *Man For Himself*, (Phoenix, Tirana, 2003) and Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, (Plejad, Tirana, 2011).

[106] See: Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence* (Cambridge University Press, New York, 2005) and Ronald Inglehart, "East European Value System in Global Perspective" in *Democracy and Political Culture in Eastern Europe*, edited by Hans-Dieter Klingemann, Dieter Fuchs, and Jan Zielonka, (Routledge, Oxon, 2006)

interest for Albania and its society. In formal terms, Albania established the functioning of a democratic political system on norms, standards and social values of inclusion and not exclusion as it had existed before. Institutions formally are democratic, but did the Albanian individual really democratized? But especially, is the Albanian society non-totalitarian?

The basic assumption of this paper is that the lack of congruence between political culture and democratic institutions has played a deterrent role in Albania's path towards democratization. The post-communist political culture in Albania is not based on principles, values and democratic attitudes, because it has conceived during almost five decades of totalitarianism. To demonstrate, this assumption will be interpreted and analyzed: theoretical aspects of political culture, its main components, factors that build the political culture of a country, and the main types of political culture recognized in the literature of political and social sciences. The paper also focuses on the features of political culture in post-communist Albania as a case study. The methodology used in this study combines theoretical and empirical analysis to support the raised hypothesis. For this reason, this paper is based on various sources such as: literature on political culture studies, totalitarianism and democratization processes, reports of Albanian and international institutes, organizations on Albania's progress and the level of democracy in the country, as well as a series of analyzes, interviews and surveys conducted by civil society on the perceptions of the citizens and their attitude to the political system.

Political culture as a determinant of democratic processes

Studies political culture is important in recognizing and studying the political system of a society. The interest in studying the roots of national and state changes in politics is an early interest in social sciences. Studies on political culture relate to the dedication of certain important features of the political sphere to a particular society. According to Gabriel Almond, one of the eminent scholars of political culture and comparative political science, the political system is first of all an action system, so it is of interest to study norms and institutions as they affect behavior and beliefs in a society[107]. The essence of studies on political culture is researching the relationship between the various stages of socialization, the final socialization process, and the dominant patterns of behavior in political culture. But what can political culture explain, especially given the subject of the study, post-communist Albania?

Level of democratic consolidation in a society

Level of participation in democracy
and institutional performance
Every political system is embedded in a particular pattern of political action orientation and Gabriel Almond refers to this relationship as a political culture. In forming a political culture of a country are influenced by some of the most important factors:

1. major historical events,
2. long-lasting processes and

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[107] Gabriel Almond, " Comparative political systems", (*Journal of Politics,* vol. 18, no. 3,august 1956,) p. 391-409

3.Socialization.

Socializing agents in the socializing political process are the most important: A. the family, B. the elites and sub massive cultures.

According to Almond two clarifications should be made when talking about political culture:

"First, political culture does not coincide with a given political system or with society, as policy-orientation patterns extend beyond the boundaries of the political system and secondly: political culture is not the same as the general culture of a country, though Is related to the latter. Political orientation includes: cognitive skills, intellect, adaptation to external situations, but also the standard values and principles of general culture, so it is a differentiated part of culture and has its own autonomy dose"[108].

Under the direction of the Communists, Albanian society turned into a tabula rasa ready to be written out of the system. Thus, during the dictatorial regime, the system of value and beliefs was promoted in accordance with the Communist doctrine. The political culture of the Albanian society is still in a substantial part shaped during the totalitarian regime, so is an undemocratic political culture. The political culture of a society can facilitate democratic/ political relations between the state and society or may slow them down. The political culture was built during the totalitarian system through the official propaganda line, press, radio shows, films, documentaries; literature, art, and music were used to create a value and normative system in accordance with the totalitarian communist culture[109]. Meanwhile, the preservation and promotion of the

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[108] Ibid p.396

[109] See: On the role of mass organizations and propaganda tools in totalitarian states: Claude Lefort, *The Complication at the Bottom of the Communist Question* (Eleuthera, Milan, 2000), and Claude Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society* (MIT Press,

value system and the communist culture norms were realized through unions, organizations that were projections of the Labor Party and so on[110].

Totalitarian systems in the logic of their functioning have the conservation of power and this could only happen to a population that shared and agreed with the values and principles of the totalitarian dictatorship. For this reason, the totalitarian dictatorship was infiltrated even in the most important socializing agents such as the family. The family is the first socializing space for the child, the first contact with the world, but the family in totalitarian regimes was an ideological concept and essential in strengthening the power. It should be noted that socializing agents in the socializing political process are two: the family and elites and sub massive cultures. After almost five decades under totalitarianism has the Albanian society today shaped the democratic values? We can ask the same question for the elites. Answering these questions can help us understand Albania's stagnation with democratization.

The term 'political culture' was used for the first time by Gabriel Almond[111] and was later elaborated more widely by Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba in 'The Civic Culture'[112]. The study of Almond and Verba tried to find out how individuals influence the political system and vice versa. More specifically, "political culture refers specifically to the pattern of individual attitudes and policy orientations among members of the political

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Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1986), and for the role and goals of mass media organizations and propaganda tools in totalitarian Albania, see: AfrimKrasniqi, *Political Parties in Albania 1920-2006,* (Eurorilindja, Tirana, 2006).

[110] Ibid.

[111] Gabriel Almond, "Comparative political systems*", (The journal of Politics,* vol. 18, no.3, august 1956, Southern Political Science Association), p. 391-409.

[112] Gabriel Almond &SidneyVerba, *The civic culture, (*Princeton University Press, 1963)

system"[113]. So, political culture is a set of orientations towards a specific set of objects and social processes.

Almond and Verba use the term 'political culture' as they engage in intertwining, combining and studying the conceptual framework of some scientific disciplines such as anthropological, sociological and psychological approaches[114]. Political culture is seen by Almond and Verba as a link between macro and micro politics in a particular society. Political culture is also interested in finding the specific characteristics of a political sphere. Literature of political culture tries to explain certain dynamics of political institutions and in particular the birth and consolidation of democracy.

Political culture referring to Oxford's Political Dictionary includes "attitudes, beliefs and values on which the activity of a given political system relies. These should include the recognition and the ability of the political system's use, its positive and negative emotional feelings towards it, and judgment on the system"[115]. Meanwhile, Lawrence C. Mayer et.al, explains the concept of political culture as "psychological predispositions or orientations Mindset that predispose individuals to a political system to react to political objects in certain ways"[116]. Political culture is the aspect of a modern political system that is most influenced by the events and experiences of a nation's past[117]. So political culture is greatly influenced by the experiences of a society's past, and as such, post-communist Albania's political culture has been influenced by its dictatorial past.

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[113] Gabriel Almond &SidneyVerba, *The civic culture, (*Princeton University Press, 1963), p 18

[114] Ibid, p. 19

[115] Ian McLean & Alex McMillan *Oxford- Concise dictionary of politics,* (Oxford University Press) p. 409

[116] Laurence C. Mayer. Et.al, *Comparative Policies*, (Ora botime, Tirana, 2003) p. 14

[117] Ibid

In totalitarian dictatorships, the values promoted are absolute and every individual or collective group should be oriented to their activities based on this dominant values. The system of values playsan influential role by physically, morally and spiritually influencing how individuals behave. Thus, this system of absolute values shapes and regulates through its code, private and collective social organization. Through this role, the dominant social model has a total physical and spiritual impact on the behavior of individuals[118]. One of the most negative aspects of totalitarianism, experienced by the Albanian society, is not the increase in the presence of politics in society than "the metamorphosis of society itself in which politics ceases to exist as a divided sphere"[119].

The primary objective of the totalitarian regime was to transform social and human relations so that "everything is organized; everything is a matter for party organization"[120]. The destruction of existing social relations as a consequence of integrating individuals into the whole of the organization affected spontaneous human relationships. Fear of individuals who listened, reported, and recorded every conversation resulted in the creation of artificial human relationships, where no one was saying what he was thinking. It is enough to mention the case of Albania, to see the serious consequences that this left in Albanian society. Still, even after 26 years of establishing a democratic regime, civil society in Albania has not been empowered; reactions of citizens to every public, social and economic issue are faint. The integration of individuals into organization networks cultivated inactivity and uniformity,

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[118] Claude Lefort, *The political forms of modern democracy*, ed. John. B. Thompson (MIT PRESS : Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1986) p.79
[119] Ibid p.79
[120] Ibid, p.91

lurking of action and thought, are still dominant features in Albanian society.

The collapse of the communist system was announced by the political and social developments in the region, the collapse of communism in Romania and Bulgaria influenced encouraging change for political change in Albania. Albania is the last country where the totalitarian communist system in Europe fell, while the transfer of power from communists to the first opposition Albanian Party (PD) took place through a peaceful transition. Yet, today, after 25 years of the first pluralistic elections, Albania has not yet faced communist legacy and its consequences. The law on opening files of former dictator's associates has not been approved; there is still no compensation for political prisoners, the issue of returning property to former owner is unresolved. In elementary and high schools in Albania there is no information on the nature of the totalitarian system that has dominated the Albanian society for five decades. Recently an agreement has been reached between the Institute for Crime Studies and the Consequences of Communism with the Ministry of Education to hold lectures on the crimes, consequences and genocide committed by the communist dictatorship[121].

But what are the main aspects of a nation's political culture? According to Lawrence C. Mayer et.al, the features of political culture are: "attitudes towards authority; beliefs or concepts about the truth; a logical or pragmatic approach to decision making; feelings of sympathy, cooling, rejection, faith or mistrust; knowledge and information and basic values"[122]. Thus, political culture with all the mentioned aspects is very important because it affects the political and democratic political product of

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[121] See, Communist Period, Teaching in Gymnasiums, (taken from:http://www.standard.al/2016/12/15/periudha-komuniste-mesim-ne-gjimnaze-agron-tufa-nuk-do-bejme-propagande/, last seen on 24 April 2017)
[122] Laurence C. Mayer. Et.al, *Comparative Policies*, (Ora botime, Tirana, 2003) p. 14

a country. In cases when the political culture coincides with the political system of a society or nation, this political system works better and consequently has a solid legitimacy. Meanwhile, when a country's political culture does not coincide with the country's political system, then the political system will have difficulty adapting to the society and vice versa, consequently the political system can be seen with distrust or lack of legitimacy. From various schoolars it is concluded that "effective governance demands that the orientation towards the power required by the constitutional format should 'coincide' more or less with the relevant orientation in that nation's culture"[123]. Laurence C. Mayer appoints: "In the parts of the world where blind obedience to authority is a social norm, people may find it difficult to adapt to the idea of making the government responsible for its political actions"[124].

Ronald Inglehart in an article on "East European Value Systems in the Global Perspective" writes that the position a society maintains in its survival index is closely related to the level of democracy in a country[125]. Former communist states emerged from the influence of the former USSR, even though in the 1991s the democratic transition processes began, a good part of them are not wealthy states, driven by post-materialism or democratic, and have even walked in the opposite direction[126]. According to Inglehart, the establishment of democratic establishments does not necessarily mean that will produce a

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[123] Herry Eckstein, "A theory of stable democracy", in *Divisions and Cohesion in Democracy: A Study of Norway* and Herry Eckstein, "Authority Relations and Government Performance: A Theoretical Framework, Comparative Political Studies, volume 2, no.3 (269 -362) quoted in Laurence C. Mayer et al., *Comparative Policies*, (Ora botime, Tirana, 2003) pg. 14

[124] Laurence C. Mayer et al., *Comparative Policies*, (Ora botime, Tirana, 2003) pg. 14

[125] Ronald Inglehart, "East European value system in global perspective" in*Democracy and Political Culture in Eastern Europe,* edited Hans- Dieter Klingemann, Dieter Fuchs, and Jan Zielonka, (Routledge, Oxon, 2006)

[126] Ibid

culture to support democracy and the self-fulfillment values. It seems that economic development promotes social and cultural change by bringing individuals closer to the values of self-fulfillment and the post-materialistic profile.[127]. In former communist states, Inglehart notes that the values of survival prevail and that the values of self-fulfillment have very low levels, and this has to do with the nature of the communist system and then with its collapse[128].

III. Features of political culture in post-communist Albania

The rapports between the citizen and the public sphere are inverse and instrumental. The Albanian citizen does not see the public sphere as something of his own, even though the public sphere is owned by all the citizens in *common* and not individually. According to Hungarian authors, Tomash, Feher and Heler, who have studied the consequences of totalitarianism and the communist world, this is a common feature of societies emerging from dictatorships. The Albanian citizen emerging from a long totalitarian system of oppression experienced a "dissident retreat from politics and an exodus from the city"[129].

In this paper, the presentation of the relation between the citizen, the politics and the city (polis) relies on the concepts of Hannah Arendt's philosophy. When Arendt speaks of action refers to the activity in the polis, the involving of citizens in public sphere. This activity cannot be done alone, but only with others. Protecting andguaranteeing the welfare of the polis depends not on a single individual, but from all individuals.

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[127] Ibid

[128] Ibid

[129]GashparTomash, FerencFeher, AgneshHeler, Philosophy and Transition, (Arbri, Tirana, 1989) pg. 32

Participation of people in the issues of the polis, country (neighborhood, city, state and nation) is what determines the extent of civic awareness and democratization. However, the Albanian citizen during the period of social, economic and cultural transition was not a participating citizen, so did not influence the elites and the political system. Lack of respect for institutions, the idea of civil society as a 'private' society has brought a kind of 'private' cult to Albanian society[130].

Reducing the public sphere and subliming the private sphere has brought the creation of an instrumental rapport of the citizen with the public sphere. Where is this claim supported? This claim is supported in the passive and indifferent attitude of the citizen and the Albanian society towards the political, social, economic and cultural developments.At the same time the lack of political commitment on the part of citizens, either to articulate their demands to the elite and the political system, or to influence the political system. Studies on political engagement of Albanian citizens are annually organized by different organizations, foreign and Albanian institutions. According to the Institute for Democracy and Mediation, Albanian citizens link political engagement only with involvement in political parties. Asked by the Institute's surveys on the impact they have as citizens in the political system, citizens answered: 72.8% have no influence and power for the country as a whole, and 59.4% think that they have no influence and power at all in their electoral zone[131]. So, the Albanian citizen thinks that he has no power in the public sphere and that he has no influence on the country's political system. The consequence of this perception is the alienation of the role of the citizen and the perception that the political system and

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[130] Ibid
[131] Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM), *Analysis of Political Engagement in Albania-2016* (obtained from: https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/IDM%20Audit%20of%20Political%20Engagement%20(Shqip).pdf,last seen on 24 April 2017)

political elites can function without the participation of the citizens in the social and political processes.

Meanwhile, when citizens were asked about the reasons that influence involvement in a political party, people respond this way: about 71.9% of citizens involve in helping family and friends (Well, to be employed in a family and friendly basis) and 58.5% for personal interest[132]. As evidenced by these results, the Albanian citizen sees the public sphere through a logical and instrumentalist optic and where personal interest and family ties are more important than political activism in the best interest of the common good. It appears that these findings agree with the ideas of Gashpar Tomash, who points out that after living for decades under a totalitarian dictatorship where everything was mystified by the establishment of a new political system (democracy), people embraced the private: "human is the private, abstract universalist demands were seen only as a form of some individuals to reach the power"[133].

In the relationship between the citizen and the state, the citizen is suspicious of the state. In the relationship between the citizen and the state, the citizen is suspicious of the state. The Albanian citizen is as much as distrustful of institutions and political system. This argument is supported by various studies and surveys such as the annual surveys conducted by IDM (Mediation and Development Institute) and surveys conducted with students of the University of Tirana, Department of Political Science under the direction of Professor Alekander Kocani expressing a high level of disbelief in Albanian public institutions[134]. Citizens of ex-totalitarian societies came to the

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[132] Ibid

[133] GashparTomash, FerencFeher, AgneshHeler, *Philosophy and Transition,* (Arbri, Tiranë, 1989) fq 46

[134] AleksandërKocani, *Research of the Value System in the Republic of Albania in the Post-Communist Period*, (AU, Tirana 2013)

conclusion that "politics is bad"[135], evidence that we find in post-communist Albanian society. Meanwhile, regarding the trust in public institutions (parliament, government) Albanian citizens answered that: 57.5% of the citizens are dissatisfied with the work of the government, 56.8% are dissatisfied with the work of the assembly and 69.7% are dissatisfied with the opposition[136]. So, Albanian citizens are dissatisfied with the political system as a whole. Interestingly, there is a high level of dissatisfaction with the opposition, citizens are not only dissatisfied and distrustful with the work of government and parliament, but do not trust that the opposition as a potential force to take power and bring the required change. Meanwhile, in perceptions about the functioning of the Albanian parliament, the data are just as gloomy: 42% think that parliament does not put the government in front of responsibility, 48% of citizens think that parliamentary discussions are not related to important issues, 59% do not agree that delegates are a respected society representative, 56% declare that parliament is not transparent institution and 50% deny that parliament is open to citizens[137]. Also, the majority of respondents have the perception that MPs do not address issues that citizens are interested in competent bodies[138]. The most trusted Albanians have on international institutions such as NATO (74%) and the EU (72%), while 1 in 3 citizens trusts the government, less trusted is the judicial system (80%) and political

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[135]GashparTomash, FerencFeher, AgneshHeler, *Philosophy and Transition,* (Arbri, Tiranë, 1989) fq 47

[136] Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM) *Analysis of Political Engagement in Albania - 2016,* (obtained from :https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/IDM%20 Audit%20of%20Political%20Engagement%20(Shqip).pdf, last seen on 24 April 2017)
[137] Ibid
[138] Ibid

parties (79%)[139]. Over 50% of respondents do not trust public institutions[140].

Another feature of political culture in post-communist Albania is high conflictuality. The element of conflict is noticed in the institutional communication between parties, in parliament, in visual and written media, and so on. Conflict as a feature is omnipresent and disables building a communication based on respect for the other. Conflict is reflected in the relationship built between *self* and the *other* in Albanian society, the 'other' was viewed with suspicion, differently and consequently was an enemy. This element was cultivated from time to time as a result of the long past under authoritarian and undemocratic rule. During the communist regime the "other" had to be observed, one could be a spy, classmate, a person who could endanger your security and as a result of this people *spoke otherwise and thought otherwise*. So the communication became formal and false, distrustful from the *other*. What does the feature of conflict in the political system show? First, the political class has no meaning (concept) on democracy and secondly, that the main Albanian parties, even though function and compete in a pluralistic political system do not accept the opposition as a concept and the '*other*' as an opposing one.

The unfinished Albanian transition has had a series of conflicts with different dimensions. According to Artan Fuga, we talk of conflicts "between different social groups, inter-individual conflicts, and within each other's"[141], and the social roots of conflict throughout the transition must be sought. Political system researcher Afrim Krasniqi stops in the political conflict between the main parties, according to him, "the persistent political conflict between the opposition and the position

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[139] Ibid
[140] Ibid
[141] ArtanFuga, *The wheel of torment* (Dudaj, Tiranë, 2007) p. 17-18

produces political and social crises"[142]. The lack of political consensus on issues of major importance to the country's progress has prevented Albania from meeting the criteria and standards set by the European Union for EU integration. Over 27 years of transition, the country is experiencing political crises created by the high level of conflict between the main political parties and in most of them agreements have been reached with the intervention of international actors in the process. Currently, Albania is in another political crisis with the opposition declaring that it will not participate in the general elections this year and the position that it will hold the elections without the opposition. Conflictuality and the lack of tolerance have continuously affected the stability of the country during the transition phase.

The Albanian citizen is pragmatic and belongs to a system of values of the materialistic profile. The Albanian citizen does not believe in post-materialist values such as the values of freedom, equality, democracy, and so on. This citizen has a pragmatic approach to the surrounding world, the society where he lives and in his state. Ronald Inglehart has found that the level a society holds on the survival index of self-fulfillment is closely related to the level of democracy in a country[143]. So, the closer to the post-materialist values that society is, the more it is predisposed to have a stable democratic system and vice versa, a society with a materialistic (survival) profile is more likely to have a low level of democracy in the country. Based on the studies of Inglehart and the studies carried out by Aleksander Kocani on the value profile of post-communist Albania, we conclude that the Albanian society

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[142]AfrimKrasniqi, *Political parties in Albania 1920-2006*, (Eurorilindja, Tiranë, 2006) p 234

[143] Ronald Inglehart, "East European value system in global perspective" in *Democracy and Political Culture in Eastern Europe,* edited by Hans- Dieter Klingemann, Dieter Fuchs, and Jan Zielonka, (Routledge, Oxon, 2006)

belongs to the system of values of materialistic profile[144]. Society with a value system of materialistic profile is oriented by pragmatic attitudes where achievements and rapid profit its purpose in itself, while post-materialist values such as democracy, equality, fairness and commitment on public issues are not yet dominant values. Therefore, the public sphere is seen as a project in which there is no interest in investing and the private sphere is important.

Albanian political culture is based on authoritarian principles since it was formed during the totalitarian system. Erich Fromm writes:

"The authoritarian sees the world and human relationships, according to the pyramidal, hierarchical pattern. Those who stand up exercise power and those who are down obey the power. Such a model that is supported by the individual in the individual is consequently a social model "[145].

Therefore, the Albanian citizens in relation to power have a subordinate position; he knows his place in the pyramid of human relationships and accepts it. The organization of social life until recently was built on clan, tribal and patriarchal structure where obedience to family and tribe was an indisputable social law[146]. Tribal structure had no place for individual freedom, and the man did not exist as an individual, but merge into homogeneity family and tribe. Consequently, Albanian society did not find it difficult to accept the establishments of a totalitarian system, as hyper homogeneous structures were present and included in the cultural heritage of the country[147].

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[144] Alexander Kocani, *Research of the Value System in the Republic of Albania in the Post-Communist Period*, (AU, Tiranë 2013, pp. 43-44)

[145] Ronald Inglehart, "East European value system in global perspective" in *Democracy and Political Culture in Eastern Europe,* edited by Hans- Dieter Klingemann, Dieter Fuchs, and Jan Zielonka, (Routledge, Oxon, 2006)

[146] Erich Fromm, *The Man For Himself*, (Phoenix, Tiranë, 2003) p. 52

[147] ArtanFuga, *Paths to the snake cave,* (Ora botime, 2004, Tiranë) p. 86

Thus, the authoritarian features of Albanian society are seen in the cultural heritage of the country and in the political culture of post-communist Albania. Albania's political culture was built over the course of 50 years through the use of propaganda, press, music, art, literature, cinematography and was preserved and cultivated through the organizations and unions that were the extension of the Communist Party. The existing political culture today has not changed obstructing the country's democratization. The communist regime fell, but the Albanian society did not face the repercussions of the regime, no regime crimes were revealed, individuals were not sensitized about the totalitarian regime and the psychological, social and human consequences that the system has had on society.

No one has ever been convicted of the crimes committed, so there was no social catharsis to understand the factors that led to totalitarianism. No public apology was sought for totalitarian dictatorship, persecution, exile and execution of a large number of Albanians: 34.135 was the number of political prisoners in communist prisons, 59.009 was the number of interned in concentration camps[148]. This was consistent with the logic of *'guilty are all and none'*, the method used by elites and repentant communist facing the world to prove that they *'all were innocent'*; it was the creation of a new collective person to make responsible for all the responsibility of events. This method of rewriting the past was a typical communist method, as Lefort points out, "accepting collective coexistence is a slander of the ex-communist style"[149]. How can you 'embrace' democratic values and principles when you have not faced the past? How can you reconcile the logic of exclusion that prevailed in the totalitarian

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[148] Taken from the statistics of the Institute for Studies on the Crimes and Consequences of Communism (Obtained from: http://www.iskk.gov.al/, last seen on 25 April 2017)

[149] Claude Lefort, *The Complication: at the bottom of the Communist Question* (Eleuthera, Milan, 2000) p.24

dictatorship with the logic of involvement that prevails in democracy?

In support of this argument, we quote A. Fuga, who once again reiterates the idea of this work that the establishment of a democratic political system did not coincide with the proper social context, "the installation of democratic institutions was made in the conditions when previous totalitarianism had become a barrier to society, had become excessive, and the social conditions for a modern, immediate, high-standard democracy were not yet present"[150]. Moreover, the conditions for a qualitative democracy, not only were not present, but were to be established[151], but with political leaders deriving from communist nomenclature, it has been difficult, not to say impossible to create a democratic political culture in the country. Political scientist A. Krasniqi points out exactly this phenomenon, recycling communist and anti-communist leaders with one another by periodically replacing each other[152]. So, in the post-communist Albanian society, there has been a political rotation, but political rotation has not brought the political change required for a real democratization.

Obedience to power is another element of Albanian political culture. The Albanian citizen has obeyed of the form of government in the transition phase, even though he is convinced that the system is corrupt and the political class is not working in the interest of the country. Albania is the last state where the last communist regimefell in Europe and the establishment of political pluralism came as a result of a compromise between the Labor Party and the Democratic Party. Even after 27 years of transition, Albanian citizens have the perception that public institutions do not

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[150]ArtanFuga, *Media, Politics, Society 1990-2000,* (Dudaj, Tirana, 2008) p. 467
[151] Ibid
[152]AfrimKrasniqi, *Political Parties in Albania 1920-2006,* (Eurorilindja, Tirana, 2006) p.238-239

defend public interests and are very corrupt[153], as we have shown in the reports of local and international institutions[154]. On the other hand,they have obeyed again to the authority and did not protest or even raise their voice speacefully against bad governance. Albanian society is an apathetic society which does not raise its demands for better governance, but respects authority without reservation even when it calls it unfair. Despite the articulated dissatisfaction of Albanian citizens, they continue to vote the same political alternatives and the same individuals that run the main parties, and the country. At the same time, the lack of forms of influence in the political system such as peaceful civic protests have been lacking and when they are held are related to party interests. There are 126 political parties registered in Albania, but the electorate continues to vote on the same alternatives and the same political leaders[155].

Another element of Albanian political culture is the relationship with the charismatic and authoritarian leader. Being a society with an authoritarian culture, the Albanian citizen as an authoritarian who sees the world in the pattern of a pyramid seeks to create emotional, personal relationships with the leader who will govern the country. Meanwhile, the profile of the leader in these 27 years of democracy is the same: the one of the authoritarian type. It is the leader or the political leader who exercises power and requires fervent obedience and submission to power.

Political leader is charismatic features and appoints everybody the place. This argument finds support in different studies and authors. In a study on political arrangements

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[153] Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM), *Public Opinion Survey - Government Confidence* (EU and UNDP, Tirana, December 2015)

[154] Albania Corruption rank,(obtained from:http://www.tradingeconomics.com/albania/ corruption-rank, last seen on 24 April 20017)

[155] AfrimKrasniqi, '126 Party in Albania', (taken from :
http://www.citynews.al/2016/05/nga-afrim-krasniqi-126-partite-politike-ne-shqiperi-nevoja-per-reforme-nga-financimi-tek-demokratizimi/1, last seen on 24 April 2017)

achieved during the transition in Albania, the Institute of Political Studies concludes that political agreements have produced "strong" leaders and "weak" institutions[156]. In the case of political crises, the achievements of political agreements have taken place outside the institutions. In this line is the decision declared by the opposition to boycott the election and bypassing the institutions and procedures of stable democracies. Since 1992, the power of party leaders has not only been reduced, but has increased, in support of this ascertainment; we see the data table borrowed from the Institute of Political Studies (ISP)[157].

KOMPETENCAT THELBESORE	ISHIN MË 1992	JANË MË 2017
Mandati i Kryetarit	Vetëm dy mandate	Pa përcaktim
Zgjedhja e kryetarit	Me kandidat rival	Pa kandidat rival
Zgjedhja e kryesisë	Nga Kongresi/Kuvendi	Nga Këshilli/Asambleja
Përfaqëson partinë	Kryesia	Kryetari
Zgjedh sekretarin me jashtë	Kryesia	Kryetari
Zgjedh departamentet	Asambleja/Këshilli	Kryetari/kryesia
Propozimi i kryesisë	Nga çdo anëtar ne KK/AK	Nga kryetari
Zgjedhja e Sekretareve	Propozim nga Asambleja	Propozim nga kryetari
Zgjedhja e zv/kryetareve	Propozim nga Asambleja	Propozim nga kryetari
Zgjedhja e zëdhënësit	Emërim nga kryesia	Emërim nga kryetari
Kandidat kryeministër	E zgjedh kryesia	Është kryetari
Kandidat deputet	I zgjedh zona	I zgjedh kryetari
Kandidat ministër	I zgjedh kryesia	I zgjedh kryetari
Kandidat kr. Bashkie	I zgjedh zona	I zgjedh kryetari
Kritiket/fraksion ne parti	Lejohej kritika/fraksioni	Ndalohet kritika/fraksioni
Mbledhje Këshilli/Asambleje	4 mbledhje	0 -1 mbledhje
Konference/Aktiv kombëtar	Çdo dy vjet	Çdo katër vjet
Mocioni i Mosbesimit	Aplikohej mocioni	Nuk aplikohet mocioni
Vendimmarrja në kryesi	Me votim të fshehtë	Me votim të hapur
Kryetar dege - pezullimi	Pezullon kryesia	Pezullon kryetari
Kryesia lokale - pezullimi	Pezullon Asambleja/këshilli	Pezullon kryetari
Anëtar kryesie - pezullimi	Pezullon kryesia	Pezullon kryetari
Deputet - pezullimi	Pezullon kryesia/grupi	Pezullon kryetari
Mbledhje kryesie	18 mbledhje	4-5 mbledhje
Burimi: Instituti i Studimeve Politike. RRPP project "The Presidentialization of political parties"		

(Table 1- Competences of party leaders in Albania, 1992- 2017)[158]

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[156] Institute of Political Studies: 'Political Agreements 1991- 2016: The Product? Strong leaders and weak institutions', (obtained from: : http://isp.com.al/2016/06/06/marreveshjet-politike-1991-2016-produkti-lidere-te-forte-dhe-institucione-te-dobeta/, last seen on April 24, 2017)

[157] Institute of Political Studies: From two-term leader to the all-powerful leader (obtained from: http://isp.com.al/2017/03/21/isp-, last seen on April 24, 2017)

[158] Ibid

Also, the functioning of coalitions between the parties in post-communist Albania is not based on political programs and ideological and political orientations, but determinants are personal relationshipswith the political leader[159]. During the transition, experience has shown that the dominant names that have led post-communist Albania are individuals with a strong character and high level of authoritarianism. The involvement of politically-moderated politicians in politics has brought them to change by imitating the party's historic leader or being removed from the political scene. In support of this, different scholastic ideas have often done an analogy between the Stalinist model and the Albanian model of political parties, "in the same way, post-communist parties in Albania and in some other countries were created in a religious spirit: they had one Spiritual leader"[160]. The political system and the political parties in Albania have undergone a lot of changes during the 27 years of transition, but the historical leaders of the parties have not been affected by these changes[161].

Conclusions

In this study, we analyzed the role of political culture in democratization processes, having as a case study the post-communist Albania. The main thesis of this paper was the lack of congruence between the political culture and the democratic political system in Albania during the transition. Although we emphasized the main theoretical and philosophical concepts on the notion of political culture as a determining factor in the

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[159] AfrimKrasniqi, *Political Parties in Albania 1920-2006,* (Eurorilindia, Tirana, 2006) p.245
[160] Ibid, p.246-247
[161] Ibid, p. 260

creation of a stable political and democratic system, we came to the conclusion that in post-communist Albanian society this has not been achieved yet. The post-communist culture of post-communist Albania has not been disconnected from the totalitarian system, as the social conditions for building a stable and immediate democracy were not present and had to be established. Political elites failed to promote conditions as socializing agents of political processes to create a democratic political culture in the country.

The first part of the paper focused on the theoretical and philosophical aspects of political culture. Likewise, a brief framework of the influence of the communist dictatorship on the creation of a political culture in totalitarianism has been provided. At the same time we gave a description and explanation of the aspects of political culture and its relationship with political systems. The second part of the paper identified the transition features in Albania, arguing that political culture does not support democratization in the country, as it is a remnant of the previous regime. Yet after 27 years, the social, cultural and economic transition is unfinished and Albania ranks as a semi-democracy (see Freedom House's reports on world democracy)[162]. The totalitarian, an undemocratic political culture built during the five decades of the Albanian totalitarian regime has become an obstacle to democracy for the country. For this reason, proper studies are needed for the literatureon building a democratic political culture in the country. When we talk about democratic political culture we consider the most important political subject in society: the participatory citizen. Democracy cannot be built in countries and societies where the citizen does not have the basic values of democracy and where attitudes

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[162] Freedom House (obtained from:https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2016/albania, last seen on 25 April 2017)

towards the political system and society are in opposition to the democracy notion.

As a conclusion, it is important to create conditions and instruments for building a democratic political culture in the country. Knowledge of political culture explains much about the nature of the political system, the political elites, and the citizen in that society. The political culture components in post-communist Albania 'speak' of an orientation towards the dictatorial system, the regime has fallen but the mentality is in existence. Removing political elites that are related to or originating from the communist class and replacing them with new elites can bring about positive changes by realizing a real political rotation. By orienting Albanian society towards a political culture in conformity with the values, beliefs and attitudes of consolidated democratic states. Younger generations are those in whom the totalitarian components of political culture will disappear by promoting and preserving a democratic political culture.

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