

# *The Media Influence on Albanian Society*

*Vehbi Miftari & Donik Sallova\**

## **Abstract**

The focus of this study is the relation of media with the audiences in Albania and Kosova. The study further aims to analyze the relations of television media, as a means of mass-communication with the public, observing above all their tendency to transform television into a control tool, namely to influence the path of creating independent judgments. The talk show type programs present in Tirana media will be treated as shows simultaneously serving to initiate the public defense of powerful people. This claim shall be followed by the attempt to answer the questions: is the tendency to win the "public battle" one of imposing "the indisputable truth" to the audiences? What is the media impact on them and what transformation do media undergo as a result of the mediatization of society? What is the relation between them and what is their mutual refusal or impact? Does the Albanian spectacle present the current situation in Albanian society or is it an unrealistic portrayal of made-up images? Beyond this, other TV media from the Albanian environment will be treated, together with their impact in shaping the public opinion. Televisions in Kosova will be treated as being in apathy with regards to spectacular talk-shows, and dominated by political tendencies which predominate the cultural discourse. TV opinionism comprises another characteristic of the "Albanian spectacle" which will be in the focus of this study. Does this opinionism constitute a media mechanism to spectacularize the public, or does it comprise, together with the media itself, an instrument in the hand of "power" to control and construct the society? Special phenomena characteristic for the Albanian media in Albania (and its impact on the society), will be contrasted and compared to special phenomena of the media in Kosova (together with their impact). The relation of television with the public opinion in Albania and the tendency to "spectacularize" the society through presenting public judgments will be in the core of the research; while in Kosova the tendency to develop controlled media through information control shall be looked into closely.

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\* Dr. Vehbi Miftari, AAB University, Pristina, E-mail: [vehbi.miftari@aab-edu.net](mailto:vehbi.miftari@aab-edu.net);  
Msc. Donik Sallova, AAB University, Pristina, E-mail: [donik.sallova@aab-edu.net](mailto:donik.sallova@aab-edu.net)

### ***Political Society / (Non)Political Media***

There is a general belief, often disputed, that media, just like the political representation, is a product of the culture in a society, and that the tendency to supervise the general public belongs to all media in transition, especially those of mass-communication, such as the television.

As the media culture belongs to the society, and even one under transition, let us start our quest in a speculate form: Is the television as a developed media in the Albanian environment during the last 20 year a representation of this reality and what is the role of the individual or the collectivity in transforming the conscience of free judgment? Is there a self-proclaimed tendency to spectacularize the relation of Albanians with television? If so, what is the final goal of this tendency and how was the symbiosis between expectation and free judgment as well as the tendency to reach the peak of "the power of lights" through opinionated filters created (society of advertisement, in which the supervised opinion is promoted)?

Let us start our search in viewing the relation which media in Albania, Kosova and elsewhere in Albanian environment have with the audience. First of all, let us claim that the Albanian society all over, partially politicized, has produced and derived political media, inclined to spectacularize to the level of "the paradise of lights", which means the *pro forma* presence of a necessary veil of spectacles, enabling the institutionalization of their political aims (and strings).

As we are talking about different media contexts, derived from different political and social ones, is this tendency developed uniformly, say, in Albania and Kosova? No, because the cultural, social and political context, completely different in those two Albanian countries, has determined the scope or the level of individual and collective participation in constructing televised media, namely their relation with the "society of lights". Therefore, today we speak of different media contexts, cultural contexts and, above all, of the somewhat paradoxical developments in the relation between television media and the citizen, by which we somewhat

include the relation of the individual with the media tendency of “blunting the masses”.

The tendency to spectacularize, both individuals and the collectivity, as a precondition of “rehabilitation” and “participation” in the cultural and political trends of the society in Albania, as well as the unnoticed and indifferent role of the audience in relation to the politicized media tendencies in Kosova, constitute paradoxical edges in the relation between Albanians and television today. Yet, as our paper does not aim to treat the relation of media to the audience particularly, or even the relations between media and marketing, but rather that between media as a political and cultural instrument and the media instrumentalization of the society, the “canonization” of media exposure as a precondition to be included in the mass-initiative politicization, namely controlled media and political deculturization, will be essential.

As already known, the talk shows in Albania constitute an essential concept of television. Particularly main television channels produce live shows by which they aspire to spectacularize the society, or make it impossible for the audience to detach from the media product, and consequently they achieve the silent pact of agreement on the control power of the media in their behavior, determining their dependency on media.

Yet, if the spectacularization (cultural, political and social, alongside the media one) is a *per se* aim (an aim in itself) of the media (television mostly) could it also be that the most important TV shows serve as the beginning of public defense for the powerful people of politics and further, as a determination of the sole instrument by which the individual may be treated as a part of the medially culturalized society? Is it a tendency to win the “public battle” of imposing to audiences “the irrefutable truth”, which they must accept through agreeing with the media tendency to serve as an instrument for political “culturalization”, through media “spectacularization”? What is the media impact on them and what transformation do media undergo as a consequence of mediatization of society? What is the relation between them and what is the mutual refusal or impact?

If the most important feature of those “show-screens” is the bond they make with the audience and the impact of television over the Albanian public, the inclusion without reluctance of lay people without any public importance in *live* shows, speaks of a tendency to “spectacularize” the Albanian individual and society. Most of Albanian citizens are ready to participate in a TV show and become “participants” in the making of the show and the spectacle, with whatever role in it, regardless of the fact of whether or not it relates minimally to them as individuals. Apart from the fact that the show-media with spectacles constitute the main interest of the Albanian audience, the audience itself is open to make public its own identity (if that identity can be distinguished in the plurality of collective spectacles), without a public function in this collective spectacle of the Albanian society.

This definition however is only based on the media environment of Albania. In the other Albanian parts the impact of media is dissimilar. In Kosova, as was mentioned at the beginning, the television is apathic wit regards to the talk-shows of the world of spectacle, while political affiliation predominates the cultural discourse. Consequently, the audience is not tied to television in the sense of cultivating civic or cultural principles and it does not constitute part of creation of media culture, nor of any spectacularizing tendency. There the audience is almost immune to television spectacularizing tendencies, and the TV centers themselves, as a product of traditional media culture, are far from becoming spectacularizing media. This immunity touches on the cultural discourse and its refusal, each time it is wrapped with “political discourse”. This pertains particularly to public television, the RTK, which unlike the public media in Albania, receives a broad audience and frequent viewing. Even here a sort of cultural paradox is observed in the relation between the individual and television, should we compare the situation in Albania and Kosova. Why does this occur, such an extreme situation in the relations of audiences in the two main cultural and media Albanian centers? What are the factors making the lay and private Albanian person so open to the public on one hand, and totally immune on the other? What are the paradoxes and what are the edges of the relation to television in Albanian

society? Is this only a transitional phase of development in a previously closed society, or is it the very nature of the Albanian individual? Do the audiences in Albania and Kosova change (as the media do)?

### ***Mediatization/ "Spectacularization" of the Albanian Individual***

(Television / Mediatized Public Opinion)

The media development in Albania, since the beginning of the 1990s, is characterized by common inclination of Albanians to cultural and media "westernization". The media was consequently developed under the western media influence, mainly of neighboring countries (such as Italy), which "spectacularizes" the society, treating this as a premise for the "mass-marketing", or the impact on media culture of the audience and through it, the political and social culture. The pact of creating a political dependency through media dependency is the political and media end goal of a spectacularized society. The debate on politicized media (television) in Albania, a constant debate (non-substantial, in our view) should therefore be oriented to the impact in behavior, more than in political affiliation of media. The political affiliation is a rapport deriving from the role between media and marketing and does not constitute the focus of this study.

Kosova, in a somewhat different (and changeable) political and cultural context, due to the traditional spirit and its influence, has developed some independent media in the 1990s, developed media controlled by local or international politics, namely businesses, in the first years of 21<sup>st</sup> century. Paradoxical, isn't it? Today, it has a politically controlled public TV broadcaster, "controlling" perceptions through news bulletins which are predominantly politically motivated, without any tendency to spectacularization, but rather aiming towards political objectivism, as well as some other media dependant on the premise of "building by any means" of a society in which the media role is culturally and politically necessary. There is a tendency to create the media power of businesses, which will necessarily increase the impact of the media in the life of individuals,

if the media role is not previously transformed in a new concept, as will later be analyzed in this paper.

The relation of the individual as an active center of independent judgment and the inter-influential spectacle (media/television) in Albania was developed leaning towards the latter. Television has managed to achieve its goal: institutionalize the spectacle as a means to communicate with audiences. The individual suddenly sees himself turned into a spectacle object, without managing to “impose” as a subject who, through this TV “publicity” aspires to accomplish certain goals in his interests and those of the community he represent (as a lay non-public figure). He is invited to spectacles, becomes part of them, accomplishes his “spectacularizing” part according to the scenario he was given and finally, totally instrumentalized, he turns into a “media person”, but never a “public personality”, since his participation in television does not constitute a participation in the public arena in which he would express his opinions on certain social or other special issues, but only a “participation” in them. Thus he simply participates in a spectacularizing arena, in which a certain “game” is being “played”, aimed at entertaining the television audience, or increasing the subscription to a TV platform, in which the citizen / the individual simply simulates his own role in an almost static manner (i.e. not being active, but submissive to spectacularizing actions on him).

The reasons for such availability of the Albanian individual to be spectacularized without any public function (apart from entertaining the audience to the detriment of his private dignity), should be studied thoroughly from sociological and anthropological viewpoint. The long period of isolation in the communist system might have influenced the Albanian individual to view himself as “lost”, while the chaotic period of (endless) transition, in which the Albanian individual remains unaccomplished, with a poor quality of life, unemployed, without quality education, relatively isolated from the world, not integrated with the rest of the world etc., has influenced in empowering this self-perception of the individual as being “lost”. Found in this state of “inexistence”, the Albanian individual has somehow accepted to transform into a “public being”, since as an

independent thinker he does not manage to exist and have a function in the society. Based on this fact other phenomena can be explained, such as the militant behavior according to which "the inexistent Albanian individual" merges with collective identity and ideas, lacking a self and ready to do anything which lines up with alienated thought, never being his true self.

In Kosova, however, the relation of the individual with television as a spectacle arena is different, in the sense that the individual is less (much less) predisposed to become part of TV and media spectacles, precisely as a refusal to the tendency to publicize his private identity. Yet, this relation of the individual to the media remains as indirect, due to the tendency of the latter to manipulate, and therefore politically and publicly instrumentalize the individual in Kosova through information/ misinformation. There, the problem of this relation lies not in the tendency of the individual to be "publicized" or "spectacularized", but rather in the aspiration of politics to keep the individual as far as possible from the public sphere (as a common good).

In this comparison of the individual and the media in the Albania-Kosova relations, it is not to say that in Albania the media is not politically instrumentalized. Yet, unlike it, the main aim of the media in Kosova is not the spectacularization of the individual, serving to the television programming, but rather his public instrumentalization in the function of political interests of political parties in power.

This refusal of the spectacle by the Kosova Albanian individual – and the political instrumentalization through media "information", which the government imposes to him constantly – constitutes an abnormal situation for a European society (or aspiring to be such), the reasons for which might be many. The fact that the Kosova Albanian citizen was active participant for almost two decades in the process of the movement for freedom, independence and democracy, might make him more interested to re-find and live the private life, "the lost intimacy", being predetermined to lead as non-public a life as possible (even less so spectacular). This is only one interpretation of this refusal to spectacles. Meanwhile, the fact that the Albanian individual and society in Kosova are "informed" and influenced by politics

through controlled public media and to some point influenced private media (due to their donation receiving character), speaks of the lack of social reaction to political developments which through media are presented as favorable, but are in fact damaging in the process of accomplishing the will of the Kosova people for independence and a state (such are the many political compromises in relation to Serbia turning the state of Kosova non-functional).

Just like in the first case when the individual is mediatically spectacularized, without a function to the public interest (the case of Albania), so in the other case where the “independent thinking” of the individual or the society is publically controlled through media (Kosova case), we asses that media has deviated (unintentionally perhaps) from its main aim: true an unbiased information, as well as “entertainment” which does not jeopardize the ethics or the dignity of the individual or the collectivity.

### ***The Impact of Television in the Public Opinion***

Nowadays in the Albanian environment, information and opinion shaping on public issues is still accomplished through media, namely television, news and shows broadcasts on television. This is why the impact of television in shaping the citizens’ opinion on public and political issues is so great (on the relation of television and public in today’s European society the Italian author Zecchi speaks in his *Man is what he watches*). Political parties aspiring to seize or remain in power, have turned the positive relation with media / television into an essential practice of political activity. The “support” which a party might have from the media may influence its coming or remaining in power, just like the “animosity” with the media, or part of it, might send a governmental party into opposition. Be it just or not, this influence of the media on the public opinion is now noticeable, and even among Albanians (in Albania and Kosova) this sort of influence is increasing.

While in Albania the media is an articulator of politics, divided into two political extremes, pro the political left or right wing, with different scale of biasness and influence, the media in Kosova,



especially the televised media, has constantly been against the right and pro the left wing (what is known as the former KLA establishment, which after the war formed a political party and is today in power). Due to ideological, political and financial domination, the public broadcaster RTK remains to this very day covered with a purely political veil. Due to the donations and the origins impacting on their foundations, some other media were created "to achieve the aim of an open society or multiethnic society". Due to the direct impact of governing politics on the media through the public money, other media in Kosova remain financially dependent (and therefore politically so) from the government. Naturally, in this semi-darkness there are media, such as the "Koha" group, which nevertheless have partially overcome the ideological and financial dependency in the interest of public sphere.

Thus in Albania the influence on the public opinion is more difficult in the sense of the ability of one side of the media to have monopoly, while in Kosova, the Public Radio and Television is practically controlled since its establishment from the party which is today in power, the PDK, or from its parapolitical structures. Being that the RTK has a wide land and satellite broadcast, the possibility to influence/manipulate the public opinion through it is greater than that of other television channels which claim "non-biasness". Even the Law on the RTK, approved only recently in the Kosova Parliament, more due to international pressure than the law-drafting immanence in Kosova, expresses very clearly the tendency of the party in power to constantly keep it under control.

The media market, however, cannot only be treated within these two cultural and media centers, without observing their inter-dependability. This would of course require to notice the "breakdown" of the spectacularizing tendency, namely, opinion-shaping according to political dimensions, between the two audiences, as a result of inter-dependability or, at least, media intercommunication between Tirana and Prishtina. Let us offer an example. As known, television channels of Albania enjoy a wide audience in Kosova. Yet, regardless of this "fondness" and the audience they enjoy, their aspiration to expand the influence (control)

on the audience is in disparity, at times even among televisions from the same media outlet. Regardless of the fact that Top Channel is very critical of the government and Prime Minister Berisha and favors (if we are permitted to so phrase it) the socialist leader Edi Rama, Berisha's popularity in Kosova is incomparably greater than that of Mr. Rama (if we could still say that Rama enjoys popularity in Kosova). Or, in the opposite case, although TV Klan openly supports Mr. Berisha and fiercely criticizes Mr. Rama, the audience of this television channel in Kosova is incomparably lower in relation to that of Top Channel.

So the audience in Kosova has made a clear division between the program quality and entertainment level on one hand, and biased information of Albanian TV channels on the other.

Another interesting case is presented by the TV Klan twin channel in Kosova, the Klan Kosova channel, whose programming quality and editorial policy are clearly different to that of the core unit TV Klan in Tirana. While TV Klan, as already mentioned, supports the right wing in Albania, Klan Kosova and its main actors are known as strong supporters of the Kosovar left wing, namely the current Thaçi government. In this endless situation of paradox, the question which might rise is the following: is it in the editorial policy of TV Klan to support parties in power, as the right wing in Albania feels closer to the left wing in Kosova? Or perhaps the private media in Kosova are obliged to always keenly support the governmental parties (not even saving the politically forsaken professionalism)? It suffices to say that this constitutes an anomaly in the media relations which we are examining here.

Such a situation, murky in appearance, died in two colors: the white against the black, which turns into a battle of the black against the white in Albania, and the black against nothing in Kosova, becomes even more obvious once the practical relations of citizen / individual with the media are observed. Televisions in Albania, we emphasize, aspire "the state of light" by alienating or not allowing the individual development of independent political judgment, keeping it "under the shadow of the spectacle", and reminding him constantly of the white-and-black color range. The television in Kosova, however,

due to the lack of this range, aspires to control the individual through direct and not circumlocutory language, i.e. not aspiring a “state of lights”, due to its refusal to spectacularize the individual, and rather sell him the political “truth” as a product of media relations. In both cases, the individual and his independent judgment remain hostages of the anonymity created from the degrading effect of lights in Albania, or from the cultural indifference, produced by political media in Kosova. In both cases the independent judgment aligns with the individual drama space, but is not erected to the level of individual responsibility to the individual culture in society. It needs “spectacularization” in order to treat its being as equal in “a state of lights” or “total public indifference”, with the purpose of treating its lost being in an informatively controlled society. Both of those stances keep him beneath the lower level of being a politically active being (Aristotelian zoon), which does not create an independent judgment as part of submission to media tendencies, but in relation to their professionalism, which they put against their personal culture and vision on the collective cultural harmony.

Is therefore the spectacle or public manipulation (i.e. political inertia), a measure for the creation of independent judgment? Furthermore, are these premises critical steps, based on which we would judge the activeness of the public? We believe not. Both stances speak of a still controllable public which treats the necessary presence as a possibility, adapting it to the imposed form, even by cutting the thread of interacting with it, or by being totally inert, yet still totally inactive, towards it. His independent judgment is preserved as such to the point of adaptation, or the meeting point with the form imposed from television. Beyond it, his judgment is prejudiced by the acceptable space of participation. And this devotion and adaptation to form, in the media of Albania, or the total lack of relation to it in Kosova, signifies the alienation of the freedom of independent thought and, consequently, lack of independent public judgment which shapes its public opinion.

Nowadays, the judgment of the opinion turns into judgment for the opinion. In a changing society, when the totalitarian mass is preserved as a memory, the judgment of the opinion will narrow the

room for activity to the extreme, alienating it into a conformist space, in which the independent judgment, already adapted in form, is seen as the link between the society and the public disposal for the victimization of the individual creative space. Inertia of judgment, different to that of the elites, yet spread into public debating space, puts them into crisis to.

### ***Mediatization / Politics with Media***

As the concept of television and its media product in Albania is set in the form of a spectacle, where the “entertainment” which disregards the civic / public ethics constitutes the main aim, the political public debate, as well as the parliamentary, media and television debate, is viewed and constructed in the same form of political spectacle, which regardless of the debating “wilderness” is seen as attractive and, almost entertaining for the Albanian television audience. Often the debates degrade into personal insults among debaters, which sometimes makes the televisions place the accent on them, exceeding the issue of public or political debates, as they assess that this is how the “space of public lights” increases and, even if indirectly, enables an increase of TV audience. Then, the very tendency of televisions to stir such debates seems intentional, otherwise the media themselves would have to lead the attempts to change that approach of debating in public. Why? Is the dominant discourse of the entire Albanian society, or are the TV political debates, and not only them, seen as a “stage” for entertainment?

In fact, one of the aspects which might influence this type of discourse among political representatives in public and TV debates is their attempt to prove their “loyalty” to political leaders, who are considered as a gate for the accomplishment of their ambitions. The more doctrinary / indoctrinating, aggressive and refusing a given political representative is to arguments of his political opponent, the more will his political role be seen with fondness.

Such a tendency to conflict in TV debates has started to spread in Kosova, precisely because Albania’s TV channels are widely viewed there. Yet, unlike with the TV shows in Albania, the debates in Kosova

are much less dynamic and aggressive, consequently debating and circulating fewer ideas. Is this a sign of emancipation and culture among Kosova politicians or is the society not yet open and free to discuss all of the problems it faces? An empirical comparative study perhaps would clarify these relations.

### ***The Opinion (projected) on Television / "Electoral" Power of the Opinionists***

The "logical" consequence in this midst is the aim of television / media to project the opinion and impose that in the public, namely to impose their own truth as a real / factual situation. Thus television / media as an opinion-shaper on general societal developments aspire to exercise its own influence in determining the approach and orientation of politics in relation to those developments. If the media could represent the public interests and opinion in this tendency, i.e. if it were an influential mechanism of the public and civil society in the state political bodies, this could perhaps be right and legitimate. Such examples with independent media serving the public interest are found in western and liberal-democratic world. Yet, in case of Albania and Kosova, the role of the media in shaping / creating the opinion presents another tendency of social and political instrumentalization of audience (as individuals and collectivity).

Thus the media in Albania, and Kosova too, have selected a cast of opinionists, who with their (in)dependent knowledge present their judgments and impact the shaping of the public opinion. The aim of televisions, through the direction of those "opinion-shows" as "show-opinions" - being in supremacy as an information source for the citizens - is to determine the political will of their audience, which is projected as a potential voting troop. Putting politicians against opinionists, during the electoral campaign and in any other period has given the latter the image of the "neutral" observers and the "right" of judgment. The final confrontation in one of the TV arenas might be crucial for the electoral and political fate of a leader aspiring to win the elections. Often enough all of this may be just an improvisation, as has happened in Albania and especially in Kosova, where the

opinionists, invited to articulate their independent thoughts, sway their opinions depending on the political casts they serve.

There are however cases when the media managed to transfer this opinion into general judgment of the public opinion. At least once, televisions in Albania and Kosova, as projectors of the public opinion, have managed to influence the shaping of the dominant public opinion for political debates, for the necessity of political change in government. The first case was that of 2005 in Albania. At that time, media intensified the criticism towards the socialist government of the time, leaving aside not even the smallest drawback or scandal and giving sufficient air space to the political alternative of the right wing. Regardless of the need for change and power rotation in 2005, the Albanian television channels (and the written media) had aligned themselves with the opposition (apart from Albanian Radio and Television). We want to stress a fact: if in 2005 the socialists were discredited in government, the media, just like the opposition, presented them as totally discredited. A silent professional observation can outline a similar tendency for media influence in future electoral developments of the country, yet now against the right wing and pro the left wing, however similar with that of 2005.

In Kosova, in fall 2007, shortly before the independence was proclaimed and after the death of historical president Ibrahim Rugova (2006), the television media (and the written ones) managed to create and impose the public opinion that the time had come for political rotation and that the Democratic League of Kosova (LDK), which had lead the movement of an independent state since the late 1980s to the late 1990s, should step into opposition, because Kosova had to be led towards "the final aim" by the Democratic Party of Kosova (PDK). In fact, as mentioned above, being always biased (favoring the party emerging to power), the idea of such a projection of the opinion has existed early, yet is became accomplishable after other (non-electoral) factors became accessible, such as, for example, a part of international factor present in Kosova which sought partners in imposing other compromises, opposed to the aspirations of Albanians (such as entry into talks without any predetermined principles or the neglect of resolute principles, set in Rugova's time). Nowadays this medium,

found between Scylla and Charybdis, is forced to soothe the compromises in relation to Serbia and through controlled informing and propagating the pro-governmental “opinionists”, it is trying to impose the opinion that the state of Kosova is moving towards “the conclusion of supervised independence”, as if this was an accomplishment and not a logical ending of a (exaggerated) process.

Finally, these cases prove that in Albania and Kosova it was not possible to set “media conditions” for genuine impact in creating an independent opinion, to which the TV audience / potential electorate would refer. Searching for space outside dependency from media in which they are represented, serious opinionists are faced with the challenge of either “silencing their voices” or smoothly turning into individuals as biased as the medium airing them to the wide audience, whose judgments align with the expectations which the television uses as tools and strategies to shape the collective judgment. Are there clear borders between audience expectation, independent professional judgment and the possibility to participate in a TV debate regardless of the professional opinion, previously shaped, which might not side with the “expectation” that the television channel has as a public media?

Is therefore a “rebel” performance of an opinionist, whose attention is not the television audience possible or is this after all just a “game” in a controlled stage?

### ***Spectacularizing Opinionism as Political Breakthrough***

Apart from the service which the opinionists’ cast conducts for the government and the political parties in Albania and Kosova (more in Kosova and less in Albania), in the majority of cases, this “type” of opinionists will soon end up in the same political setup with the very ones they had “judged well” while presenting their “independent opinions” in public. To bring examples: In Kosova, prior to any political campaign, the PDK promotes the opinionists’ “guard”, to whom, as a payback for their political judgments, it presents the posts of Deputy-Ministers or Members of Parliament. If you were to analyze the government and the Parliament composure, you will find media-

political representatives who are there without any voter support (only the decision-maker's decision over the militant voters determines their fate). Recently, the debate on the often-talked-about Criminal Code, which contains two disputed articles (37 and 38) on the limitations of freedom of speech, made the discrepancy between the profession and political affiliations of journalists emerge into surface, as did the demagoguery with which the code sponsor, Minister of Justice, once called on the MPs to vote for it and then called on the President of the State to not accept them. The journalists were accused of sleeping under government sheets, while the government needed no accusation, as the majority of journalists had embraced the political "dialogue" with the government and other Ministers had to reiterate the Minister's demagoguery as an announced moral act. The media experience in Kosova, tightly linked to politics, has enabled some journalists to behave like "political conformists".

This phenomenon shows that the Albanian society, in Albania and Kosova alike, has yet not managed, not even at the level of media opinionists, to build the "culture of public interest", in which public non-political personalities undertake to protect and promote the public interest in certain interim or regular periods without aspiring any personal public or political promotion. Meanwhile the principle of "activation" for the civil society is not the assumption of the political/governmental power, but the influencing of it.

There are many opinionists who have changed their critical stance once politicians established certain (cooperative) relations with them (e.g. a part of opinionists have ended up as political advisers or MPs for political parties in power). There are also many opinionists who, due to deteriorated personal relations (and interests) with certain politicians, use the public space to attack the same politicians without any grounds, implanting a great hatred among the voters who do not know "the story" behind their relation. And it is the media/television that gives an opportunity to those opinionists without any professional (or moral) credibility to exercise their influence on the public and the voters for the benefit of the political wing the media itself supports.



Thus Albanian TV opinionists are to a great extent instrumentalized and instrumentalizing. They serve the interests of certain political conjunctures through instrumentalizing waves of the media, and in playing the role of public judges they aspire to build up their public profile for the benefit of their future political carriers, only seldom focusing on general public interests. It seems that the fate of many “analysts” and “opinionists” is similar to that of many “activists” of the civil society, who after receiving the many funds for the empowerment of civic activism, swiftly turn into political parties and quickly assimilating the political behavior against which they were once “committed”. As to whether or not this is a virtue of the Albanian citizen too, or just a vice of our civic and political bodies, remains a dilemma which needs examining and debating within Albanian societies in Albania and Kosova.

Are the television channels going to free themselves from their controlling tendencies and will they stimulate the free judgment? The problem of media tendency to control and influence the public opinion and through this to increase the access to political decision-making, is not one linked only to media particularly. This is in fact a problem which reflects a wide scope of issues which the Albanian societies (in Albania and Kosova) have in their endeavors to build a political and social life on the principles of *freedom* and *democracy*. There are many factors and sections of those societies which need *reforming* based on liberal-democratic principles, and which would lead to the liberation of media/television from their controlling tendencies. Above all, it is the *civil society* which needs reforming in the Albanian societies. In Albania and Kosova alike, civil society has not managed to build its profile as a representative of the public interests, “combating” against government on the basis of public interest principles and not as used for the “breakthrough” of their representatives into the race for political power.

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