

Public Administration Professionalism and Political Changes in Albania under EU Consideration

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Abstract: Albania is making big steps in the process of integration toward western institutions and organizations. The domestic political factor plays a leading role in Albanian society as an indicator of expressing the willingness to help the process of integration through well designed reforms. However, the resistance of political forces, especially those with direct or indirect heritages from the old political class, is preventing the transition to newer western political concepts of doing politics. Reforms to improve democracy requires leadership from within the country as a prerequisite in building the political will for reform as very important for consolidating democracy and strengthen ties with European Union and distancing the society from its troubled past. In this paper I want to illustrate the model of development in politics of public administration in Albania, to be part of the political management in my country. Moreover, one of the biggest challenges in public reforming of Albanian economy and making Albania attractive to foreign investments is the implementation of the property rights. This still remains one of the biggest challenges due to the lack of transparency of the process of legalization and lack of state guidance in development of urban and rural areas. In this paper we analyze two topics directly related to change the public administration with Strategy of Decentralization and Local Autonomy.

Keywords: public administration; EU role; leadership style; management; reforms

1. Introduction

Albania, located in South East Europe, has traveled a turbulent historical path. For 500 years, it was part of the Ottoman Empire, and only in the beginning of 20th century started to design the frame of an independent country. It has been argued that Albania knew little of liberal democracy before the communists took power

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after World War II (Elbasani, 2004), but the authoritarian monarchy established in the mid-1920s, brought an important contribution in shaping the Albanian Constitution and enriching the legislative body with western concepts and standards. The former King Zog I (1928-1939), engaged a group of French, German, and Italian lawyers and constitutionalists not only to help the Albanian institutions to improve their institutional culture, but also to build the fundamentals of the Albanian Constitution."Zog's monarchy brought stability to Albania and the king organized an educational system. He also attempted to modernize the Albanian military, though the costs involved in this project were high. As King he was, honored by the governments of Italy, Luxembourg, Egypt, Yugoslavia, France, Rumania, Greece, Belgium, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Austria. (Zogu Zog¹)

1.1. Turbulent Historical Path, Albania and Traditional Culture

Western European values have always been welcomed by Albanian traditions and culture and, the revival of those traditional values in the new Albanian society is the right approach to integration. The communist regime that took power right after WW II tried to impose artificially the proletarian way of management. Those new ideas were embraced quite successfully by the poorest class of the society with the promise of equality and fraternity in sharing the goods of the society and, fulfilling their dreams of becoming land owners. In imposing those communist theories, exported from the Soviets and after their example, the political class initiated a reign of terror against rich class and people who did not share the same communist vision in governing the country.

The Communist Party adopted a dictatorship that resembled a rigid Stalinist version of communist regimes (Elbasani, 2004, p. 33). Thousands were killed and thousands of others were imprisoned. Most of these were intellectuals who had studied in European Universities and who opposed the communists by explaining to the society that the form of the government should be established by free elections of a pluralistic democratic society.

¹ ahmet zogu zog 1 - king of the albania181961.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses

Albania commits itself to continue and foster cooperation and good neighborly relations with the other countries of the region including an appropriate level of mutual concessions concerning the movement of persons, goods, capital and services as well as the development of projects of common interest, notably those related to combating organized crime, corruption, money laundering, illegal migration and trafficking, including in particular in human beings and illicit drugs. This commitment constitutes a key factor in the development of the relations and cooperation between the Parties and thus contributes to regional stability. (Dumi, 2013, pp. 134-157)

There are three hypotheses in this paper research:

H1: Studied the prevalent scenario with a detailed socio-cultural and religious background of the inhabitants of the Albania region, an attempt has been made to study the established in the area with the ingrained misperceived and misinterpreted religious ideology of the region, exploitation of its relatively emotionally dominant culture, emotionally intertwined social system, role of mass media and the possible emotional implications of the geographical location or positioning of the region.

H 2: After silencing the political opposition, the communist leadership imposed a total obedience to its rule in Albanian society, and extended control over all aspects of social, political, economic and cultural life (Goldman, 1997).

In mid 80s, the total isolation of the country from the foreign international relations and the policy of self-reliance reached paranoiac levels (Elbasani, 2004, p. 33). The fall of the Berlin Wall found the Albanian communist regime struggling to deal with changes, even though the student movement against the communism has reached its peak.

H3: The mentality of the old political class still influences the creation of new elite by selecting new politicians based on traditional political connections, and not on individual intellectual values and institutional experience.

2.1. Need for Reform of Political Thought

While the establishment of a pluralist democratic political system was an historical moment after five decades of imposed-value society, the NATO membership in

2009 was a major indicator of political change. With its NATO membership and the willingness to be part of the European Union, Albania is reforming its society and political mentality to better fit the new needs and responsibilities. *“Most important is that the elites, as well as the people, have shown a striking consensus on the issues of democratization and Euro-Atlantic integration.”* (Nation in Transit. Freedom House report, 2008).

This analysis presents data from a survey sent to members of professional indicators of Albanian development. The first free elections were held in Albania in March 1991, but the Democratic Party, even though it won a respectable amount of votes confirming the irreversibility of the democratization process (Goldman, 1997), could not get enough to form the majority, leaving in power the old Communist Party. In 1992, after one year of continuous street protests and populist movements, the country went through early elections, and the Democratic Party won, giving the country its first pluralist parliament after 48 years of communism.

2.2. Data Analysis and Discussion

In many countries of Europe the public sector is going through a deep reformation. Improving performance, better services, and time spent on the assignments realization, the responsibility and the effectiveness of the programs and public services are very important to everybody, for the persons who offer these services and for the ones who receive it. But there are a lot of political, bureaucratic and technical hindrances that affect the performance of the Public Administration.

Being unique in all Europe, while installing a very unique way of communist management, Albania built a steady mono-party mentality of leadership, also shaping authoritarian leaders and managers in all the society levels including a large politicized public administration. Albania and its complex history is facing challenges of political thought and political class reformation. Certain parts of society that support or should support the main lines of political leadership in overcoming the old political school obstacle are those who continue to feed political class with a resistance mentality.

Although the abandoning of the old policy is clear indicator of secession from the Communist leadership concepts, the current domestic political factor is inhibiting the country's political integration. The update of the political class new elite, manning away from the old traditional model, is more than a necessity. The old

model that is still dominating in the political leadership style has been totalitarian one, as Dr. Barjaba stated in his report; “..the Albanian political elite has been characterized by despotic and authoritarian mentality, which has always needed a father figure, sought, found and betrayed him to go 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 democratic state.” (Barjaba, & June, 1998, p. 20) This makes difficult the efforts of young generations to find space to fit into the decision-making process of the policy makers, with the attempt to reform the political mentality to better fit their needs.

Even though the very intense participation of students and young intellectuals was one of the main features of the democratic movement in Albania (Barjaba, 1998), the resistance to fresh blood in politics, is an attempt to conserve the power, resulting in implementation of old ways of authoritarian management, seriously jeopardizing the integration process. Even in recent electoral process resulted and valued as a good one with a quiet transition in shifting powers from Democratic Party to the Socialist Party, the new Prime Minister elected, Edi Rama, much younger than his former opponent Berisha, still reflects the old traditional model in managing his political party. Edi Rama’s newly appointed very young Ministers and Head of Important Public Services and Institutions in Albania has been percept not as an attempt to change the way of doing politics by reforming radically the political class, but as a continuous attempt to have total control over his government and public administration.¹

3. Methodology and Research Goal

3.1. Data and Methodology of Study in this Paper Research

This article was made created by respecting all the methodological rules. The methodology of this article was based in two parts: Studying the foreign and Albanian literature, bibliographic studies, collecting data from official sources as MOF, UNICEF Albania, MOH, DHR Resources and from different publications such as magazines. And practicing, which is related with the interviews with leaders and employees of the Public Administration. To collect the data for this article we made interviews, questionnaires and other researches. We created also a

¹ Stabilization and Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Albania, of the other part, 2006, Article 4.

questionnaire, which was composed by 110 questions and 4.8% of the employees in the central level of the public administration answered. We are concluding in these key factors for success, such as: Local government's investment initiatives to jumpstart the stagnant economy. The direct steps are:

- creative use EU funds to implement local policy;
- efficient municipal administration;
- coherent links among urban planning, infrastructure and economic development;
- retailers can use one of three strategies to liquidate this merchandise.

Table 1. The democratic movement in Albania

Leaders in Albanian Administration	Employeess in Public Administration	Interviews and data collections
Central Level answered	Public administration answered	Central Level Administration answered

Source: (Dumi, 2013). MSCER 2013 Roma Italy

The authoritarian model in politics continues to be part of the political management. The polarization of Albanian politics between two major political domestic actors, the Democratic Party and the Socialist Party, is main indicator of this authoritarianism. Verbal violence while addressing each other, intolerance in conception of building relations with opposition in order to give the image of cooperation in solving countries' main issues, and the monopolization of party leadership positions are elements of this old fashion model of doing politics. European institutions are offering assistance and models to be followed, but the process of upgrading requires time.

In contrast, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, and Romania geographically farther West than Albania, with their quick achieved success after integration policies were implemented prioritized a political mentality upgrade as more important than a formal physical integration. They cleverly understood that they were geographically part of Europe and the integration process needed to be

focused on changing the old mentality, realizing also the importance of a reform-minded process to facilitate the integration. The result was that all the above countries joined NATO before Albania, and are members of the European Union (Albania is still not part of the EU.)

3.2. Analyzing Data and Regression Analyze

The performance evaluation is mainly characterized by qualitative indicators and there are only a few quantitative indicators. According to the data collected from the questionnaires the employees asses the importance of the performance evaluation in 80%, they concretize it with the objectivity in the evaluation.

Values	4	4	5	6	7	7	7	8	9
Ranks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

$$M_{R=} = \frac{n1(n1+n2+1)}{2} = \frac{4(4+5+1)}{2} = 20$$

We calculate the quadratic average derivation of the Man Whitney criteria

$$S_{R1} = \sqrt{\frac{n1n2(n1+n2+1)}{12}}$$

During this analyze us are in focus of these results: 20-26%

is agreed that Albanian society has need for control over all aspects of social, political, economical and cultural life. (H1 and H2)

34-38% hopes in decentralization Albania reforms, 10% of interviewers are indifferent.

The increasing price reductions helps alleviate the negative attitude toward merchandise that is left over. Even though the upgrade of political mentality is facing its challenges, Albanian society is successfully transforming during this endless transition period. The progress and integration to democracy is irreversible, even though some elements in the Albanian society, media, and politics, continue to spread the message of continuity in support of old concepts of management expressing nostalgia for that dark and violent historic stain. (H 3 is hypothesis that all interviewers are sensitive and hope in Albanian adhered in EU).

While recording the colossal damage that was caused by implementing five decades of communist mentality in political level, economy and society, in early

90's, new laws were designed in order to overcome denial remaining from the actions of the old political management. The disadvantage of the combination strategy is that a retailer may be selling merchandise at a loss after the first or second markdown. (H1+H2+H3)

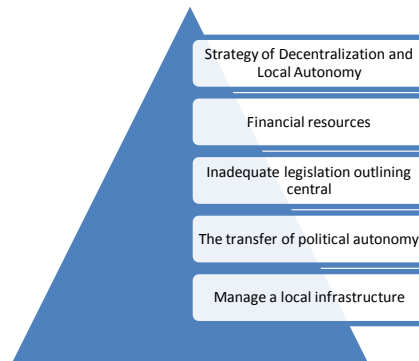
The size of the markdown required to sell the merchandise is difficult to determine. Highly perishable merchandise particularly fashion typically to determine require more substantial markdown than stable merchandise.

3.2.1. Public Administration's Role in Offering a Safe and Stable Government Policy Management

An important aspect of Albanian integration process is the objective evaluation of Public Administration's role in offering a safe and stable government policy management pointing to the professionalism while depoliticizing different structures of public services. One of the political frictions between two major parties in Albania today is the Law on Civil Service. Prior to 23 June Elections with the consultant of western and European players in Albania two major political forces reached an agreement to approve and implement the Law on Civil Service that will serve as legal framework in consolidating and directing Public Administration toward professionalism and protect public servants from political changes in government.

Even though the law was to be implemented in October 2013 some difficulties raised due to the fact that “.. the new law abrogate the existing legislation without providing the necessary transitory provisions until its implementing legislation enters into force. It is very important to create a merit-based public administration as part of reforms in consolidating democracy in Albania. It is also very important to understand that quality public administration develops stronger, more professionals and capable public servants that are better able to manage their institutions and respond to rising societal demand for better governance.

Table 2. Evaluation on public goal, the challenge for successful management of the public goals and treatment in Albanian condition



Source: (Dumi, 2013). AJERM 2013 Roma Italy

3.3. Need for Economical and Legal Reforms

Albania differing from other countries of former socialist camp in its unique way of management established during the communist regime is still missing the clear political vision in taking the country out of the endless transition period. Sometimes the lack of vision is associated with the willingness in carrying reforms to avoid political costs associated with them, but these costs are paid by the society that still suffering a very low economic income. Albania is one of the poorest countries in Europe, with its GDP ranked number 119 in the world - below war-torn Congo and just five places above North Korea. According to the World Bank study on growing out of poverty 2012 the situation as been describe as below: *“With the exception of Tirana where poverty is apparently quite shallow, much of the urban and rural poverty may be deep - where incomes fall far short of a minimally acceptable standard. People are struggling to meet basic needs (food, clothing and heating). Many others are vulnerable to poverty, if not in an immediate income insufficiency context; they are threatened by poor public services and out-of-reach social services.”* (World Bank Report. Albania. Growing out of Poverty, 2012)

Designing a stabilization program and furthermore a deep transformation of the Albanian economy requires taking important additional specific features into consideration (Muço, 1997). While noting Albania’s progress, Ambassador Osmo Lipponen of Finland, head of the OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-

operation in Europe) presence in Albania, emphasized the country's poorly functioning economy as the basis for much of its instability. Liponen also noted that the level of polarization in politics has led to political conflict rather than a discussion of important issues concerning the country and the reform process (October 2004). This confliction policy produces a lack of the public's trust in national authorities. Effective reforms against corruption are to be considered as the first step in bringing the confidence and trust to Albanians.

The U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe carefully considered hearings from different actors in Albania and, concluding that: "Albania must move toward having a normally functioning parliamentary system, beginning with undisputed elections conducted according to international standards, and a transparent, functioning administration in order to be able to manage its significant socioeconomic and rule of law problems. This needs to be supported by broadening civic participation in the governing process as corruption and lack of accountability have severely damaged the public's trust in national authorities. "Reforms for fast integration toward western institutions are part of Albanian society challenges. A greater civic participation, as stated in the OSCE report, will improve the monitoring process on how the reforms are implemented and, how they impact the government efforts against specific element's unwillingness to reform the economy because of the illegal benefits they and officials involved, receive from monopolized sectors of the economy.

4. Conclusions

EU candidacy is very welcomed by Albanian society as well considered as a challenge due to the numerous problems citizens are facing every day. This challenge will be entitled to the objective interpretation of historical facts defoliated from the communist indoctrinations that unfortunately we still see present in Albania even 23 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The upgrade of the political mentality in accepting the important role of involvement of new elite in political class, and the implementation of a new political management away from authoritarian model, are main issues that domestic political factor should take in consideration for a fast integration.

One of the biggest challenges in reforming the economy and making Albania attractive to foreign investments is the implementation of the property rights. This still remains one of the biggest challenges due to the lack of transparency of the

process of legalization and lack of state guidance in development of urban and rural areas. Different attempts have been made to offer big foreign companies to operate in Albania but the process has been undermined by the impossibility to create a direct relation between investors and landowners. Judicial branch has contributed to this chaos by offering a very complicated process in claiming rights to the properties also offering corrupted judge and prosecutors that are bribed to make ambiguous decisions very difficult to be interpreted and further processed. Looking in a different perspective, a broader participation of young generation in politics imposing new ideas and, a modern way of management will facilitate the acceptance process. *The main hypothesis suggests that:*

1. Reforms to improve democracy requires leadership from within the country as a prerequisite in building the political will for reform as very important for consolidating democracy and strengthen ties with European Union.
2. True efforts are to be made also in cleaning the public administration and institutions from political contributors and party militants.
3. This requires a strong political will and overall consensus from major political actors in eradicating their mentality of management and, a wide cooperation with non-government organization in reducing the social costs that may be associated with this initiative. Efficient steps also should be made in implementation of Civil Service legislative package in order to create a merit-based public administration. Albania is part of Europe and the process of integration will allow the Albanian society to be fully integrated in European Union, not because of the geographical position, but because of the level of successful reforms.

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