

**Mapping the leaders in  
Macedonia and Albania:  
can elites promote positive  
social change?**

# Contents

<b>THE CASE OF MACEDONIA</b>	13
Introduction	14
Goals of the project, methodology and the research process	14
Elites and socio-political change	17
Elites and the societal discourse	18
Elites and Macedonian transition to democracy	20
The Yugoslav Context	20
<i>Macedonian Elites Responses to the Yugoslav Crisis - Liberalization</i>	22
<i>Macedonia Opts for Preservation of Yugoslavia; Democratizes</i>	24
Research Findings – Macedonia	29
<b>Elite circulation</b>	29
Political elite	29
Economic elite	31
Academic and cultural elite	33
<b>Liberal values</b>	34
Political elite	34
Economic elite	35
The academic and cultural elite	36
Answers to the questionnaires	36

<b>Gender equality</b>	38
Political elite	38
Economic elite	38
Academic and cultural elite	39
Answers of the questionnaires	40
 <b>Multiculturalism</b>	32
Political elite	32
Economic elite	32
Academic and cultural elite	43
Answers of the questionnaires	44
 <b>Social welfare and economy</b>	46
Political elite	46
Economic elite	46
Academic and cultural elite	47
Answers of the questionnaires	47
 <b>Perception on the role of the elites then and now</b>	49
Political elite	49
Economic elite	49
Academic and cultural elite	50
Answers of the questionnaires	50
 <b>Perception of the communist past</b>	52
Political elite	52
Economic elite	52
Academic and cultural elite	53
Answers of the questionnaires	54
 <b>Elites and the public opinion</b>	57
Personal freedoms	57
Nationalism and multiculturalism	57
Social welfare and economy	58

Gender equality	59
Perception of the role of the elites	60
Perception of the communist past	61
Conclusions	63
Bibliography	67

## **THE CASE OF ALBANIA** 69

Introduction	70
Goals of the project, methodology and the research process	70
Research findings on the political elite	74
Circulation of political elite	74
Liberal values	75
Gender equality	77
Multiculturalism	77
Social welfare	78
Perception on the role of the of the elites then and now	78
Perception on the communist past	79
Research findings on the economic elite	80
Reproduction or circulation od economic elite	81
Liberal values	81
Social welfare and gender equality	82
Perception on the role of the elites then and now	83
Perception on the communist past	83

Research Findings on Academic and Cultural Elite	85
Circulation of academic & cultural elite	85
The 'brain drain'	85
Liberal values	86
Gender values	86
Social welfare	87
Perceptions of the communist past	88
Perception on the role of the elites then and now	88
 Report on the Public Opinion Poll	 88
Survey highlights	88
Methodology	90
Sample description	91
Survey Findings	92
Multiculturalism	92
Individual Liberties & Liberal Values	94
Social Welfare and Equality	97
Gender Considerations	97
Perceptions on Elite Now and Then	98
Perceptions on the communist past	100

# THE CASE OF MACEDONIA

## Introduction

### Goals of the project, methodology and the research process

The main aim of the project is to provide an insight into the processes of elite circulation in Macedonia and Albania over the last two decades. Primarily, the project is interested in the formation of two cohorts of elites – the ones who were in a high position in the social hierarchy at the time of the changes of the socialist regimes (approximately 1985 – 1990), and the ones who have climbed the ladder in the period from 2005 onwards. Finally, the project is interested in the examining shared values and attitudes between the representatives of the two cohorts of elites, and among the elites and the public.

In order to render the image of the members of the elites and to answer who these persons are, we have conveyed in-depth interviews with 42 individuals who we identified as a former or contemporary representative of the elite. Twenty-five of them belong exclusively to the contemporary category [2005-onwards], while seventeen represented the elite 1985-1990, even though some of them had maintained their position today or have gained an elite position in different field (for instance, one representative of the former political elite today is a successful entrepreneur). In total, five interviewees belonged to more than one category – the most frequent crossover being the one between the political and the academic/cultural elite. Only five of the interviewees were female – even though we tended to provide a better gender balance, the fact that especially in the socialist times, but today as well, women were rarely in high positions delimited our possibilities. Out of all categories, the least represented was the one of the former economic elite.

The projected number of interviews was much higher; however, several factors have posed a great burden for the interviewing process. Our experience has confirmed what the literature on the methodology of elite research points out as an immense challenge: interviewing representatives of the elites is a necessarily demanding and often very tiring process.<sup>1</sup> In our case, contacting the representatives of the elite from the period 1985-1990 was delicate due to their bad health condition or their reluctance to speak to researchers after finding the long sought peace in their days of retirement. Some of the representatives of the contemporary elite, on the other hand, while warm and welcoming during the initial contact, often ended up indefinitely postponing the interviews, carried away by their intense daily schedules. Elite representatives' disbelief or suspicion regarding our factual objectives was another obstacle we had to overcome.

We faced another challenge during drafting the list of potential interviewees. In general, elite research builds upon two main approaches for defining elites – the reputational and the positional one. We have selected the latter in order to avoid methodological complexities. The reputational approach requires an in-depth background research that would examine who is the people who set the agenda, influence decision-making, act as power brokers and in general, have significant yet invisible influence. According to the positional approach, on the other hand, elite are people who hold high decision-making positions in the main governance bodies and the public sector, the main political parties and the wealthiest private enterprises. Such definition proved to be very practical for our purposes and greatly facilitated our work. The positional approach granted us with the opportunity to come up with a well-structured pool of interviewees that resembled various categories and times.

In order to achieve a better representation of the various spheres of authority and influence, we adopted a model that differentiates among three general sub-categories: political, economic and academic/cultural elites. In the framework of the positional approach, we defined political elite as individuals who currently are or used to be in a position that provided them with the opportunity to participate in the political decision-making process. In particular,

---

1 See David Richards, "Elite interviewing: Approaches and Pitfalls," *Politics* 16(3), 1996, pp. 199-204; Jeffrey M. Berry, "Validity and Reliability Issues In Elite Interviewing", *PS: Political Science & Politics*, December 2002, 679-682; Darren G. Lilleker, "Interviewing the Political Elite: Navigating a Potential Minefield", *Politics* Vol 23(3), 2003, pp. 207-214; "Conducting and Coding Elite Interviews", *PS: Political Science & Politics* December 2002, pp. 673-676.



political elite representatives are current or former members of the parliament, officials from the executive branch of the central government, high rank officials from the local government, and participants in the high committees of political parties. By the same token, we defined economic elite as people managing or having run large state and private owned enterprises – executives and their deputies, as well as senior managers and members of boards. Finally, academic/cultural elite according to our approach are the ones who are or used to be in high positions in institutions that shape the academic and the public discourse – rectors, deans and professors at public and private universities, directors of research institutions, managers and editors-in-chief in national media outlets, managers of cultural and scientific institutions and so on.

The interviews themselves consisted of three segments. In the first part, we gathered information about the background and the personal story of the elite representatives. Besides discussing their education, family and personal issues, most crucial were the question how did they get into the particular position they currently hold or used to hold. This part of the interview often was very hard to keep within the anticipated period of forty to sixty minutes for the whole interview. For instance, the introductory part of interview with some of the representative of the elite 1985-1990 took about two hours, which left substantially less time for the rest of the questions.

The second part of the interviews attempted to extract the interviewee's thoughts and attitudes in six thematic areas. We discussed the following themes: 1) *liberal values*, with the purpose to assess the attitudes towards pluralism, personal freedoms and contested rights; 2) *gender equality*, in order to assess the perceptions regarding the emancipation of women; 3) *multiculturalism*, to tackle the interviewees' awareness of ethnic diversity, as well as to determine the in-group/out-group perceptions; 4) *social welfare*, in order to assess the attitudes towards issues such as social aid, public services, etc.; 5) *comparison between the elites in communism and the contemporary ones*; and 6) the perceptions on various aspects of the *communist past*. The answers of these questions served as indicators of the values of the representatives of the elites, and helped us draw conclusions based on the premises on value sharing and representativeness.

The third and final part of the interviews was conducted in the framework of a standardized questionnaire consisting of 24 affirmative and negative claims, four in every of the sections listed above. The interviewees answered

on a five-point scale of agreement (from strongly disagree to strongly agree). While the majority of the questions expressed more traditional and conservative values as well as an approval of the communist past, we asked some of the questions by expressing more liberal and progressive claims in order to keep the respondents actively thinking, thus avoiding automated answers. A further aim was to collect data regarding the values and the attitudes of the public, in order to compare the popular opinion to the perception of the elites regarding important social issues. We used the same questionnaire in a nation-wide telephone survey, carried on a stratified representative sample of 1094 respondents.

## **Elites and socio-political change**

Scrutinizing elite-related topics means focusing on the actions carried by an essentially small cut of the population of one society. The classical elite theory defines the *elite* as a minority with power and privileges. The elite is comprised primarily by individuals who have accumulated political, economic, cultural or any other form of capital that puts them high in the power hierarchy, comparatively a lot higher than the average citizens in the society. Elites are the very few who have the possibility to set the agenda, affect political and economic developments and shape the societal discourse. Or, for the ones who see this is as an overstatement - the elite are the very few who have a more realistic possibility than the rest of the population to do all of the above.

The basic trait of elite theory is re-thinking the idea that social and political change can occur solely through popular revolution or mobilization of a large number of less privileged and often socially endangered parts of the population. As classical elite theory argues, social change follows as a top-down driven process, conducted by a limited set of individuals (the elite) who have the sufficient resources or have found themselves in a position to conduct or at least control the transformation of polities and societies. However, the elites are not a collective, nor a solid, homogenous and strictly bound actor. While many of the people who we label elite in fact do interact and cooperate with each other, the term itself is used solely to denote individuals standing higher in the social hierarchy, who at the end of the day act on their own behalf and on behalf of their interests and beliefs.

The impact of elites on socio-political change has been an especially important notion for the analysis of the communist and the post-communist political experience. For instance, the two most notable communist/state socialist regimes did not transform via popular revolution and overthrow of the one-party system, but primarily via the victory of the reformers over hardliners in party structures. Both the Soviet Union and Socialist Yugoslavia started to transform at the point when the liberal streams within the party elite prevailed over the conservative ones – Gorbachev’s administration carried the *perestroika*, while Ante Markovic sought to transform Yugoslavia into a free-market, Western-type liberal democracy and a member of the European Community. In other cases, where civil society had a more important role, parts of the political elite and the high ranks in the secret police had an important facilitating role of the public dissatisfaction and the political change. Similarly, in the cases of the prevailing communist regimes, such as China or Cuba where certain transformations take place, the acts of leaders rather than the popular sentiment or bottom-up movements instigate socio-political changes.

The top-down political transformation in the Yugoslav case, and in particular in Macedonia, meant that the very few that initiated, carried or in other ways helped in the change of the political system at the end of the 1980s and the early 1990s would remain highly involved in the design of the post-communist order. This process took a similar path as the intra-elite contention between hardliners and reformers that was the motion force of the regime change. As Gryzmala-Busse and Jones Luong put it, the processes of post-communist state formation saw an open “elite competition” over the policy-making capacities.<sup>2</sup>

## **Elites and the societal discourse**

The makeup of society highly depends on the elite and their actions. The privileged few have an immense possibility to promote new ideas and implement reforms. They can instigate a change through their own examples and can operate with a variety of instruments to inspire the common people. From times ancient until today, philosophers, thinkers, and later on sociologists and political theorists have tended to assess societies based on the conduct of the privileged ones and the ways they use the privileges of power. The analyses on the role of

---

2 Anna Gryzmala-Busse and Pauline Jones Luong, “Reconceptualizing the State: Lessons from Post-Communism,” *Politics & Society*, Vol. 30 No. 4, December 2002, pp. 529-554

the elite in post-communist societies follow the same path, as the attitudes and the behavior of the elite are central to the political developments.<sup>3</sup> The two crucial variables for determining the character of one society, according to the model of Gryzmala-Busse and Luong, is the level of elite representativeness, as well as the character of the elite competition itself.<sup>4</sup> If the individuals in power do represent the common people, and if they recognize each other's role and legitimacy, the societal change will take a path of progress. In the work of Higley and Lengyel, the authors focus on the latter: their crucial variables for determining the character of post-communist societies are elite differentiation and elite unity.<sup>5</sup> It is very important for elites to have shared values and common vision for the future of the society and use their joint efforts for the benefit of the community.

In this paper, we build upon such premises. In addition to recognizing the aforementioned theirs, we adopt the so-called new elite paradigm, originally devised by Michael Burton and John Higley and their associates over the course of the last several decades.<sup>6</sup> Burton and Higley start from the premise that the most important condition for the prosperity of one society is the consensus between the elites. They distinguish between three ideal-type elite regimes: disunited elite, consensually united elite and ideologically united elite. In practice, these models are not strict and can transpose from one form into another.

Disunited elite is the one marked by low structural integration and value consensus where "communication and influence networks do not cross partisan lines and elite sector boundaries." The relationship between the various disunited and often conflicted factions are marked by suspicion and brutal power-struggle, which ultimately gives the political discourse "a zero-sum or 'politics as war' character." Society in which elites are disunited is likely to produce authoritarian regime or illiberal democracy.

---

3 For instance, see George Schopflin, "Identities, politics and post-Communism in Central Europe," *Nations and Nationalism*, 9 (4), 2003, 477–490, Heinrich Best and John Higley (eds), *Democratic Elitism: New Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives* (Boston: Brill, 2010)

4 Gryzmala-Busse and Luong, op. cit.

5 John Higley and Gyorgy Lengyel, *Elites after state socialism* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2000)

6 See Michael G. Burton and John Higley, "Elite Settlements", *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (Jun., 1987), pp. 295-307, Paul Cammack, "A Critical Assessment of the New Elite Paradigm." *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 55, No. 3 (Jun., 1990), pp. 415-420 and John Higley, Michael G. Burton, G. Lowell Field, "In Defense of Elite Theory: A Reply to Cammack.", *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 55, No. 3 (Jun., 1990), pp. 421-426

When the level of structural integration is high, there is stable communication among elites, and there is consensus over the core political and social values despite the ideological and other differences, then the elites are consensually united. Despite the divergences between the main political subjects, they share a mutual respect, acknowledge each other's importance in the socio-political reality as the authors describe, "accord each other significant trust, [they] cooperate tacitly to contain explosive issues and conflicts, and their competitions for political power have a positive-sum or "politics as bargaining" character." In such a setting, elites have the best chance to introduce liberal democratic standards. Finally, there is the extreme case of ideologically united elites, characterized by strong and sharply centralized structural integration and value consensus that approaches the level of unanimity and total lack of disagreements. The elite therefore tends to portray itself and act as a strictly bound actor yet with tangible hierarchical features; moreover it sees divergences from its ideology as a negative trend as in this case, political decisions are not grounded on debate or compromise, but rather on ideology and following the orders of the narrow leadership. In such cases, there are fertile grounds for highly authoritarian, illiberal and totalitarian regimes.<sup>7</sup>

## **Elites and Macedonian transition to democracy**

### ***The Yugoslav Context***

In search for options how to deal with the crisis, in the beginning of the 80's Yugoslav communists began the process of (re)legitimatization of the regime which would eventually lead to the democratization of the country. Different options were proposed in the discussions, ranging from proposals for restoration of the multi-party system, to a "party-less" socialist system operated through citizens' associations. Although some propagated even stricter rule of the party, most of the ideas were undoubtedly quite liberal and reform-oriented in character, ranging from calls for establishment of full-fledged "social democracy" to multi-candidate communist elections.

---

7 John Higley and Michael Burton, *Elite Foundations of Liberal Democracy* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006)

Parallel to the liberalization debate, was the discussion on the status of the federation and the value of the 1974 Constitution. Paradoxically, inter-republican discussions over the status of the Yugoslav federation would be the salient cause for the liberalization and the break up of the country. Indeed, the Serbian upsurge of the institutionalized confederate balance of power game would inevitably accelerate the centrifugal processes in Yugoslavia. Serbian's party leadership insistence on re-centralizing Yugoslavia would tip of the status quo and provoke strong chain of reactions, first among the Slovenian, and later among the other Yugoslav republics party leaders, which in turn would directly lead former Yugoslav communists to embrace more radical options as solutions to the crisis: democratization, and dissolution. Drastic changes in the attitude of the Serbian party leadership toward the status of the Yugoslav federation would come about with the rise to power of Slobodan Milosevic, exactly in the midst of the federal level discussions on how to overcome the Yugoslav crisis.

Until 1987, it seemed conceivable that while the regional elites would further debate the future status of the federation, Yugoslavia could continue on a path of slow transformation to pluralism and liberalization. However, the rise of Slobodan Milosevic who the same year "succeeded in deposing his erstwhile mentor, Ivan Stambolic, and in establishing himself as the unrivaled boss in the republic of Serbia" would significantly change the situation in the country. Milosevic shrewdly materialized on Serbian's people national sentiments and moved to change Serbia's "disadvantaged position" within the Yugoslav federation. Using the ideology of the nationalistic wing of the Serbian intellectuals, and populist methods, in the period between 1988 and 1989, Milosevic, swiftly abolished the autonomous status of the Kosovo and Vojvodina provinces, and installed own supporters in the Montenegrin party leadership. By means of taking control of the Serbian media and establishing "cult of personality" Milosevic mobilized the Serbian society in favor of the slogan "strong Serbia, strong Yugoslavia." After entrenching his power in Serbia and Montenegro, Milosevic aimed at changing the federal constitution so that it meets Serbian interests better. Not surprisingly, Serbia's new policies provoked a strong reaction among the other Yugoslav republican leaders; Slovenia among which taking a leading role in opposing Milosevic. Already in 1988 and especially in 1989 two clear trends among the Yugoslav republics could be gauged; promotion of particular, regional interests through mobilization of a growing pluralist society, and consequently, official endorsement of democratization and multi-party elections to further strengthen and legitimize the republican party leaderships.

### ***Macedonian Elites Responses to the Yugoslav Crisis-Liberalization***

In the immediate post-Tito period the Macedonian party elites followed a conservative course of action, thus favoring the preservation of status quo of Yugoslav politics, i.e., decentralized and communist Yugoslavia. However, in the second half of the 80's, the combination of the effects of the Macedonian media liberalization and the pluralisation of the Macedonian society deepened the chasm between the liberal and the conservative camps in the communist leadership. Since the more liberal fraction of the Macedonian communists prevailed in the conflict and took over the party, it began changing the course of Macedonian politics.<sup>8</sup> Represented by a new generation of young leaders like Vasil Tupurkovski, Petar Goshev, Gjorgji Spasov, and Branko Crvenkovski, the Macedonian party leadership now reoriented its policies towards reforms of the system, though, still favoring the 1974 Yugoslav constitutional arrangements which left wide powers to the regional centers.

Contrary to the Macedonian party policy immediately after Tito's death, Macedonian party elite in the second half of the 1980's advanced pro-reform ideas. Thus, for example, in 1985, the Macedonian representative to the Socialist Alliance of Workers People of Yugoslavia (SAWPY) Aleksandar Grlickov, argued against the public monopoly of the ruling party and assessed that a non-communist could not stand a chance to become member of the republican leadership of the SAWPY.<sup>9</sup> He proposed greater, up to 50 %, participation of 'non-communists' in the SAWPY. By the end of 1980's Macedonian communist leaders were well aware of the structural crisis of the party and advocated reforms. In March of 1988, Petar Goshev, a member of Presidency of the Central Committee, stressed the need for reforms within the economic and political system of the country. In October the same year Vasil Turpurkovski, Macedonian member of the collective Yugoslav presidency, explained the need for democratization of the communist party. Speaking about the crisis in Yugoslavia, in November, 1988, Tupurkovski, exposed the idea of reforms and a change to 'democratic centralism, i.e., inner party democracy.'

---

8 Mirjana Maleska: "Rizikot na Demokratijata: Sluchajot na Makedonija", in *Godishnik na Institutot za Socijalno Pravno Politichki Istrazhuvanja*, Skopje, N.1, 1998, p.160.

9 Sabrina Ramet, *Balkan Babel: Politics, Culture, and Religion in Yugoslavia*, Oxford: Westview Press, 1992, p.15.



The rise of Serbian nationalism alarmed Macedonian party elites about the potential danger of a significant decrease of the status of Macedonia within Yugoslavia. Serbian nationalist leaders alienated Macedonians by trying to pass a federal law that could have allowed Serbian colonist who had acquired land in Macedonia and Kosovo during first Yugoslavia to reclaim their land. Furthermore, in October 1989, the Serbian leadership “intensively backed a proposal to declare 1 December- the day on which Yugoslavia was first united in 1918- a national holiday.”<sup>10</sup> Since the Kingdom of Yugoslavia had mistreated the rights of Macedonians, degrading them as “southern Serbs”, Macedonian party elites became anxious about the possible outcomes of the Yugoslav crisis. In response, they mobilized the Macedonian society to promote the ‘Macedonian case’ within the federation.

Thus, in line with the robust nationalist tendencies in the other Yugoslav republics, the Macedonian elite presented to the Macedonian public a similar strategy. Macedonian party leaders took advantage of the increasing human rights activity of the Macedonian diaspora, which in the late 1980’s begun promoting the interests of the Macedonian minorities in the neighboring countries, Greece in particular, to advance Macedonian agenda within the Yugoslav framework. Encouraged by the success of the *First International Reunion of Child Refugees of Aegean Macedonian*, throughout the second half of 1988, the Macedonian party leadership increasingly spoke about the status of the Macedonian minorities in the neighboring countries. Pressured by the Macedonian republican government, the Yugoslav representative to the United Nations, in November 1989, accused Greece of oppressing the human rights of the Macedonian minority in Greece.<sup>11</sup> In May 1989 an international delegation of Aegean Macedonians presented the problem of the Macedonian national minority in Greece to the Centre for Human Rights in Geneva and met with representatives of the European Parliament in Strasbourg. The Macedonian party elite sympathized with the human rights efforts of the Aegean Macedonians.

In 1989 the Macedonian leadership changed the republican constitution so that Macedonia was redefined as the state of the ‘Macedonian people’ in place of the previous ‘a state of the Macedonian people and the Albanian and Turkish minorities.’ Macedonian party ideologist Svetomir Shkarikj explained the changes: “Macedonia is to be defined as a state, and the only bearer of this statehood should be the Macedonian nation. That is why the new definition excludes the

---

10 Ramet 1992: 35.

11 Loring M. Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict. Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995, p.106.



sovereignty of the nationalities in Macedonia.”<sup>12</sup> Similarly to the other republican leaders’ reactions to the tense Yugoslav situation the Macedonian party elites too strengthened the legal position of the titular nationality in Macedonia, the ethnic Macedonians. Hence, by changing the constitutional amendments, and thus preserving Macedonian interests against any potential manipulations by the Macedonian minorities, the party showed that it cared about the interests of the Macedonian people.

Having defeated the more conservative forces within the party and given the fact that in the late 1980’s the Macedonian communists strongly sustained Macedonian national interests, the liberal faction in power felt confident that the introduction of multi-party elections would not significantly change their authority position within the Macedonian society. Consequently, already in early 1989, Vasil Tupurkovski begun advocating pluralism as the solution to the degenerating situation in the Yugoslav federation. Throughout 1989 Tupurkovski, repeatedly noted that de-monopolization of the party and ‘pluralisation’ of the society should be the top priority on the agenda.”<sup>13</sup> By mid-1989, the Macedonian communists were deeply committed to the introduction of a multi-party system in Macedonia.<sup>14</sup> In December of 1989, just before the Fourteenth Congress of the Yugoslav communist party, Goshev, acting as a new elected president of the Macedonian Central Committee, declared that Macedonia supported reforms. Moreover, in February, 1990, immediately after the breakup of the League of Communist of Yugoslavia, Goshev announced that the Macedonian communist party would transform into a modern social democratic party and contest in the republican multi-party elections scheduled for the fall of that year.

### ***Macedonia Opts for Preservation of Yugoslavia; Democratizes***

Introducing multi-party system the Macedonian communist leaders continued with the policy of mobilization of the Macedonian society affirming Macedonia and its interests within the Yugoslav federation. On 20th of February

---

12 Mirjana Maleska; “Politichki, Kulturni, i Megjunarodni Okolnosti, koi Vlijaat Vrz Efikasnost na Sistemot” [Political, Cultural, and International Circumstances that Affect the System Efficacy], in Efikasnost na Parlamentarnata Demokracija 1991-1992, [Efficacy of Parliamentary Democracy], Skopje: Institut za Socioloski i Politichko Pravni Istrazhuvanja, 1998, p11.

13 See: Ramet, 1992: p.27.

14 Hugh Poulton: Who are the Macedonians?, Indiana UP: Bloomington, 1996,p.172.

1990 the Macedonian party elites organized a mass rally in the center of Skopje. These demonstrations, attended by some 75,000 people, promoted Macedonian identity and protested against the oppression of ethnic Macedonians in Greece, and Bulgaria. The protest was tacitly prepared to coincide with the visit of the Greek Prime Minister to the Yugoslav federal government in Belgrade.<sup>15</sup> Another mobilization of the Macedonian public occurred in May the same year, when “50,000 Macedonians blocked the border crossings between Yugoslavia and Greece in an effort to convince the Greek government to recognize its Macedonian minority and to persuade the Yugoslav government to pressure the Greek government to move in this direction as well.”<sup>16</sup> Macedonian communists also reacted upon Serbian nationalist designs on Macedonia. Thus, in a speech held on 2nd of June, Petar Goshev, not only castigated Bulgaria, and Greece, but also warned about the potential danger coming from the north.<sup>17</sup>

The same month the Macedonian leadership ‘internationalized’ its care for the Macedonian national interests. At the second meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension, held in Copenhagen in June of 1990, the Macedonian influenced Yugoslav delegation again raised the issue of minority rights in Greece and Bulgaria. In corporation with Macedonian minority activists from different countries, the Yugoslav delegation, introduced a “Memorandum Relating to the Macedonian National Minority” which accused the governments of Bulgaria and Greece of a number of specific violations of the human rights of the members of the Macedonian national minorities living in their countries.<sup>18</sup> Mobilizing the Macedonian society and appearing on the forefront of the defense of Macedonian national interests, the Macedonian reform communist party looked with much hope upon the upcoming multi- party elections.

In late June 1990, another nationalist party emerged on the Macedonian scene. Supported by the Macedonian emigration and founded by such eminent Macedonian dissidents as Dragan Bogdanovski and Goran Jakovlevski, the new party, was named VMRO-DPMNE, Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization, Democratic Macedonian Party for Macedonian Unity.<sup>19</sup> The party platform previously published in the March issue of *Mlad Borec* largely related to the

---

15 Poulton, p.173

16 Danforth 95: 134.

17 Poulton,p.174.

18 Danforth 95:137.

19 Poulton, p.173.

ideals of the historical VMRO. Led by the charismatic, young leader, Ljubcho Georgievski, VMRO-DPMNE, pledging to work for the ideal of 'all free Macedonians united', overshadowed the national agendas of the reform communists. The party also asked for immediate improvement of Macedonian relations with Slovenia and Croatia, and for the return of the 'Macedonian territories' within the Serbian boundaries.<sup>20</sup>

On the eve of the first multiparty elections in Macedonia, held in November 1990, over twenty parties were operating in the country. The reformed communists (League of Communists of Macedonia - Party of Democratic Transition, SKM-PDP) run on a platform that sought recognition for Macedonian sovereignty in some type of "Yugoslav framework." SKM-PDP opted for a Macedonian identity and dignity and promised to organize Macedonia as a "sovereign state which accepts union with other peoples of Yugoslavia only on voluntary and equal basis, and of course with the right of secession."<sup>21</sup> Although SKM-PDP, promoted Macedonian interests it was still careful enough to leave an open door for the possibility of a transformed Yugoslav state.

VMRO-DPMNE, was too committed to Macedonian sovereignty, but not necessarily within a Yugoslav confederation only; the party envisioned a broader confederate union of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Greece, which would *de facto* bring all Macedonians in the region under the auspices of a single state. As an only alternative to this project VMRO-DPMNE discussed a complete separation from Yugoslavia.<sup>22</sup> Supported by Macedonians from the diaspora, and largely playing with nationalist rhetoric VMRO-DPMNE, send appealing messages to large segments of Macedonian society. The party's stand against, the largely perceived as illegal, Kosovar Albanian immigration into Western Macedonia, in favor of return of property of dispossessed Macedonians in Greece, and the "spiritual, economic, and ethnic union of the divided Macedonian people and the creation of a Macedonian state in a future united Balkans and united Europe", significantly increased VMRO-DPMNE's popularity among the Macedonian voters.<sup>23</sup>

---

20 Poulton, p.173.

21 Leonard Cohen: Broken Bonds: Yugoslavia's Disintegration and Balkan Politics in Transition, Westview Press: Oxford, 1993, p.148

22 Poulton, p.176.

23 Duncan M. Perry, "The Republic of Macedonia: Finding its Way", in Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott (eds.), Politics, Power, and the Struggle for Democracy in South-East Europe, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997, pp.241-242.

Not surprisingly the results of the parliamentary elections showed how much the Macedonian communist elite had underestimated the potential strength of parties that put even more emphasis on the Macedonian matters, than SKM-PDP.<sup>24</sup> Although in the late 1980's Macedonian communists led the republic on a relatively reasonable course, and in 1990 offered the Macedonian public very sensible solutions to the frantic Yugoslav situation combining it with a strong pro-Macedonian pre-election agenda, SKM-PDP still could not win the 1990 parliamentary elections. Riding on a nationalist ticket VMRO-DPMNE was the most successful party obtaining 38 seats (31.7 percent) in the legislature, followed by the reformed communist with 31 seats (25.8 percent), a coalition representing the interests of the Macedonian Albanian minority with 23 seats (18.3 percent) and the economically oriented Alliance of Reform Forces with 17 seats (14.2 percent).

The outcome of the election produced rather highly fragmented and unclear results.<sup>25</sup> The newly elected Macedonian leadership, still insisted on some sort of consensus on the status of Yugoslavia, while maintaining its independent course of action. On January 25th, 1991, the parliament adopted a Declaration of Sovereignty which declared that the independence and the territorial integrity of the Macedonian people, based upon their right to self-determination and secession, should be guaranteed in a forthcoming constitution and validated through a popular referendum. The declaration also anticipated an equal role for Macedonia in the inter-republican negotiations on Yugoslavia's future.

Shortly after the adaptation of the Declaration of Sovereignty, on January 27th, 1991 Macedonian assembly elected Kiro Gligorov president of the country. Immediately upon his inauguration Gligorov won the support of the parliament and dedicated his efforts to a three point plan: preservation of Yugoslavia through a peaceful resolution of the crisis, creation of a parliamentary democracy secured by adoption of a new constitution, and promotion of the rights of national minorities in Macedonia.<sup>26</sup> Aware of the perils for Macedonia if Yugoslavia disintegrated, Gligorov, together with Alija Izetbegovic, the president of Bosnia and Herzegovina, concentrated in mediating between the two sides holding opposed view on the future status of Yugoslavia, Slovenia and Ser-

---

24 Ibid.

25 Poulton, p.150.

26 Gjorgji Spasov: "Dilemmas of Independence", in East European Reporter, Vol. 5, N.5. March-April, 1992.

bia. On June 3rd Gligorov, together with Izetbegovic, proposed a new Yugoslav framework which would have included a common army, currency, and foreign policy.<sup>27</sup> However, throughout 1991, despite the Gligorov and Izetbegovic's mediating efforts, the political rift between the two opposing sides of the Yugoslav conflict only widened. Yugoslav Army's intervention in Slovenia in June, 1991, and the multiplication of armed skirmishes between Serbian irregulars and police authorities in Croatia only worsened the already tense situation.

Faced with an increasingly violent deterioration of the crisis in Yugoslavia, which could have had dangerous implications on Macedonian security, in the spring of 1991 Gligorov insisted on and succeeded in forming a government representing all parliamentary parties as a kind of a 'national front' for achieving Macedonia's strategic aims. The "government of experts" represented the broad consensus among the Macedonian parties concerning the fundamental Macedonian policy orientations and in support for democratic and sovereign, or in case of a break up of Yugoslavia, independent Macedonia, the rule of law, market economy, and joining the European system. The constellation of powers in the new government and the presidency came about as a result of a party pact between the leading Macedonian parties.

Following the violent summer of 1991, when fighting erupted first in Slovenia, and then throughout Croatia, Gligorov and the new Macedonian government, decided to go ahead with the plans for obtaining independence. On September 8th, 1991, a referendum was held in which more than 95 % of those voting, voted for a sovereign and independent state. On September 17th, the same year the Macedonian parliament, adopted a Declaration on the proclamation of the results of the referendum. The new Macedonian constitution promulgated on 1st of November, 1991, and brought as a result of complicated debates between the major Macedonian parties, established Macedonia as a parliamentary democracy and provided space for "cohabitation" between the Macedonians and the minority groups within the country.<sup>28</sup> Macedonia completed the democratization process on November, 21st, 1991, when it declared independence from rump Yugoslavia. However, because of Greek objections, and despite of the EC's Badinter Commission recommendation that argued that among the

---

27 Cohen, p.213.

28 For an commendable discussion on the Macedonian Constitution and the rights of minorities see: G'org'I Caca; "Status and Rights of Nationalities in the Republic of Macedonia", Balkan Forum, n2., 1996

Yugoslav republics aspiring to become independent only Slovenia and Macedonia met the minimum requirements for recognition as democratic states, Macedonia was not recognized by the EC in 1992.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS - MACEDONIA**

### **Elite circulation**

#### **Political elite**

The political elite 1985-1990 played a great historical role. They have advocated the ideas for liberalization of the Yugoslav society and opening up towards the West, preparing the field for what was supposed to be a transition towards a liberal democratic order. On the long run, these dreams turn out to be less feasible than anticipated: in the two decades of independence, Macedonia faced plenty of obstacles on the way to fully-fledged liberal democracy.

The political elite back in the one party regime of the 1980s was recruited exclusively from the Macedonian branch of the Yugoslav League of Communists, or at least from the circles close to the party. Their recruitment was contingent on a broader array of factors, most importantly being the fit within the concepts of both the regional (Skopje) and federal (Belgrade) leaderships. The political elite 2005-onwards on the other hand, have emerged into a very different context. Their role is no less historical as they are the generation that is expected to finally achieve the ideal of democratic consolidation and accession to the European Union and NATO. Their emergence however, has been carried in a very different context compared to the case of the elites of the 1980s, as Macedonia since has become an independent country with a pluralistic model that has few competing centers of political power.

A successful career in politics demands well-rounded life story and having deposited great amounts of knowledge and experience in other occupations. Several of our interviewees, who were among the high ranks of the Communist Party and had notable political roles at the turn of the regimes, have made names for themselves primarily because of their education, knowledge and the demonstration of analytical and writing skills. Compared to their contemporary

counterparts, representatives of the political elite 1985-1990 have had more enthusiastic approach to politics – they have been active well beyond the party premises. The majority of the interviewees representing the political elite from the period 1985-1990, in addition to their political careers, used to be or still is part of the economic and especially the academic or the cultural elite. Among them there are been university professors, experts in social sciences, recipients of international scholarships (primarily American and Western European ones), who have continued their careers in academia after their retirement from politics. They all belonged to the reformist wing of the Party. At times of reform, and later on during the democratic opening, many of them have had highly notable individual impact on the public debate, sometimes even against or not in accordance with the official communist party doctrine. A common pattern seen in their personal narrative is the way they have conditioned their stay in politics: very often, they would demand from the seniors to grant the maintenance of reforms, and in return would assume high political function.

Some of the representatives of the old political elite point out that in order for one to get into a high political function they had to win intra-party elections in which at least two candidates faced each other. Even though it was a one-party system, members of the party choose between strong individuals, who often risked their safety on the account of sounding their opinion within the party circles. They contrast this notion to the impression that in contemporary Macedonia, politics has become much more partisan like. Party leaders have too much power and deciding among other things the electoral party lists. As the old elites argue, today, despite the democratic system and the multi-party regime, citizens can elect only “party servants”, a form of choice in which the individual qualities are obviated. Unlike the strong individuals of the 1980s, contemporary “party servants” in their opinion do and speak only what is approved by their leadership and suppress their own thoughts and attitudes, which impedes democratic deliberation.

A very few of the old elites from the period 1985-1990 remained in office after the turn of the regimes. Many of the interviewees referred to the cases of notable communist leaders ousted after the democratization, such as the high ranking party cadre and diplomat, a former president of the United Nations General Assembly, Lazar Mojsov, who according to one interviewee, if remained in office could have greatly contribute to the democratic development and international establishment of Macedonia. They point to the fact that even though



political elites in the 1990s were recruited from the lower ranks of the former communist party, very rarely there was anyone without previous political affiliation.

The contemporary political elite, on the other hand, has emerged in different socio-political setting. Among the new political elites, there is low frequency of inherited positions, as even the ones who have had family connections with representatives of the elite in the past, point to other factors, such as hard work and capacity to deal with the challenges as crucial for achieving their success. Hard work has been especially emphasized - unlike in the days of the one-party system, political work today includes active campaigning in the field and extended and continuous communication with the electorate, as the success of the parties depends solely on the support they are able to get from the public. Several of the interviewed representatives of the contemporary political elite, prior to entering politics had already profiled themselves as public figures due to their international experience and education as well as their involvement in the Macedonian civil society, media and academia. Some of those with advanced education argue that sometimes it might be a disadvantage due to the low level of Macedonian politics, or as one of the respondents and a former vice prime minister put it, "it is like climbing a mountain with an F1 car."

Representatives of both generations of politicians see politics as something more than professional occupation, and claim that they have been driven by ideals and desire to make a change. The politicians of the old times (1985-1990) emphasized their willingness to contribute to the reforms that would eventually liberalize and democratize the former regime as a key determinant of their political careers. Among the contemporary political elite, on the other hand, the representatives of VMRO-DPMNE were determined to end the shady years of the post-communist transition; while the new SDSM elite has entered politics in order to end the authoritarian political practice of the VMRO-DPMNE government which is now in its sixth year in power.

## **Economic elite**

Supported by the federal cohesion funds and the integrated market Macedonia's economy during the Yugoslav era did well. Therefore, in the 1980s, Macedonia's business elite was comprised of people running heavy industry



mills and public enterprises with international scope of activities. However, due to the crisis in the aftermath of the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the level of economy activity decreased the trade links significantly altered. Today's economic elite is therefore significantly different – it is comprised of people coming from companies that are service oriented, from media corporations and in general, people who have made their fortune in tertiary industries. They also have diverging narratives regarding their coming into and maintaining high positions in society. Interestingly, during the interviews, most of them have tried hard to relate or denounce the interdependence between success in business and connections with the political elite, giving out an impression that the market is still not free from the influence of the state and the political parties.

The representatives of the economic elite 1985-1990 claim that it was not connections or party membership, but knowledge and skills that were crucial for their success. None of them claims that party links or other types of networking was the sole reason for their business success. However, this attitude is rather contrasted to the perception that in the past, as well as today, having connections and political support was an important facilitator for having a successful business career. While in order to succeed you need personal qualities, managing the relationships with politicians is certainly helpful. This contingency is not a positive phenomenon though – the old guard of CEOs and top managers disapprove of instances of excessive politicization of elite recruitment in the economy.

Interviewees from the contemporary economic elite also claim that their career development was a result of their hard work and not gained through political connections, although some of the people, who belong to the economic elite nowadays, used to be holders of political functions in the past. Yet, they seem to share the opinion stated by one interviewee, that “a precondition to be successful [in business] is continuous hard work.” Another interviewee noted that innovative thinking, audacity and risk taking are also important to succeed. The representatives of the new business elite however, complain of party influences in many spheres in the society, including in the business sector and in the recruitment of new elites. A successful manager added that “it is even tasteless to see how incompetent people quickly advance their careers and enrich themselves” when they have the prerequisite connections. One of them even mentioned that the strong influence politics has on society and the intolerant attitudes of people in power permanently endanger the freedom of expression

and the freedom to do and expand the business. They also see a tight grip the state has on the market and the practices to use public revenue collection as a mechanism to convert political to economic capital as unfavorable conditions for entrepreneurship. Most of the interviewees from both generations claim that mutual trust among people is low precisely because of such trends that ultimately corrode the system.

### **Academic and cultural elite**

Similar to the discussion of the economic elite, interviewees holding high ranked positions in academia and cultural institutions have discussed the process of elite recruitment in the light of political loyalties and the interests of politicians. One striking impression is the fact that especially among the old cohort of elites; many individuals have transferred between the academia and politics and often have been holding both high academic and high political positions in society. While this certainly serves as an indicator that political recruitment was conspicuously merit-based (there have been many PhD holders in politics at the time of the regime change) it also indicates that academia was not overtly divorced from the government. Some of the representatives of the academic and the cultural elite from the period 1985-1990, remained involved in politics, especially in the period following the independence. Many of them have contributed for establishing democratic principles in Macedonia and forecasted for the end of the communist regime. Other interviewees left the country due to their heretical political beliefs and disagreements with the leadership; the same factor later on contributed to their involvement in post-communist politics as well.

Yet, interviewees representing the academic and cultural elite of the late 1980s do not hide the feeling that during communism, the connections within the party were in fact essential for getting into high position, regardless of gender or any other factor. However, as many of them underline, it was even more important that there were established scientific criteria for one's career advancement, unlike today when most of the academic institutions resemble family businesses and contribute to the deterioration of academic standards. For them, academic success was prestigious and more meaningful, while today, working in academia and culture, as they argue, is more lucrative and less about the virtues of intellectualism and artisanship.

The contemporary academic and cultural elite in Macedonia are comprised of two categories of individuals. The first one is comprised of the seniors, who had started their careers and had achieved a notable success back in the days of the former regime. Today, they remain in position or climb up the ladder in spite of the political changes. In fact, compared to the other sectors (the political and economic), continuity here seems strongest. The other sub-category represents the contemporary elite that emerged in the last two decades, largely owing to their personal qualities and efforts, even though many state the importance of political connections in the academic and cultural sphere as well. Compared to the senior class and the former academic and cultural elite, this new generation of academics and cultural officers is much less politicized and has succeeded primarily due to the achievements in its professional field of work.

## **Liberal values**

### **Political elite**

The period of the 1980s was the epoch of the liberalization of the Yugoslav state, and the generation of politicians of that particular era became known as the “reformers,” manifesting strong liberal tendencies. One high rank politician from the period 2005-2010 argues that the period 1988-1992 were “the golden days for the Macedonian democracy.” Alas, as they say, the legacy of the visionaries of that time was not maintained throughout the 1990s.

In general, interviewees from the political elite 1985-1990 derive pride from having been supporters of personal freedoms, freedom of expression. They claim to have had high level of tolerance regarding alternative lifestyles during communist times. Some of them were among the first ones to discuss the ideas of political pluralism and free elections. They often conditioned their stay in politics with the reforms that would reshape Yugoslavia and later independent Macedonia as a Western-style democracy.

The new political elite have different understanding of the idea of freedom. Almost all of its representatives claim that they have entered politics in order to contribute to a broader social change. However, what is noticeable is the very contrasting image that the interviewees had of Macedonia, depending on

their political affiliation. The members of the contemporary ruling elite (led by VMRO-DPMNE) were much more critical of the governments that were in power in 1990s and believe that only in the first decade of the twenty-first century Macedonia has become a democratic society. For the majority of the left-wing ethnic Macedonians on the other hand, Macedonia is still not fully consolidated democracy with a prevailing illiberal set of values. Therefore, they see their mission in politics as a liberalizing one.

Most of the interviewed representatives of the new political elite are strong supporters of freedom of expression; for some of them, their own opinions have cost them their privileges and positions. When it comes to their views on different lifestyles, however, the ideological divide greatly affects the interviewees' opinions. In general, the division between the left and right among the new political elite renders more differences than the ethnic division, typical for other elite categories.

## **Economic elite**

While inertly agreeing that personal freedoms are important facet and one of the basic rights that we need to protect, the representatives of the economic elite 1985-1990 manifested some notable illiberal stances. Especially significant is the fact that the great majority of them is against granting rights to the sexual minorities. They hold very conservative and illiberal beliefs on this topic. One of the interviewees even said that homosexuality "is a sickness that needs to be cured. I do not accept such a population."

The interviewees of the new economic elite are liberals, despite their reservations. In general, they support the idea of freedom of expression and most of them stand for freer market. In terms of their views on personal freedoms, their answers are much less flexible compared to the new political elites, for instance. Yet, while some of them declare themselves cosmopolitan, an equally significant portion share traditional and conservative values, sometimes justifying that manifesting harsh and traditionalistic attitude is a prerequisite for being able to successfully run a private enterprise in the Macedonian society. They are reserved yet not overtly judgmental regarding alternative lifestyles.

## The academic and cultural elite

All interviewed representatives of the academic elite 1985-1990 believe that today there is a greater freedom of expression compared to the previous system. As some of them in communist times had gone through traumatic experiences due to their beliefs, they argue that any kind of “verbal crime” (defamation, libel, slander) should be decriminalized. The new academic elite representatives focused on free speech from a different perspective. They believe that today anyone who wants to express their opinion, has all the conditions to do so. Yet, some of them are disappointed that many of the people today are still afraid to participate in the public debate, despite the obvious freedom to do that. In terms of respecting diversity, most of the interviewees from both generations demonstrated tolerant attitudes, although there is tangible disgust among some when for instance non-heterosexuals are in question.

## Answers to the questionnaires

(The least conservative attitudes are bolded, the most conservative values are both bolded and italicized)

	Oldpol [2]	Newpol [8]	Oldecon excl [5]	New econ excl [9]	Old academic excl [3]	New academic excl [8]	Old academic + old political [4]	Old academic + new academic [2]	Old political + new economic [1]
Abortion should be illegal.	<b>3</b>	1.5	1.6	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	2.13	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Marijuana possession should remain illegal.	<b>5</b>	4.63	3	2.56	<b>2</b>	4.13	3.25	<b>5</b>	4
Same sex couples should not have the right to marry.	3	<b>4</b>	3.2	3.22	2	3.38	3.25	3	<b>1</b>
It is important that my (grand) children learn religious values at school.	3	2.5	2.4	2.22	1.67	<b>3.75</b>	3.25	2.5	<b>1</b>

	Political elite excluding the ones who belong to more than one category [10]	Economic elite excluding the ones who belong to more than one category [14]	Academic elite excluding the ones who belong to more than one category [13]	Interviewees belonging to more than one category [5]
Abortion should be illegal.	<b>1.8</b>	1.2	1.69	<b>1</b>
Marijuana possession should remain illegal.	<b>4.7</b>	<b>2.8</b>	3.77	3.4
Same sex couples should not have the right to marry.	<b>3.8</b>	3.07	3	<b>2.8</b>
It is important that my (grand) children learn religious values at school.	2.6	<b>2.2</b>	<b>3.08</b>	2.8

	Elite 1985-1990 including the ones that maintained high positions afterwards	Elite 2005-2010 [25]
Abortion should be illegal.	<b>1.41</b>	<b>1.52</b>
Marijuana possession should remain illegal.	<b>3.41</b>	<b>3.72</b>
Same sex couples should not have the right to marry.	<b>2.82</b>	<b>3.52</b>
It is important that my (grand) children learn religious values at school.	<b>2.47</b>	<b>2.8</b>

An analysis of the answers to the questionnaires reveals several important conclusions:

- There is generally strong tendency against the criminalization of the abortion among all the interviewees; on the other hand there are mixed feelings towards same-sex marriages and religious education,

while there is predominantly conservative attitude when it comes to use of narcotics/drugs.

- In total, the representatives of the elite 1985-1990 had more liberal scores than the representatives of the elite 2005-2010; however, the higher conservative scores of the new generation of the elite is primarily a result of the notably conservative attitudes of the representatives of the contemporary political and academic/cultural elite, while the new economic elite exhibits significantly liberal attitudes. The most liberal part of the elite 1985-1990 are the ones who despite their high rank in politics had or still have career in academia/economy.
- Politicians are more conservative when it comes to personal freedoms, compared to entrepreneurs and academics.

## **Gender equality**

### **Political elite**

Representatives of the elite 1985-1990 believe that women in the former regime were represented only in a formal manner, without having any decision-making power or participating in the top bodies of the hierarchy. Representatives of the new political elite, especially left-wingers, believe that due to the revival of the cult of traditional values in the recent years, the position of women exacerbated. Representatives of the contemporary ruling elite tentatively manifest stances that are more patriarchal. Finally, almost all representatives of the new political elite agree that women have unfavorable role in the economy as they are underpaid and discriminated against. One of them says that whenever a woman gets into a high position, she has to face the prejudice that her success is a result of promiscuity.

### **Economic elite**

A great majority of old economic elite believe that mothers should be as good in their careers as in their roles as housewife; yet the household might be better off if the man wins the bread and the wife is devoted to household work.

Interviewees of the new economic elite, on the other hand, think that women should be equal with men, admitting that mothers' careers are more difficult due to the double role in life they play. Contemporary elite representatives believe that women should participate in decision-making because they bring creative ways of solving problems. Some of them, on the other hand, mention that some women in Macedonia have a patriarchal upbringing, which limits their career choices and world outlook. One female interviewee confirmed this by noting that each partner in the family has a specific, predetermined role.

### **Academic and cultural elite**

Most of the interviewees from the academic and cultural elite consider gender equality a high priority, and believe that women should have an equal status in all spheres. The majority of them believe that nowadays the status of women is improved compared to the communist times as in communist days, women were in lower positions. Some of them argue that unfortunately, the patriarchal mentality still exists among the people. One of the points they have stated is that many men still hardly allow their wives to have better and more dominant job position than them.



## Answers of the questionnaires

(The least conservative attitudes are bolded, the most conservative values are both bolded and italicized)

	Oldpol [2]	Newpol [8]	Oldecon excl [5]	New econ excl [9]	Old academic excl [3]	New academic excl [8]	Old academic + old political [4]	Old academic + new academic [2]	Old political + new economic [1]
Mothers can have careers, but their first duty is to be homemakers.	2	1.63	2.6	1.67	1	3.38	2	1.5	1
The government does not need to take positive action to achieve gender balance in certain employment areas.	1.5	1.75	1	1.78	1.67	2.38	1	1	1
Men and women should not earn the same wage for the same type of work done.	1	1	1	1.11	1	2	1.5	1.5	1
Women should not have the right to serve in the army.	1.5	1.38	1.4	1.22	2.67	2.5	1	1.5	1

	Political elite excluding the ones who belong to more than one category [10]	Economic elite excluding the ones who belong to more than one category [14]	Academic elite excluding the ones who belong to more than one category [13]	Interviewees belonging to political elite and another category [5]
Mothers can have careers, but their first duty is to be homemakers.	<b>1.7</b>	1.93	<b>2.54</b>	1.8
The government does not need to take positive action to achieve gender balance in certain employment areas.	1.7	1.47	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Men and women should not earn the same wage for the same type of work done.	<b>1</b>	1.07	<b>1.69</b>	1.4
Women should not have the right to serve in the army.	1.4	1.27	<b>2.38</b>	<b>1</b>

## Can elites promote positive social change?

	Elite 1985-1990 including the ones that maintained high positions afterwards	Elite 2005-2010 [25]
Mothers can have careers, but their first duty is to be homemakers.	<b>1.88</b>	<b>2.2</b>
The government does not need to take positive action to achieve gender balance in certain employment areas.	<b>1.18</b>	<b>1.96</b>
Men and women should not earn the same wage for the same type of work done.	<b>1.18</b>	<b>1.36</b>
Women should not have the right to serve in the army.	<b>1.53</b>	<b>1.68</b>

An analysis of the answers to the questionnaires reveals several important conclusions:

- In general, all the interviewees have a rather liberal attitude regarding gender equality.
- Representatives of the contemporary economic elite manifest the most patriarchal attitude when it comes to the role of women in society/household. They also exhibit higher conservative attitudes regarding gender equality, compared to the interviewees belonging to different categories.
- In total, the interviewees from the academic and cultural elite expressed more conservative attitudes than the politicians and the entrepreneurs.
- Representatives of the elite 2005-onwards had more conservative attitude regarding all of the four questions on gender equality, compared to the interviewees from the generation 1985-1990.

## **Multiculturalism**

### **Political elite**

Most of the interviewees from both cohorts of the political elite, when discussing the issues of inter-ethnic relations in the Macedonian context, adopt a very pragmatic stance – while they agree that ethnicized politics is not the ideal model, they see it as the best solution for the tensions existent in the Macedonian society. Some of them have had remarks regarding the representation of smaller ethnic communities, arguing that due to their size and the political resolution of the war like crisis of 2001, it is primarily the Macedonians and Albanians who participate in the decision-making process and occupy the crucial positions in society today. The attitudes of ethnic Albanian interviewees go more along the lines of protection of the rights of the members of their ethnic community.

Some of the representatives of the old political elite note that back in the days of socialism, when they discussed the possibilities of reforming the system so that it becomes more inclusive and friendly towards minorities, their proposals were not received well. Had their ideas be implemented, they argue, the tensions and the conflict of 2001 might have been prevented.

### **Economic elite**

The majority of the representatives of the economic elite from the socialist times (1985-1990) believe that it is not important to have proportional representation of minority members in the public sector. They also straightforwardly claim that ethnic parties should not exist – the majority of the interviewees from the new economic elite shared this opinion as well.

The economic elite representatives say that the language of the majority must be respected and that people should be proud of their nation and their country. Many of them dislike the construction of many new religious buildings, churches and mosques, claiming that such practice stirs intolerance. Ethnicity plays factor in the answers of the representatives of the business elite, as the ethnic Albanian interviewees, in a similar way to their counterparts from the

political elite, discuss multiculturalism primarily through the prism of minority rights. One ethnic Macedonian interviewee pointed out that “flags of foreign countries should not be waved at party rallies in Macedonia.”

### **Academic and cultural elite**

One of the representatives of the new elite argues that since 2001 “Macedonians started to be more open towards other ethnicities.” Many of the interviewees, especially ethnic Macedonians do not approve the concept of mono-ethnic political parties in Macedonia, and they see that the problem is in early years of transition period when the political parties emerged. One interviewee points out that the state lacks integration strategy; they suggest that the institutions should “make citizens of the country, not of the nation.” For them, a solution for inter-ethnic coexistence is the possibility to have pre-election party coalitions between Macedonians and Albanians.

Similarly, representatives of the academic and cultural elite, of Albanian ethnic origin, argue that Macedonian institutions introduced multicultural norms and practices only after the conflict in 2001 and the acquisition of greater rights for minorities in the country. However, they note that unfortunately, the political reforms and the transformation of Macedonia were primarily a result of external pressure rather than internal discussions and consensus.

## Answers of the questionnaires

(The least conservative attitudes are bolded; the most conservative values are both bolded and italicized)

	Oldpol [2]	Newpol [8]	Oldecon excl [5]	New econ excl [9]	Old academic excl [3]	New academic excl [8]	Old academic + old political [4]	Old academic + new academic [2]	Old political + new economic [1]
Being born in a given country implies being proud of it.	4.5	3.38	3.2	3.33	4.67	<b>2.63</b>	3.25	<b>5</b>	4
Our ethnic group is superior compared to others.	<b>1</b>	1.25	1.8	1.56	1.33	<b>1.75</b>	<b>1</b>	2.5	<b>1</b>
Representation of minorities in public institutions is not a very important issue.	4	2.38	2.8	2.78	3	2.38	1.75	<b>4.5</b>	<b>1</b>
Some ethnic groups will never fully integrate in our society.	3	1.88	3	2.56	<b>3.33</b>	2.38	1.5	2.5	<b>1</b>

	Political elite [10]	Economic elite [14]	Academic elite [13]	Interviewees belonging to more than one category [5]
Being born in a given country implies being proud of it.	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3.33</b>	3.46	3.4
Our ethnic group is superior compared to others.	1.2	1.6	<b>1.77</b>	<b>1</b>
Representation of minorities in public institutions is not a very important issue.	2.7	2.67	<b>2.85</b>	<b>1.6</b>
Some ethnic groups will never fully integrate in our society.	2.1	2.6	<b>2.62</b>	<b>1.4</b>

	Elite 1985-1990 including the ones that maintained high positions afterwards	Elite 2005-2010 [25]
Being born in a given country implies being proud of it.	<b>3.88</b>	<b>3.12</b>
Our ethnic group is superior compared to others.	<b>1.47</b>	<b>1.52</b>
Representation of minorities in public institutions is not a very important issue.	<b>2.82</b>	<b>2.52</b>
Some ethnic groups will never fully integrate in our society.	<b>2.53</b>	<b>2.28</b>

An analysis of the answers to the questionnaires reveals several important conclusions:

- Generally, all interviewees expressed more liberal than conservative attitudes regarding issues of nationalism, ethnicity and multiculturalism; the sole area in which they had moderately conservative answers was the “patriotic question” that assessed the perception of loyalty to the homeland.
- Representatives of the academic and cultural elite expressed comparatively more conservative stances than the politicians and entrepreneurs.
- There are no significant differences along generational lines when it comes to the questions on nationalism, ethnicity and multiculturalism.

## **Social welfare and economy**

### **Political elite**

Almost every representative of the political elite was highly concerned over the rising poverty and the exacerbating living conditions for a significant share of the Macedonian population. Yet, the interviewees' opinions on the social responsibility of the state varied greatly between the concepts of social democracy and market capitalism. They clearly contrasted the ideas in favor of introducing a welfare state, with high levels of taxation offering for example accessible and good quality public services on one hand, and the ideas for establishing a liberalized privately owned healthcare and education on the other. One common value the interviewees share is the necessity to protect human dignity. The same goes for the question of financial assistance for the poor social classes: while some of the interviewees, especially those representing the new political elite argued that the "lazy" and the ones who refuse to work should not be entitled to social security, all elites think that there must be a threshold below which no human being should be allowed to fall below.

### **Economic elite**

The interviewees from the socialist economic elite (1985-1990) are concerned that today in Macedonia there is an increasing stratification of the population where there is a one rich class, small in numbers, and a large class of people living in poverty. A strong middle class is almost non-existent today. Without a thriving middle class, the state cannot progress. The interviewees blame the present economic problems of Macedonia on the, according to them, unsuccessful model of privatization implemented in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Representatives of both cohorts of the economic elite are critical of the present state of the quality of public services. They claim that the educational system today is of really poor quality. One of the interviewees even mentioned that it only "reproduces stupidity."

## Academic and cultural elite

In a similar manner, the interviewees of both generations of the academic and cultural elite consider that education, social security and health care in the previous system were much better than today. They also argue that nowadays science has been neglected and disregarded by institutions, while the education system has become “chaotic and driven (only) by financial interest.” The representatives of the academic and cultural elite 1985-1990 fear that the pension system is in collapse. They were paying for pensions and health insurance 40 years and today, when they are retired, they cannot see the benefit of it.

## Answers of the questionnaires

(The least pro-welfare state and controlled economy attitudes are bolded, the most pro-welfare state and pro-controlled economy values are both bolded and italicized)

	Oldpol [2]	Newpol [8]	Oldecon excl [5]	New econ excl [9]	Old academic excl [3]	New academic excl [8]	Old academic + old political [4]	Old academic + new academic [2]	Old political + new economic [1]
The ones able to work but refuse the opportunity should not be entitled to society's support.	4	4.75	3.4	4.78	<b>5</b>	3.88	4.25	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
The rich are not too highly taxed.	4	4	<b>2.8</b>	4.22	2.67	4	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
Having more money should not entitle people to better healthcare conditions.	<b>1</b>	3.75	2.2	2.33	1.33	2	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	2
Free market does not imply freedom for the people.	3.5	2.38	3	2.78	<b>1.67</b>	1.75	3	<b>4</b>	3



## Mapping the leaders in Macedonia and Albania

	Pol [10]	Econ [14]	Acad [13]	In 2 categories [5]
The ones able to work but refuse the opportunity should not be entitled to society's support.	<b>4.6</b>	4.2	4.31	<b>4</b>
The rich are not too highly taxed.	4	<b>3.8</b>	3.85	<b>5</b>
Having more money should not entitle people to better healthcare conditions.	3.2	2.27	<b>1.69</b>	<b>3.6</b>
Free market does not imply freedom for the people.	2.6	2.87	<b>2.08</b>	<b>3</b>

	Old including old that has maintained some position 2005	New [25]
The ones able to work but refuse the opportunity should not be entitled to society's support.	<b>4.12</b>	<b>4.48</b>
The rich are not too highly taxed.	<b>3.82</b>	<b>4.08</b>
Having more money should not entitle people to better healthcare conditions.	<b>2.18</b>	<b>2.68</b>
Free market does not imply freedom for the people.	<b>2.94</b>	<b>2.32</b>

An analysis of the answers to the questionnaires reveals several important conclusions:

- All of the interviewees basically agree on tightening access to aid for the ones who do not use their working ability; they think that the rich are not too highly taxed, while they stand moderately on ideas such as universal health-care and the merits of free market economy.
- Former politicians who were or are still active in academia or business, exhibit the strongest pro-welfare state and pro-controlled economy attitude.

## **Perception on the role of the elites then and now**

### **Political elite**

Some of the contemporary political elite representatives admire the political elite from the Yugoslav 1980s and see them as reformers and visionaries, while seeing the majority of the contemporary elite as less emancipated, less enlightened and more profit oriented and opportunistic than their predecessors. On the other hand, some contemporary right-wing politicians see the communist elites as servants to the regime; having small or even “no personal integrity,” while arguing that the contemporary elites are doing a much better job of leading the country. The representatives of the socialist elite (1985-1990), are more often critical of the representatives of the new elite, but also of the fellows from their generation. They say that very rarely some of the important politicians of the 1980s remained politically active after Macedonian independence - in some of the interviewees’ perceptions, mostly because they were not competitive enough and did not have a sense for responsibility.

### **Economic elite**

The representatives of the economic elite 1985-1990 claim that the socialists were better educated than the elites today and that they had much higher personal integrity. They are critical of the new business elite, and especially of individuals who earned their wealth in the early 1990s. As they say, these people care only about material gains and disregard ethics and traditional values. For the contemporary economic elite, on the other hand, the main difference between the economic elite in the former and the present regime is the level of independence. They see the old economic elite as closely related to political power as economic development and trade during communist times was to a large scale party influenced. Moreover, they see the privatization of the old socialist companies as unjust and politically influenced, serving for the interest of the narrow circle of people in power. Representatives of the contemporary economic elite also speak of corruption, nepotism and bad economic work and management of socialist enterprises.

## Academic and cultural elite

Interviewees from the academic and cultural elite emphasize the process of privatization as being irresponsibly managed, leading to a deterioration of the economy, disintegration of societal links and impoverishment of the population. Some of the representatives of the socialist academic and cultural elite (1985-1990), however, criticized the set of values of the members of the contemporary elite. They also say that people from their profession used to be much more respected in the communist days compared to today.

## Answers of the questionnaires

(The answers that are least in favor of the communist elite are bolded; the answers that express the highest keenness towards the communist elite are both bolded and italicized)

	Oldpol [2]	Newpol [8]	Oldecon excl [5]	Newecon excl [9]	Old academic excl [3]	New academic excl [8]	Old academic + old political [4]	Old academic + new academic [2]	Old political + new economic [1]
Communists were better educated than the contemporary elite is.	3	2.38	3.6	2.33	1.67	1.88	<b>3.75</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Communists took better care for minorities than the contemporary elite does.	2.5	2.38	1.4	<b>2.56</b>	3	2.13	2.5	3	<b>1</b>
Communists took better care for women than the contemporary elite does.	2	2.5	<b>4</b>	2.56	2.33	2	2	2	<b>1</b>
Communists had higher personal integrity compared to the contemporary elite.	3	<b>3.38</b>	2.8	<b>2.67</b>	<b>2.67</b>	<b>3.38</b>	3.25	3	3

## Can elites promote positive social change?

	Pol [10]	Econ [14]	Acad [13]	In 2 categories [5]
Communists were better educated than the contemporary elite is.	2.5	2.67	<b>1.69</b>	<b>3.2</b>
Communists took better care for minorities than the contemporary elite does.	2.4	<b>2.07</b>	<b>2.46</b>	2.2
Communists took better care for women than the contemporary elite does.	2.4	<b>2.93</b>	2.08	<b>1.8</b>
Communists had higher personal integrity compared to the contemporary elite.	<b>3.3</b>	<b>2.73</b>	3.15	3.2

	Old including old that has maintained some position 2005	New [25]
Communists were better educated than the contemporary elite is.	<b>2.76</b>	<b>2.2</b>
Communists took better care for minorities than the contemporary elite does.	<b>2.24</b>	<b>2.36</b>
Communists took better care for women than the contemporary elite does.	<b>2.59</b>	<b>2.36</b>
Communists had higher personal integrity compared to the contemporary elite.	<b>2.94</b>	<b>3.12</b>

An analysis of the answers to the questionnaires reveals several important conclusions:

- On average, the respondents had a rather neutral stance when it comes to assessing the role of the elite today and in the past.
- Surprisingly, interviewees belonging to the elite 2005-onwards believe that communists took better care for minorities to a higher extent compared to the former communists as well; at the same time, the representatives of the new elite are more likely to think that communists had higher personal integrity compared to them.

## **Perception of the communist past**

### **Political elite**

The representatives of the socialist elite (1985-1990) see the communist days as a period of intense state and nation building efforts. They argue that from the six decades of the existence of the Macedonian statehood, the vast majority of the infrastructure and institutions have been established in the first four decades of the communist rule. Sadly, they note, after twenty years of independence, Macedonia is still far from reaching the level of development and well-being from socialist times. They agree that the former regime lacked respect for human rights, personal freedoms and that it nurtured laziness due to the all-encompassing social security measures. Yet, as they say, the 1980s saw the process of “gradual liberalization” and “high level of democracy.” Within the Communist Party there was a notable level of plurality of ideas that has allowed many, including some of our interviews, to have a vocal individual opinion calling for change - the Party was comprised of various ideological currents, and there were internal conflicts, often taking very dramatic and dynamic path.

The representatives of the contemporary political elite, especially right-wingers, are critical of communism, its legacy as well as the popular nostalgic sentiments today. Although they acknowledge that there have been some benefits, such as the rapid modernization of society, they argue that Macedonia's struggle in the 1990s was a result of the bad management of the Communist party and its successor. Representatives of the new elite, who belong to the left wing parties, share a very different image about communism: they argue that despite certain shortcomings and downsides, it was a period of prosperity and development.

### **Economic elite**

Representatives of the old economic elite (1985-1990) claim communist times were more just than today. They also claim that Yugoslavia was a strong economy, seen in the fact that it was one of the founders of the IMF and the World Bank. Within the Yugoslav federation, Macedonia was industrialized country

with well-educated managers that ran important companies in the construction sector, in metal processing and the chemical industry. For most citizens life was better during communism than today – the vast majority were employed, salaries were good and guaranteed, while public education and health care were free and reliable. All of that is gone today. The sole negative remark goes for the one-party rule and citizens enjoying less individual freedom than today.

Representatives of the economic elite (2005-present) believe that state socialism was sham; yet, in their perception, liberal democracy in Macedonia is failing as well. For instance, they complain that the quality of education has dramatically declined. They believe that the communist regime had a positive impact on development. They believe that lower classes fared better under communist rule, and life was calmer and less stressful. Yet, as they argue, not only the personal freedom, but the possibilities for advancement were limited as well.

### **Academic and cultural elite**

For the representatives of the old academic elite (1985-1990), who also had a noteworthy political role, one of the most problematic traits of the former regime was the limited freedom of expression. Yet, they add that even though the ruling ideology was relatively authoritarian and closed; the regime was much more open compared to the rest of the East European countries.

The interviewees of ethnic Albanian origin, primarily the ones from the old academic and cultural elite, claim that during communism, not all people had an equal treatment. According to them, in Tetovo where the most of the citizens were Albanians, only a small share of them was employed in the state-owned enterprises. They point out the different role ethnicity played then and now: one of the key things to become member of the elite in communism for Albanians was the loyalty to the communist party and the restricted personal identification with their religion and ethnic background. In this sense, they believe that life is better today, as these barriers are gone.

## Answers of the questionnaires

(The answers that are least in favor of the communist elite are bolded; the answers that express the highest keenness towards the communist elite are both bolded and italicized)

	Oldpol [2]	Newpol [8]	Oldecon excl [5]	New econ excl [9]	Old academic excl [3]	New academic excl [8]	Old academic + old political [4]	Old academic + new academic [2]	Old political + new economic [1]
"Everyone according to their abilities, to everyone according to their needs" is a good idea.	<b>5</b>	4	2.6	2.78	3.33	<b>2.5</b>	4.75	3	3
Life in communism was better.	3	3.38	<b>2.6</b>	2.78	3	2.38	<b>3.75</b>	3.5	3
Economically, we were better off during communist days.	3	3.25	<b>2.6</b>	3.67	2.67	3.5	<b>4</b>	3.5	3
We had more freedom under communism.	3	1.88	2	1.56	<b>1.33</b>	2.63	2.5	<b>3.5</b>	2

	Pol [10]	Econ [14]	Acad [13]	In 2 categories [5]
"Everyone according to their abilities, to everyone according to their needs" is a good idea.	4.2	<b>2.73</b>	2.77	<b>4.4</b>
Life in communism was better.	3.3	2.73	<b>2.69</b>	<b>3.6</b>
Economically, we were better off during communist days.	<b>3.2</b>	3.27	3.31	<b>3.8</b>
We had more freedom under communism.	2.1	<b>1.73</b>	<b>2.46</b>	2.4

## Can elites promote positive social change?

	Old including old that has maintained some position 2005	New [25]
"Everyone according to their abilities, to everyone according to their needs" is a good idea.	<b>3.59</b>	<b>3.08</b>
Life in communism was better.	<b>3.12</b>	<b>2.84</b>
Economically, we were better off during communist days.	<b>3.12</b>	<b>3.48</b>
We had more freedom under communism.	<b>2.29</b>	<b>2</b>

An analysis of the answers to the questionnaires reveals several important conclusions:

- Overall, the interviewees expressed moderately positive attitudes towards the socialist regime and the Marxist ideas, and see life and economy under communism as better than today. Yet, they believe that the system failed to secure freedom. Former politicians who were or are still active in academia or business exhibit the most positive attitudes towards the former regime.
- While representatives of the older generation of the elite have overall better image of the communist past, the contemporary elite have a stronger impression that in terms of the economic conditions, Macedonia was more prosperous in the communist days.



## Elites and the public opinion

### Personal freedoms

	Public	Elite
Abortion should be illegal.	2.89	1.48
Marijuana possession should remain illegal.	4.38	3.6
Same sex couples should not have the right to marry.	4.23	3.24
It is important that my (grand) children learn religious values at school.	3.6	2.67

The interviewed representatives of the elite have manifested less conservative attitudes than the public on issues concerning personal freedoms. The biggest difference is noted in terms of the issue of the legality of the abortion. The number of survey respondents who strongly or partially disagree with the idea of criminalizing abortion is higher than the number of the ones who want abortion prohibited (the ratio is 8:7 in favor of the ones for legal abortion). The vast majority of the interviewed elite representatives strongly disagree with the idea that the abortion should be illegal. Exceptions are primarily right-wing politicians and some businesspeople, which have a more pro-life viewpoint on the issue.

The vast majority of the respondents in the public opinion poll disagrees or strongly disagrees that marijuana should be decriminalized; among the interviewed elite representatives, the majority also shared a negative stance. The number of the surveyed respondents supporting same sex marriages is very low - the ratio is close to 5:1 in favor of the ones against same sex marriages. On the other hand, the interviewed representatives of the elites are relatively divided on the issue, as the number of the ones strongly disagreeing or disagreeing with the proposal, and the number of the ones strongly agreeing or agreeing with it is equal. Among the political elite, the number of the ones agreeing and disagreeing is the same; among the representatives of the economic elite the number of the ones disagreeing is slightly higher, whereas the situation with the academic-

cultural elites is the opposite. Homosexual marriages have more support among the new elites, compared to the old ones.

The number of the respondents who support the idea of religious education is higher than the number of the ones who do not (the ratio is more than 2:1). Among the elite, more interviewees from the older generation of elites disagree that the religious education of their children is important to them whereas the representatives of the new generations. In terms of the different categories, the majority of the interviewed representatives of the economic elite consider religious education important, while among the political and the academic-cultural elite the situation is the opposite.

### Nationalism and multiculturalism

	Public	Elite
Being born in a given country implies being proud of it.	4.28	3.43
Our ethnic group is superior compared to others.	3.45	1.5
Representation of minorities in public institutions is not a very important issue.	2.99	2.64
Some ethnic groups will never fully integrate in our society.	3.34	2.38

In general, the representatives of the elite have manifested less conservative attitudes than the public on issues concerning nationalism, ethnicity and multiculturalism. The biggest difference is seen in terms of the question on perception of one's own ethnic group in comparison to other ethnic groups.

More than three quarters of the respondents in the public opinion poll strongly disagree that the random nature of the fact that one is born in a given country is a reason for not being proud of it. Similarly, most of the elite representatives strongly agree that being born in a given country should not imply not being proud of it; however, a significant portion of them shares the opposite opinion. In general, the ratio is roughly 3:2 in favor of the former. There is a difference in terms of generations, as the representatives of the old elites tend to agree more often than the representatives of the new elites that the fact that a person is born in a given country, should not imply pride.

In total, the number of the respondents who think that their ethnic group is superior compared to other ethnic groups is much higher than the ones who do not (the ratio is 5:3). Among the elite representatives on the other hand, the vast majority of the interviewees (all but nine) strongly disagree that their ethnic group is superior to the others.

The number of the respondents of the nationwide survey agreeing and disagreeing with the concept of proportional representation of minorities in public institutions is the same. Among the elite representatives, the majority of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that minority representation in the public institutions is important. The only exception case is the economic elite, where the same number of interviewees agrees and disagrees on the issue. There is no significant variation across generations.

The majority of the respondents of the survey believe that certain ethnic groups will never fully integrate in the Macedonian society. Among the interviewed representatives of the elite, the majority strongly disagrees with such a proposal, although the economic and the academic-cultural elite seem to give more diverse perspectives than the representatives of the political elite. More doubts regarding the potential of certain ethnic groups to fully integrate in the society is met across the representatives of the new elite compared to the old one.

## Social welfare and economy

	Public	Elite
The ones able to work but refuse the opportunity should not be entitled to society's support.	4.67	4.33
The rich pay enough taxes.	3.81	3.98
Having more money should not entitle people to better healthcare conditions.	2.85	2.48
Free market does not imply freedom for the people.	1.62	2.57

The vast majority of the respondents in the public opinion poll agree that the ones able to work, but refusing the possibility, should not expect aid from the society (the ratio is 15:1). Similar attitudes are shared by the interviewed representatives of the elites, where all but 8 interviewees agree or strongly agree that those who refuse work should not expect state assistance.

In total, the ratio of the survey respondents who disagree that the rich are too highly taxed compared to the ones who believe that they are not is almost 3:1. The interviewed representatives of the elites share similar attitude and imply that there is room for re-introducing progressive taxation.

More than 80% of the total number of respondents of the survey strongly or partially agrees that the freer the market is the freer are the people. Among the interviewed elite representatives, a slight majority agrees with the idea that the freedoms of the people are contingent on the freedom of the market, yet to a smaller extent than among the public.

## Gender equality

	Public	Elite
Mothers can have careers, but their first duty is to be homemakers.	3.41	2.07
The government does not need to take positive action to achieve gender balance in certain employment areas.	1.44	1.64
Men and women should not earn the same wage for the same type of work done.	1.35	1.29
Women should not have the right to serve in the army.	2.23	1.62

In all but the question on affirmative measures, the elite representatives have less conservative attitude than the public. Especially large margin is noted regarding the question on the role of women in the society and the household. Around 60% of the respondents, equally distributed across gender, agree that mothers may have careers, but that their first duty is to be homemakers. Among the elite interviewees, the majority disagrees or strongly disagrees with such a proposal.

Overall, among the public, there is a strong support for the affirmative actions intended to increase the participation of the underrepresented gender in the public sphere. The ratio of the respondents who supported the idea compared to the ones who did not is about 13:1. Similar answers have been registered regarding the right of women of having equal wages for the same type of work done by men. The ratio here is about 14:1 in favor of the ones who support the concept of equal wages. Similarly, there is a strong support for both of these ideas, especially the latter, among the interviewed representatives of the elites.

The nationwide survey results revealed a paradoxical outcome in terms of the question whether the women should have the right to serve in the professional army. While combined 72.5% of the male respondents agreed that women should have the right to serve in the army, only 64.2% of the female respondents share the same opinion. The total ratio of respondents supporting the idea of women serving in the army to the ones who do not is about 14:5. The vast majority of the interviewed elite representatives agree that women should have the right to serve in the army. Female respondents in fact manifested attitudes very close to the ones of the men regarding all questions on gender equality.

	Male (public)	Female (public)
Mothers can have careers, but their first duty is to be homemakers.	3.43	3.39
The government does not need to take positive action to achieve gender balance in certain employment areas.	1.47	1.42
Men and women should not earn the same wage for the same type of work done.	1.39	1.32
Women should not have the right to serve in the army.	2.08	2.34

### Perception of the role of the elites

	Public	Elite
Communists were better educated than the contemporary elite is.	2.86	2.43
Communists took better care for minorities than the contemporary elite does.	2.87	2.31
Communists took better care for women than the contemporary elite does.	2.73	2.45
Communists had higher personal integrity compared to the contemporary elite.	3.27	3.05

In the public opinion poll, the questions on the perceptions of the communist compared to the contemporary elites were roughly in favor of the contemporary ones. However, unlike the others, a significant share of respondents did not have a definite answer (quite often the answers were “they are both the same” or “they are equally bad”). The interviewed representatives of the elites

have given slightly different answers, as they have been more critical of the elites in the communist era, although more answers in favor of the communist elites was given by the representatives of the older generation.

In the public opinion poll, the ratio in terms of the perception of the elite's level of education is 6:5 in favor of the contemporary elites. When it comes to the question "who has paid better care for minorities", the ratio is 8:7 in favor of today's elites. In terms of the care for women's rights, the ratio is 7:5 in favor of the contemporary elites, yet women tend to agree less than men on this issue. The only aspect in which communist elites were evaluated better than contemporary elites was their individual integrity (yet, the difference is very narrow - the ratio is 1.1 : 1 in favor of the socialist elites).

The interviewed representatives of the elites on the other hand have given the following answers: roughly 3:2 regarding education, about 2.5:1 regarding care for minorities and about 3:1 regarding care for the rights of women in favor of the new elites; but roughly 2.1:1.7 in favor of the older elites when it comes to the individual integrity. However, while the vast majority of the interviewees of the socialist elite (1985-1990) argue that the elites in the communist days had better integrity than the ones today, the answers of the elite from the period 2005-2010 go mostly in favor of themselves.

### Perception of the communist past

	Public	Elite
"Everyone according to their abilities, to everyone according to their needs" is a good idea.	4.3	3.29
Life in communism was better.	3.78	2.95
Economically, we were better off during communist days.	3.94	3.33
We had more freedom under communism.	3.59	2.12

The public has a better image of the communist past compared to the elite representatives. While overall the impression of the Yugoslav days among the respondents in the nationwide survey is positive, the interviewees on average hold a moderate stance (except when it comes to the level of freedoms under communism).

The vast majority of the total number of respondents in the nationwide survey believes that everyone should work according to their possibilities, but earn according to their needs. They also share the impression that life in the Yugoslav days was better than today. Almost two thirds of the respondents (64.6%) strongly or partially agree that life in communism was generally better than today. Among the interviewed elite representatives, however, the number of the ones agreeing and disagreeing with the proposed claim is almost the same. The representatives of the political and the economic elites share the opinion that life in communism was better, while the representatives of the academic-cultural elite disagree. On the other hand, the representatives of the elites 1985-1990 have a significantly better image of the Yugoslav past than the ones of the period 2005-2010.

Even higher is the number of the ones who agreed with the proposal that economically “we were better off during communism” (68.2%). As well, among the elites, the majority (slightly more than a half of the total completed questionnaires) agrees that the people were in a better economic situation during communism.

Finally, almost 60% of the respondents in the public opinion poll agree that people had more personal freedoms during communism. It is extremely significant that almost two thirds of the ethnic Macedonian respondents (74.2%) agree that they had more personal freedoms during the communist past, while only 23% of the ethnic Albanian respondents agree with the claim. Among the interviewed representatives of the elites, on the other hand, the majority strongly disagrees with such a proposal (the ratio is higher than 4:1).

## Conclusions

One overarching assumption regarding the processes of the production, reproduction and circulation of the elite in the late communist days is that it was still contingent to the approval of the narrow decision-making bodies within the party leadership. As in every one-party system, in the Yugoslav one it was much more beneficial for individuals to conform to rather to dissent party politics. Yet, our interviews indicated that this was not a strict rule, and there have been other dimensions to the career advancements. In that respect, it is important to note that personal and professional merits were an important factor for the emergence of the elite in the period 1985-1990. Good and well-rounded education was prerequisite for getting into public office. Clear scientific criteria were decisive for advancement in the academic and cultural sphere. Often people from the academia, especially the one from the social sciences, had political careers and held an idealistic approach to politics.

The democratic breakthrough in Macedonia, on the other hand, was a top-down process that followed the reformist tendency of the Communist Party from the 1980s onwards. In terms of the change of the people in power, the political transition resembled a period of a broader societal makeover. It saw the ascent of the lower ranks of the Communist Party, who surged to top positions after the gradual ousting of the communist leaders, senior elites and many of the promising reformers. Only a small share of the former elite has retained its position during the 1990s, while many migrated from one sector to another (former politicians usually ended up in academia or entrepreneurship). The political elite 2005-onwards, on the other hand, are comprised of people who had made names in various fields before they started their political careers. Factors such as education and hard work were crucial for their recruitment. Their main motives to join politics, however, lie in the disappointment from the Others – while the members of the political right blame the bad policies of the 1990s leftist governments, the new leftists frame their political deeds as a struggle against what they label as a burgeoning conservatism with authoritarian characteristics.



The economic elite of both generations has been quietly reliant on political developments. Representatives of the old elite admit that in communist days the approval by the political leadership was a great facilitator of success in their careers. Interviewees representing of the contemporary economic elite, on the other hand, denounce politicization of business, yet, they recollect that knowing the right people in right places, as well as maintaining close relations with them apparently facilitates commerce. However, they all emphasize the role of effort and skills, as well as the understanding of the market, as some of the prerequisite features for one to succeed and remain on the top.

The image of the former regime remains positive among the old guard, and they use it often to contrast the contemporary state of the society. The contemporary elite has a deep respect towards the state-building milestones achieved by their predecessors and shares the impression that today things are not as rosy as they might have been. In fact, virtually all of the interviewees described the present state of affairs as unfavorable for large shares of the population. There is a consensus among both the elite and the popular opinion that the former regime provided more security and stability. There is notable support among the public for the idea that life in generally was better and that communists had more personal integrity than elites have today. The majority of the surveyed respondents also claim that there was more freedom in the past as well. Answers here are dependent on ethnicity and political orientation: ethnic Albanian respondents and interviewees, and right-wing politicians in general, are more critical of communism and the communist elites. The representatives of the elite 1985-1990, especially the ones who faced the rough side of the one-party system do not necessarily speak in superlatives of the former regime. They have critical remarks regarding the society today as well, some of which are not that different from the remarks regarding the former regime: lack of tolerance towards different opinions, omnipresent role for the ruling party(ies) and façade politics.

One concerning fact is that when it comes to personal freedoms and gender equality, as well as some aspects of the issues of nationalism, ethnicity and multiculturalism, the elites from the era 1985-1990 have more liberal and tolerant stances compared to their contemporary counterparts. That is an indicator of a trend pointed by one of the more liberal politicians of the post-2005 era, who suggested that Macedonia sees resurgence of traditional values, political conservatism, nationalism and patriarchal values. On the other hand,

it is important to underline that on average, the interviewed representatives of the elites have attitudes that are more liberal and are more accepting towards personal freedoms compared to the general population. Moreover, regarding national/multicultural matters, the respondents in the nationwide survey demonstrated generally ethno-centric attitudes and disbelief towards the possibility of integration of various communities in the society on the long run. The role of the elites is especially important here: the history of inter-ethnic tensions has made politicians aware of the importance of multiculturalist mechanisms and practices, to the extent that even the ones who might prefer a civic political model, would not criticize the existing ethnic framework of the Macedonian politics. Businesspeople and academic and cultural elite representatives are less sensitive on this question. The interviewees from the two largest ethnic groups on the topic multiculturalism staked out the relationship between Albanians and Macedonians and rarely mentioned the other minorities in the country. Regarding gender equality, it was somewhat surprising that women do not express significantly different views than the men in the nationwide survey.

So what can be the conclusion of the role of the leaders and their potential for promoting a positive change? While the circulation of elites is a completed process that has helped in concluding the historical chapters and finalizing the epoch of Yugoslav communism, it raises more questions than provides answers for the future of Macedonia. Why are contemporary people in power less liberal than their predecessors from the 1980s? Do the generally illiberal attitudes of the public have roots in the resurgence of traditionalism among the elites? Why many of the interviewees reiterate the concerns, that society has become too politicized? In the framework of Higley and Burton, it was this generation of the elite who opened the debates and pushed for unity through debate and consensus, rather than through shared ideology as it was the case in the decades before. Yet, this consensus did not prevail – as it is reflected on by most of the interviewees, but also seen in the rhetoric of contemporary political elite, divisions along party lines are too strong to discuss eventual unity and consensus between the opposed factions regarding questions of high political and societal significance. After analyzing the gathered data, we can point out that contemporary Macedonian political elites qualify as partially (dis)united. On one hand, their viewpoints on many questions are not overtly divergent and many times, they agree on certain matters, which give the impression that they have consensus over certain values (such as freedom of speech, social welfare, human dignity, gender equality, etc). However, what leaves the impression of disunity is the denial of

each other's legitimacy to participate in the political arena. In many of the interviews, it was visible that political communication rarely crosses the partisan lines and the final impression is that in Macedonia politics still is conceptualized as war, even though the methods of solving problems are based on the idea of politics as bargaining. This impression was reiterated with the answers of the economic and the academic elite as well. Especially interesting were the answers of the old cohort of the elite, that had lived and worked under a one party regime, expressing distress due to the excessive partization of the contemporary society and the division between ethnic and ideological political blocs – arguing that political partisanship was not as important even in the Yugoslav days. And if we follow the line of thought of Higley and Burton, this might be one indicator to why the relatively illiberal scores of both the public and the elite in our quantitative survey. A positive change at this point might as well be overcoming political enmities and focusing on tolerance and mutual respect.

## Bibliography

- Aberbach, Joel D. and Bert A. Rockman "Conducting and Coding Elite Interviews", *PS: Political Science & Politics* December 2002, pp. 673-676
- Berry, Jeffrey M. "Validity and Reliability Issues In Elite Interviewing", *PS: Political Science & Politics*, December 2002, 679-682
- Best, Heinrich and John Higley (eds), *Democratic Elitism: New Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives* (Boston: Brill, 2010)
- Burton, Michael G. and John Higley, "Elite Settlements", *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (Jun., 1987), pp. 295-307
- Cammack, Paul, "A Critical Assessment of the New Elite Paradigm." *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 55, No. 3 (Jun., 1990), pp. 415-420
- Cohen, Leonard: *Broken Bonds: Yugoslavia's Disintegration and Balkan Politics in Transition*, Westview Press: Oxford, 1993
- Danforth, Loring M., *The Macedonian Conflict. Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995
- Gryzmala-Busse Anna, and Pauline Jones Luong, "Reconceptualizing the State: Lessons from Post-Communism," *Politics & Society*, Vol. 30 No. 4, December 2002, pp. 529-554
- Higley, John and Gyorgy Lengyel, *Elites after state socialism* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2000)
- Higley, John and Michael Burton, *Elite Foundations of Liberal Democracy* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006)
- Higley, John, Michael G. Burton and G. Lowell Field, "In Defense of Elite Theory: A Reply to Cammack.", *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 55, No. 3 (Jun., 1990), pp. 421-426

Lilleker, Darren G. "Interviewing the Political Elite: Navigating a Potential Minefield", *Politics* Vol 23(3), 2003, pp. 207-214

Maleska Mirjana; "Politichki, Kulturni, i Megjunarodni Okolnosti, koi Vlijaat Vrz Efikasnost na Sistemot" [Political, Cultural, and International Circumstances that Affect the System Efficacy], in *Efikasnost na Parlamentarnata Demokratija 1991-1992*, [Efficacy of Parliamentary Democracy], Skopje: Institut za Socioloski i Politichko Pravni Istrazhuvanja, 1998

Maleska Mirjana; "Rizikot na Demokratijata: Sluchajot na Makedonija", in *Godishnik na Institutot za Socijalno Pravno Politichki Istrazhuvanja*, Skopje, N.1, 1998

Perry, Duncan M. "The Republic of Macedonia: Finding its Way", in Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott (eds.), *Politics, Power, and the Struggle for Democracy in South- East Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997

Poulton, Hugh: *Who are the Macedonians?*, Indiana UP: Bloomington, 1996

Ramet Sabrina, *Balkan Babel: Politics, Culture, and Religion in Yugoslavia*, Oxford: Westview Press, 1992

Richards, David, "Elite interviewing: Approaches and Pitfalls," *Politics* 16(3), 1996, pp. 199-204

Schopflin, Gero, "Identities, politics and post-Communism in Central Europe," *Nations and Nationalism*, 9 (4), 2003, pp. 477-490

Spasov Gjorgji, "Dilemmas of Independence", in *East European Reporter*, Vol. 5, N.5. March-April, 1992

# THE CASE OF ALBANIA

## **Introduction**

### **Goals of the project, methodology and the research process**

In what ways governing elites matter for the success or failure of effective and sustainable democratic development? In order to answer this question, this project aimed at analyzing the structure, impact, and values of three categories of elite in two different periods of time. Primarily, the project is interested in the formation of two cohorts of elites – the ones who were in a high position in the social hierarchy at the time of the changes of the socialist regimes (during 1985 – 1990), and the ones who have climbed the ladder in the period from 2005 onwards. Finally, the project is interested in examining the shared values and attitudes between the representatives of the two cohorts of elites, and between the elites and the public. By examining the public opinion and interviewing distinguished representatives of the economic, political and academic and cultural elite, the study ultimately aims to provide a clear picture of the process of circulation and formation of elites. The general perception on the elite role in the country is rather vague or somehow neglected. The elite circulation in Albania was partly a spontaneous result of real competition of ideas, abilities and alternatives. But mostly it was a result of the selection and preferences of the old political elite, in order to maintain its influence and prerogatives in the future developments of the country<sup>1</sup>.

After categorizing the three elite categories - political, economic, and academic/cultural - in two periods (1985-1990 and 2005-today), we selected an average of 10-12 representatives of each category for each period as per a qualitative sociological interview model. We compiled the list of interviewees

---

1 Barjaba, K. 'Albania in transition – Elites role and perceptions' – June 1998

in coordination with several representatives of both elite categories, by using the ‘snow-ball technique of sampling.’<sup>2</sup> The projected number of interviews initially agreed upon between IDM and CRPM was between 60 – 80 interviewees for all three categories of elites during both periods – old communist regime and 2005 – present. Due to a number of difficulties presented below, IDM researchers could interview as much as 50 representatives of political, economic, academic and cultural elites during communist time (1985 – 1990) and present (2005 – onward).

Several factors have posed a great burden for the interviewing process. Our experience has confirmed what the literature on the methodology of elite research points out as an immense challenge: interviewing representatives of the elites is a necessarily demanding and often very tiring process.<sup>3</sup> With regard to identification of our target population, elite research builds upon two main approaches for defining elites – the reputational and the positional one. We have selected the latter in order to avoid methodological complexities. The reputational approach requires an in-depth background research that would identify the people who set the agenda, influence decision-making, act as power brokers and, in general, have significant yet invisible influence. According to the positional approach, on the other hand, elite are people who hold high decision-making positions in the main governance bodies and the public sector, the main political parties and the wealthiest private enterprises. Such definition proved to be very practical for our purposes and greatly facilitated our work. The positional approach granted us with the opportunity to come up with a well-structured pool of interviewees that represented various categories and times.

To achieve a better representation of the various spheres of authority and influence, we adopted a model that differentiates among three general sub-

---

2 Snowball sampling is used by researchers to identify potential subjects in studies where subjects are hard to locate and particularly when the “population” targeted by the study is very rare or is limited to a very small subgroup. Read more: <http://www.experiment-resources.com/snowball-sampling.html#ixzz1Ud35Sq5H>. Also, see Salganik, M.J. and D.D. Heckathorn (2004). “Sampling and Estimation in Hidden Populations Using Respondent-Driven Sampling”. *Sociological Methodology* 34 (1): 193–239.

3 See David Richards, “Elite interviewing: Approaches and Pitfalls,” *Politics* 16(3), 1996, pp. 199-204; Jeffrey M. Berry, “Validity and Reliability Issues In Elite Interviewing”, *PS: Political Science & Politics*, December 2002, 679-682; Darren G. Lilleker, “Interviewing the Political Elite: Navigating a Potential Minefield”, *Politics* Vol 23(3), 2003, pp. 207-214; “Conducting and Coding Elite Interviews”, *PS: Political Science & Politics* December 2002, pp. 673-676.



categories: political, economic and academic/cultural elites. In the framework of the positional approach, we defined political elite as individuals who currently are or used to be in a position that provided them with the opportunity to participate in the political decision-making process. In particular, political elite representatives are current or former members of the parliament, officials from the executive branch of the central government, top officials from the local government, and participants in the high committees of political parties. Academic/cultural elite according to our approach are the ones who are or used to be in high positions in institutions that shape academic and the public discourse - rectors, deans and professors at public and private universities, directors of research institutions, managers and editors in chief in national media outlets, managers of cultural and scientific institutions and associations, and so on. Defining the economic elite of the former regime was slightly difficult given the predominance of full state planning approach over Albanian economy. Hence, to be considered part of the old economic elite, one had to have served in positions related to the economy of the country, under a certain authority defined as central power, for the period 1985-1990, while the new business elite would comprise powerful business persons, managers of business groups as well as well-known analysts of the modern market economy.

The interviews consisted of three segments. In the first part, we gathered information about the background and the personal story of the elite representatives. Besides discussing on their education, family, and personal issues, most crucial were the questions how they got into that particular position they are currently holding or used to hold. This part of the interview often was very hard to keep within the anticipated period of 40-60 minutes for the whole interview. For instance, the introductory part of interview with some of the representative of the elite 1985-1990 took about two hours, which left substantially little time for the rest of the questions.<sup>4</sup>

The second part of the interviews sought to solicit interviewee's thoughts and attitudes in five thematic areas. We discussed the following themes: 1) *liberal values*, with the purpose to assess the attitudes towards pluralism, personal freedoms, and contested rights; 2) *gender equality*, in order to assess the perceptions regarding the emancipation of women; 3) *social welfare*, in order to assess the attitudes towards issues such as social aid, public services, etc.; 4) *comparison*

---

4 The interviewing process was also very sensitive particularly with members of the old regime's elite. Many of them did not consent to recording the interview.

between the elites in communism and the contemporary ones; and 5) the perceptions on various aspects of *the communist past*. The answers to these questions served as indicators of the values of elite representatives, and helped us draw conclusions based on the premises on value sharing and representativeness.

The third and final part of the interviews was conducted in the framework of a standardized questionnaire consisting of 24 affirmative and negative claims, four in each and every of section listed above. The interviewees answered on a five-point scale of agreement (from strongly disagree to strongly agree). While the majority of the questions expressed more traditional and conservative values as well as an approval of the communist past, we asked some of the questions by expressing more liberal and progressive claims in order to keep the respondents actively thinking, thus avoiding automated answers. A further aim was to collect data regarding the values and the attitudes of the public so as to compare the popular opinion on the perception of the elites regarding important social issues.<sup>5</sup>

One of our initial assumption was that throughout the 1990s the change of governing characteristics and qualities of the elites influenced the democratic success and / or decline in a country. However, a country with a history of more than 20 years in transition has coped with a series of changes and transformations. In this respect, the interviewees shared three common beliefs:

**First**, they claim that governing elites from the two eras have faced different contexts. Governing elite today faces the challenges of globalization and internationalization of economies, while the same does not hold true for the previous system governing/political elite. **Second**, they hold that the new economic, social, political contexts and circumstances trigger a new elite behaviour – principles and practices – as they try to maintain their efficiency and legitimacy. **Finally**, these changes in elite political behaviour have a profound effect on the development of democracy. *Theoretically, the connection between globalization and local politics is democratization*<sup>6</sup>. In order for the democracy to be receptive for

---

5 We used the same questionnaire in a telephone survey, carried on a stratified representative sample of 650 respondents in 23 cities and towns. Prior to implementing the survey ,IDM team carried out a testing process with 50 respondents across the country. The telephone survey could not cover the entire territory and population in Albania due to the restricted coverage of Albanian landline telephone company only in urban areas.

6 Pierre, J. (2000) *Debating Governance. Authority, Steering and Democracy.*- Oxford University Press.

this development, the collected alternatives have to expand and the elite should be the epicentre for such expansion.

## Research findings on the political elite

### Circulation of political elite

The political elite's (re)production and circulation in the communist system (1945 – 1990) was an exclusive monopoly of the party structures and leadership. The party nomenclature regarded devoted party membership and possession of “revolutionary spirit” as important factors in this respect. This general standpoint is unanimously confirmed by the interviewed representatives of the past and current political elite. All former political elite representatives consider that the education background and honesty in their professional engagement were essential for them to be included in the elite circles. Some others also add the innovative and intellectual “spirit” to these aspects, while only a few of them declare that their biography<sup>7</sup> and revolutionary spirit were essential for career progress.

However, members of the former political elite hold that circulation of elites was not common in the highest level of the political hierarchy, unlike the second or third level of the political hierarchy at that time where less indoctrinated newcomers were often given a chance. Furthermore, three of these respondents bring concrete examples in this account. For instance, in the late 1980s two or three ministers had completed their studies abroad or were coming from the new intelligentsia. Fewer respondents of the former communist elite say that individuals who can be considered as the real elite – possessing the necessary education background – were often assigned to help the main political leaders at that time as a cover up of the incompetence and mediocrity of these leaders.

---

7 The term “biography” in this context refers to a whole process of examination of people's lives in the past system which was extended also to members of his / her family and relatives. For example, having a family relative jailed for one reason or another was considered a “problematic biography” and the person was commonly referred to as one with a “stain in his/her biography”. These persons were most usually deprived from many benefits such as “becoming a party member”, progressing in their careers, access to higher education etc.

Following the fall of the communist system, the old political elite were replaced. Yet, a considerable part of interviewees belonging to both, former and current political elite, state that some of party officials (working in the party structures covering press, doctrine, culture, education, etc.) remained active and entered the structures of the newly-established political parties and in the state structures too. A member of the current political elite explains this trend pointing to the fact that it was particularly communist intellectuals and students that initiated the regime change and the democratic movement.

The new elite after the 2000 and especially after the year 2005 had their career breakthrough. The majority of those asked from the old and current political elites, make reference to two main sources “producing” the new elites: studies and professional experience in western Europe and USA and the recruitment from the powerful business circles who are increasingly entering politics. Some of the old elite members say that now there is no fair competition to progress in political career. Another respondent from the present political elite declares that politicians today would rather remain in the group of newcomers that are trusted by the leader, than to face challenges that accompany a normal political career.

All but a few respondents from the current political elite agree that the main barrier to the normal circulation, (re)production and recycling of political elite is actually the fact that the political scene remains dominated by the same three to four political leaders for twenty years. Commenting on one of the most controversial issues related to the communist elite – some of the interviewed rightwing politicians say that in the leftwing political spectrum there are many former communists (or members of former communists’ families). The response from current leftwing politicians is that “it is true that 7-8% of their colleagues come from a communist background or communist functionaries’ families, but they are in politics only because of democratic meritocracy (and not due to their communist ties).

## **Liberal values**

Respondents from the old and current political elites unanimously confirm that Albania used to be a conservative society and that liberal values were considered a threat to the communist system and the country. Given the severe

conditions in the 1985 – 1990 the attitude towards these values was somehow alleviated in this period. Yet, the majority of respondents say that regardless of this trend in the society, the political system did not give any signs heralding democratic change. Many of them say that the system considered few alternative solutions to democratization to keep socialism and the power of leaders alive. Hence, all respondents believe that the liberalization during the years 1985 – 1990 was incomplete and failed to reform the country, unlike for instance, Gorbachev's "Perestroika" or Hungary's pre and post-Janos Kadar economic and political reforms of the 1980s. Respondents coming from the second and third tier of former political elite say they were encouraged by higher level elite to draft development projects, to put forward recommendations and to "dare to suggest". Yet, when this was done, they were "crucified" by the high level (old) political nomenclature as revisionists who do not respect the principles of the socialist system. A former member of the highest political elite of the communist system says that "we were encouraged even by the head of state not to be so static with the socialist principles and laws and to express freely our thoughts, but when we would do that he would completely abandon us or even worse... he'd give us in to the old devoted communists of the Political Bureau".

In the course of the years, it seems that many of the old political elite have changed their beliefs. A number of these respondents declare full support to liberal values and principles and to Euro-Atlantic integration processes, the western lifestyle and respect for fundamental human rights. Yet, representatives of the old nomenclature believe that the new political elite only "plays" with liberal values and that they remain conservatives in substance. "It is difficult to believe that these neo-liberals are free and democrats as long as they stand behind and support the two authoritarian leaders of the ruling and opposition camps", says a respondents who held an important political position in 1985 – 1990.

On the other hand, respondents from the current political elite claim that Albanian society is moving based on sound democratic foundations. This view is not shared by some of the old political elite who still see the spirit of the old regime amid the fear of the current elite to express themselves freely. This spirit has only changed shape but the substance is still there.

## Gender equality

The vast majority of interviewed representatives of former and current political elite share the view that gender equality is a precondition for a democratic, developed and free society. Old elite representatives have a high esteem about the positive role played by the communist system with regard to emancipation of women. They claim that through education and employment women “abandoned” their predominant occupation as housewives and became more involved in the cultural and political life. Yet, a handful of representatives of the 1980s political elite declare that despite numerical increase of women in governance, their involvement was more of a formal façade and their role in decision-making almost ineffective.

Current elite representatives share a different perspective, as they believe that in the communist system women were the most repressed social group. They also see the so-called emancipation as an additional burden rather than a deliverance from inequality.<sup>8</sup> Both current and former political elite representatives share the view that involvement of women in political life remains limited nowadays.

## Multiculturalism

Interethnic relations are not a hot topic in Albania. Interviewees from both the old and current political elite hold that there has been a sustained harmony when it comes to relations between different ethnicities. According to old elite representatives, members of minorities participated in the highest ranks of the political, social and cultural life of communist Albania. Some of the young politicians believe that posts reserved for minorities’ representatives were mainly honorific positions serving to propagandistic purposes. Yet, respondents of both generations confirm that there has been little discrimination on the basis of ethnic, race or religious grounds. Only few of the former political elite members declare that Roma and Egyptian minorities were granted a lower social status, with fewer education and employment opportunities.<sup>9</sup>

---

8 According to them, the greater involvement of women in the public life and in professional activities did not change the perceived primary task for her in the household.

9 A senior political representative of the current system suggests that the political bureau, parliament and government in the 1980s involved a significant number of Aromanians.

The majority of interviewed representatives of the former and current political elite are not in favour of ethnic-based political parties and they believe that specific policy measures must be adopted in order to ensure minorities' representation in the state institutions.

## **Social welfare**

Free market economy, private property, and entrepreneurship enable social welfare but do not exclude the polarization and inequalities in the society. This is a shared opinion among interviewed representatives of the current and old political elites. Leftwing interviewees coming from current and communist political elite argue that these inequalities and polarization are sharp and overwhelming. Although they agree that the standard of living has improved, they claim that the threshold remains very low, as the number of the poor has increased along with the unemployment rate. At the same time disadvantaged groups are completely abandoned by the state.

Rightwing politicians share some of these perceptions as well. Yet, they relate this situation with the nature of free market economy, competition, and entrepreneurship. More than half of respondents from both periods do support the need for a welfare state, but they are at odds when it comes to differentiated tax and fiscal policy. The main differences consist in the choice between more liberal policies to encourage entrepreneurship on one hand, and increased assistance on the other.

## **Perception on the role of the elites then and now**

The perceptions of interviewees on the role of the elite then and now are diverse and often controversial. Members of the current political elite believe that Albania did not have an elite as such before the 1990s or they see individual intellectuals of that time as servants to the old regime. This view is not held by members of the former political elite. Some of the latter group of respondents are enthusiastic about the fact that elites in the fields of education, art, culture, and science took part in shaping the public discourse back then.

The old and current political elite representatives make divergent claims regarding the role of the political elite today. Current political elite members believe that Albania's leaders today are well-educated in western universities and are experienced individuals with a vision for the country's development. On the other hand, members of the old political elite claim that today there is a large number of individuals who are only self-proclaimed and not professional politicians. "Albanian MPs are more concerned about their contract and salary" says an interviewed member of the past political elite.<sup>10</sup>

Yet the majority of the interviewees of both generations confirm that there is a harsh and often unfair competition to enter and to remain part of the political elite. The role of elite intellectuals is much smaller than that of the powerful businessmen who are linked with the ruling political elite.

### **Perception on the communist past**

The vast majority of respondents belonging to current and past political elites perceive the communist regime as a dictatorship, poverty and imprisonment. Old elite members have no nostalgia for the communist system and are confident that this part of the Albanian history will not reoccur. Differences between the two surveyed elites arise, however, when asked about the moment and ways of transition to democracy and attitude towards the communist legacy. "The year 1990 was definitely the end of the old regime regardless of what our will was", say all members of the old political elite. Yet, they have different stances on issues such as the so-called "shock therapy".<sup>11</sup> Respondents from the current political elite and the rightwing politicians, in particular, tend to portray the Albanian socialism as a hell on Earth and the communist leaders as "cannibals". On the other hand, respondents from the old political elite agree on the fact that the communist system was a dictatorship but they tend to underline also the positive sides of the regime (e.g. significant achievements in a number of areas and especially in defending the territorial integrity of Albania).

---

10 A member of the old political elite says Albanian intelligentsia is completely submitted due to political blackmail or fears they might lose their jobs. Interestingly, a member of the current political elite states that today's politicians are keener to hear the mediocre advice of foreigners rather than that of Albanian intellectuals.

11 The "shock therapy" refers to the set of economic restructuring measures that were proposed and carried out in the early 1990s by the right wing Government.



## Research findings on the economic elite

In general, political and economic elite are the only elite groups which dispose their own independent base of power. The power base of economic elites are financial means, the ownership of means of production, and the control the large organisations<sup>12</sup>. Hence, the economic elite have a huge influence in modern societies. Under state socialism, the political and the economic elite were part of the state apparatus, as there was an absence of private capital. The power of the industrial and economic institutions was not derived from private ownership. A characteristic of capitalism, on the other hand, is the relative autonomy of the economy and its elite. In the Albanian post-communist society, the process of transition has witnessed the formation of a new ownership class and the mushrooming of private market-oriented companies. In post-communist societies experiencing a prolonged and problematic transition towards democracy, even the concept of economic elite as such differs substantially. The distinction between economic elite within a socialist cooperative system and elite of a market economy determines the role of each of them in the progressive or regressive changes of the country.

A glance behind the façades shows that there is a meaningful difference between the concept of the **economic elite before the 1990s** and the **business elite after the 1990s**. Indeed, in Albania there is a clear-cut structural difference in favour of the business elite when compared to the economic elite of before 90's. The main argument of this difference stands first and foremost on this elite's exclusive power of decision over investments, rationalization measures, something the economic elite before 90s did not have and could not apply. The rapid internationalization that business structures have had, over the past 20 years, has noticeably increased the power that the business sector is advantageously having. In few words *'the business elite has become not only a crucial actor but an interest group to exert pressure over the governmental policies and action and to all other spheres of society'*.<sup>13</sup>

---

12 Lane, D.; Ross, C "The transition from Communism to Capitalism" St. Martin Press- New York, 1999 (pg 180-181)

13 Scuzcs, S.; Stromberg, L. "Local Elites, Political, Capital and Democratic Development – Governing Leaders in seven European Countries" – Urban and Regional Research International – 2006 (pg 21)

## **Reproduction or circulation of economic elite**

The most popular interpretation of the origin of the new economic elite is that a reproduction of class position and privileges has taken place in the last 20 years. Explanations take two forms: the first is the argument that the nomenclature of the old regime has converted political capital into private economic assets (private capital). The second argument is that economic power derived from control has been transformed into the ownership of production assets<sup>14</sup>. The analysis here is that managerial and economic executives have turned economic power into property rights. Both these approaches involve a shift of legitimating principles from administrative political authority to ownership and market ones. Current interpretations of transition in Albania stress the reproduction of the nomenclature and make the circulation a bit vaguer at least in this category of the elite.

## **Liberal values**

A very interesting element of study appeared at its initial stage. The representativeness seems to be very different between the economic elite of before 90s and the business elite after 90s. While for the economic elite of the former regime, it stands upon the issue of selection process by the state, by the party, for the business elite of after 90s, the factor of choice seems to establish the presence in this group. These two crucial key points come out while trying to reflect the origin of the economic elite in the societal pyramid and their position/presence in the today's social structure of the Albanian community. Moreover, the economic elite of the previous system had a common standard of partisanship except for the graduation background in the field; the business elite of nowadays is not faced at all with the initial criterion of partisanship and not necessarily with the oriented background in graduation. The only pattern that seems to be common between them is the origin from the upper middle class of the society. The target was initially approached with a very delicate 'hot potato' of the old regime and quite an arguable issue in the today's fragile democracy of Albania: criticism.

An analysis of the answers showed up the following. The interviewed

---

14 Perkin, H. 'The third revolution – Professional elites in the modern world' London & New York Press – 2003 (pg 20)

persons belonging to the old economic elite found it as crucial to emphasize that the critics in the previous system were thought thoroughly on an individual ground and addressed only smoothly and not to the top level: *“the critics in the previous system circulated by becoming bigger and bigger with the passage of time, while in the current one the critics starts as huge and the more time passes, the more it diminishes...maybe it is because of this that the previous system failed in its economy”*<sup>15</sup>. Finally, the difference in scenario stands for the section on individual liberties and liberal values. The difference in age between the interviewees played its undisputable role when comparing their answers. Many of the liberal values have been shaped and circulated in the society only in the last twenty years; therefore what was stipulated as subversive for the old economic elite is evidentially very different in perception to the new elite. While the old economic elite does not hesitate to take a rather hostile attitude towards recent phenomena like freedom of expressing sexual orientation, increasing of number of divorces, liberalisation of education, etc., the new business elite expresses a rather indifferent or neutral opinion. The new elite appreciates the freedom of speech and acting in the market economy as revealed in the interviews..

## **Social welfare and the gender equality**

An arguable debate to be mentioned in the context of questioning the economic elite has been the common occupations while serving as economic elite as well as the career path, due to this engagement. The interviews conducted with the old and new elite competent in the economic management and development reveal that the new industrial and building capitalist elite has mainly come from the middle-upper executives, usually members of the state economic (and Party) apparatus. “Other entrepreneurs” that deducted the new economic elite had a mixed background with many of them from professional, white-collar, research, and industrial executive.

There is an interesting debate on the attitudes that the old elite keeps towards the cooperative way of organising the economy and the free market economy stipulated and strongly defended by the new business elite. What characterizes more the assessments at the question ‘How did you compare yourself to those gentlemen that held your post 20 years ago?’ was the efforts to identify

---

15 Hysen Shahu – Deputy Minister of Interior Affairs and Head of Chamber of Commerce – MP and Member of Central Committee

and strongly argue on the positive sides of the respective systems that ruled the market in each time. *‘All was good till it was taken by the partisanship’*<sup>16</sup>

### **Perception on the role of the elites then and now**

The economic elite during the communist rule was more in a “labelled” function rather than an active role. Hence, the decisions including the most important aspects of the economy management and implementation of policies regarding economic development were prepared and endorsed under the propaganda of communist ideology. On the other hand, the business elite of today is forced to compete with other elites for available resources, hence identifying itself as very relevant in general decision-making. Regarding the social strata, the economic elite of the previous system was visibly and loudly against distinctions and detailed segmentation of the social classes. They hold that behind the posts of the economy authorities stood almost always the upper middle class. Nowadays one can notice a very different approach on the criteria for incorporation in the business and then becoming business elite. In the perceptions of the new elite, other social and cultural patterns shape the fate of the progress or regress of your venture, marking this way the paths of becoming an elite or remaining a simple medium-sized entrepreneurship.

### **Perception on the communist past**

Interviewed in the framework of this project, the economic and the business elite expressed different rather than contradictory opinions on the communist past. It is obvious that the business elite of the years of democracy (2005-2010) were very much eager to highlight the importance of the market economy, hence the change of political system from a mono to a plural way of powering. However, certain patterns of the national economy and management of indicators related to the above-mentioned were assessed as good tools of reference for the today’s economy, such as employment, professional education as per market need and capacity, etc. On the other side, the communist period appears to have been quite a dark epoch of the relationship of the state with consumer. Both representatives of the elite put such relationship as a crucial element of prog-

---

16 Martin Cukalla – Deputy Minister of Mines and Industry

ress of the economy. “Social institutions could function better, including family, religion, education, and work if the consumer’s voice is heard somehow; directly or indirectly...”<sup>17</sup>

A very important issue mentioned in the interviews with the economic elite was the very safety that the economy had in the communist past. Most of the representatives of the old economic elite state that the safety of the national economy in the communist past was not transparent, not objective, hence not safe and long perspective. The new elite find it worth to mention that the safety of the economy efficiency nowadays in Albania is also a very debatable concept. Although freedom of entrepreneurship has changed dramatically, the overview of the economy, principles of free market economy are not very visible, and fairness between state and entrepreneurs is not present, which puts in stake the relationship and trust between business and the state.

Finally, one of the interviewed economy experts in this framework, a high official of economy in the previous system and a successful entrepreneur in Albania nowadays, says that a wise combination of some patterns of the past with the present facilities and freedoms of dealing in business nowadays could clarify the communist past and blame it accordingly.

As an additional remark mentioned by more than two representatives of the elite were the following three factors emphasized as potential pushing factors of the economic elite in the European integration for Albania in the last 20 years and mentioned by one of the representatives of the new economic elite interviewed.

- The economic elites have played an active role in economic decision-making during transitional processes
- The exertion of this influence has mostly gone unrecognised and unnoticed by the public, even by assigned observers
- The above-mentioned has led to a rising public scepticism and distrust of large corporations and their effective links with the political process of Albanian integration.

---

17 From the interview with Guro Zeneli, economic advisor to the then President Ramiz Alia.

## Research Findings on Academic and Cultural Elite

### Circulation of academic & cultural elite

Albania is still catching up with contemporary developed societies, where academia and research are awarded high importance through public policies and support by both state and private actors. Moreover, many of our interviewees consider decision making in academia and culture dependent on politics.

The academic and cultural elite are an important factor in ensuring progress and success of the democratization process in overall. The establishment of a free market economy and the new changes in the 1990s decreased the status and the income of intellectuals, hence many of them abandoned or shifted from their professions to more profitable vocations (sometimes of a lower status), even becoming business entrepreneurs.<sup>18</sup> As one composer and showman says: *“the cultural elite in the previous system was defined based on the talent and somehow positive approach towards ideology; income and financial status were not crucial factor in identifying those people – while cultural elite and somehow the academic one has to have a reliable, sustainable financial support to be identified as such”*. It is because of this argument that a number of previous academic and cultural elite are almost ‘forgotten’ today.

### The ‘brain drain’

As a result of the difficult socio-economic situation in the country, Albania has experienced high emigration in the past twenty years. The massive emigration has had two diametrically different consequences. While the high level of remittances sent by emigrants has improved the socio-economic situation of a large number of families in the country, the loss of human capital has seriously affected Albania’s potential for economic development. Among the emigrants, there is a considerable number of well-educated and highly-skilled

---

18 Bogdani, M. & Loughlin, J.; “Albania and the European Union” I.B Tauris & Co. 2007 (page 183)

citizens, whose exodus is known as “brain drain.” According to The Economist (2002), Albania has lost one-third of its qualified people over the 1990s. Alas, many of them have menial jobs abroad as emigrants, instead of using their intellectual capacities and skills, what is also known as “brain waste” (also pointed by one of our interviewees).

## Liberal values

It has been a very interesting approach asking the cultural and academic elite on the liberal views in general. Among all, the arguments discussed with them through the interviews showed up a level of high relevance issues such as the concept of freedom, perceptions of critique addressed to the government, dissemination of information through the various media outlets, etc. Although very aware and transparent on the gaps in the notion of critique and freedom of speech, the representatives of the old elite find it worth to mention the concept of compromise towards these issues. As M. Hajati (former general director of national public TV during 1981-1984) says in this regard “... *the concept of critique was much straighter forward during communist time rather than nowadays...For example we were given certain frames and we “were free” to speak within them. Nowadays people are living and working in scenarios without boundaries, consequently the critics is open and more present than back then. However, when it is not listened to by the state, by the ears of the power, then it becomes insignificant and of less use*”. Media brings a series of debates on liberal values and norms in today’s society. It enters in the social relations as a tool of communication between people and power. However, in Albania it seems that it still serves to the messages produced by the politics targeting the community and not vice-versa.

## Gender equality

“...In many of communist societies, family support policies including paid maternity leave, income subsidies, preferential housing for young families, and day care for children encouraged family formation and women’s participation in the labor force...”<sup>19</sup> Not surprisingly, gender equality concern was the

---

19 Macek, P., Flanagan, C.; Gallay, L.; Kostron, L.; Botcheva, L.; Csapo, B.; “Post-communist societies in times of transition: perceptions of change among adolescents in central and eastern Europe.” Journal of Social Issues Fall 1998 v54 i3 p547(1)

most elaborated issue in the interviews with the representatives of the cultural and the academic elite. They have maintained a certain distance from the politics; moreover, they seem to be considerably attentive to the question of gender quality. The answers of the old elite made it very obvious that the posts assigned to women in the former communist system were not very much based on the meritocracy but on the partisanship and nepotism. Regardless of partisanship and nepotism, women assigned in higher official posts were granted more respect by their male peers, although nowadays this is interpreted as an imposed rather than a natural and reasonable behaviour. The elite of the 90s sees the increasing involvement of women in public life as a way 'to smoothen' and remove patriarchal principles.

Representatives of the old elite argued on the relations within the family as an important factor for gender equality. While a clear and comprehensive scenario of the social roles within the family was present and evident during the previous system, it was the state that kept this rule accordingly and defined the gender attributes. Hence, children and new generations were grown up in a spirit of control and not over-passing the stages settled by the state and dictated through the family. Therefore, the deviances and individual particular orientations with regard to gender and sex were considered as taboos. The same models were safeguarded not only by the family but also by state social institutions, such as education facilities/schools since the religion was out of any consideration. A very different view appears today in regard to family and raising of children upon modern social roles, where gender roles have improved and the authority of the family has decreased.

## **Social welfare**

The social welfare as a concept has changed dramatically when comparing the two periods under study. However, interviewees from the cultural elite of both periods believe that public education, health care, pension system, and other public services were at a higher level in the past,. Yet, most of them emphasize that the people were expecting more from the state in the previous system and less from the present one. State authorities were designated to offer and ensure services while the perception has changed a little in the market economy, in which individuals try more themselves before addressing to the state for these services.



## **Perceptions of the communist past**

Interviewees representing the cultural and academic elite of both periods often say that communism damaged the image of academic forums in general, the inspiration of art, and the normal evolution of the cultural progress. As one interviewee points out: *“To understand the factors that may play a crucial role in the development of the country, as per the cultural elite view, one has to have, first of all, a grounding in the social and historical context within which they experienced their childhood and youth”*.

## **Perception on the role of the elites then and now**

As a general trend and a final remark, the *knowledge class* of the democratic system assesses directly or indirectly that their peers of the previous system were much more appreciated and evaluated as progress indicators and key factors to the developments nationwide.

Even though certain paths of considerations, treatment, and respect of the specialists of different fields are mentioned in retrospective as much more impressive and valuable from the communist regime rather than the ones followed during the democracy, both representatives of the interviewed elites hold the democracy principles in the promotion of art, academic forums, and culture as very important.

## **Report on the Public Opinion Poll**

### **Survey highlights**

The report presents the findings of a telephone survey conducted with 650 respondents in 223 major urban areas in Albania. The survey is conducted in the framework of the bilateral project between IDM (Albania) and CRPM (Macedonia) focusing on elite (re)production and circulation. A relatively simple questionnaire was used for this opinion poll due to the selected surveying techniques (via telephone). Respondents were asked a number of “closed” questions covering six key areas, which are the following:

- Multiethnic relations and multiculturalism
- Individual liberties and liberal values
- Social welfare and equality
- Sensitivity towards gender equality
- Perceptions on the role of elite now and then
- Perceptions on the communist past

Regardless of partial coverage of the Albanian population – i.e. representative sample for half of the total number of citizens – the survey reveals interesting *indicative* findings regarding respondents' general perceptions on issues related to liberal values, multiculturalism, social welfare, gender and the communist past, etc. Respondents' general attitudes and stands vary from strong and wide consensus when asked about the communist past and the role of old regime's elites to "confronting" attitudes for instance on gender considerations or some liberal values, and occasionally they appear even as "indifferent or neutral attitudes" when it comes to multiculturalism.

In a relatively homogenous population (as compared to other Balkan countries, e.g. Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro), it seems that multiculturalism is not a hot issue, despite occasional public debates.<sup>20</sup> The survey indicates that about 66% of those asked agree with the opinion that "*It doesn't matter whether the involvement of ethnic minorities in public institutions reflects their number in the overall population*". And yet, a very discouraging view is held by another 60% of respondents who see that some ethnic groups can never be integrated in the society.

Respondents are at odds when asked about issues related to liberal values and individual liberties. For instance, 46% do not agree with the opinion that "*abortion must be always considered illegal when the woman's life is not at risk*" and another 45% believe the contrary. Yet, majority of respondents hold a conservative view when asked about the possession of marijuana for personal use (79% say that this must be treated as a criminal offense) or same-sex marriages (68% opposing). These typical conservative attitudes are confronted on the other hand by the view of 61% of respondents who do not support the opinion that "Schools must endow children with religious values".<sup>21</sup>

---

20 One of such debates is currently evolving in relation to the population census that is expected to be carried out in 2011.

21 In fact, according to "Civil Society Index for Albania 2010" (IDM) almost 2/3 of Albanian

Quite a developed free market-oriented sense among respondents is also perceptible – with 77% of respondents believing that “the freer the market is, the freer the people are”; or another 79% who say that “*those who are able to work and refuse such opportunity should not expect support from the society*”. Nevertheless, respondents seem to be at odds on some social welfare issues. For instance, 52% hold that “*those who can afford, must have the right for higher standards of healthcare*” while another 43% do not agree with this opinion.

The survey section on gender issues reveals some contradictory stands and perceptions of respondents. Namely, while the majority of them see the primary role of women as a housewife, there is an even large number of respondents who do support measures encouraging greater representation of women in certain sectors or who think it is right to have equal pay for equal work for women and men.

The communist past and the old regime are beyond any doubt a negative experience for the majority of respondents. Some 81% of them disagree with the statement that “*life in the communist past was much better than today*” and some 84% hold the same disapproving view on the opinion that that “*in the communist past we were better off economically*”. A vast majority of respondents (91%) do not agree that in communist time Albanians enjoyed greater personal freedom. The majority of respondents (73%) do not believe that the communist elite was better educated than the current one despite the fact that a smaller group – i.e. almost half of them (47%) do not agree that communist elite had more individual integrity than the current elite. Also, roughly 2/3 of respondents do not agree with the view that communist elites used to take care more of minorities or women.

## Methodology

The telephone survey carried out within a relatively restrictive infrastructure in Albania in terms of territory coverage by the Telecom company implies that findings of the opinion poll refer only to a part of the population, i.e. Albanian citizens residing in urban areas (23 cities and towns). More specifically,

---

citizens do not consider themselves as “religious” persons, despite the fact that they are aware of and declare their religious background. See Civil Society Index (CSI) for Albania – ‘In Search of Citizens and Impact’ available at [www.idmalbania.org](http://www.idmalbania.org)

the survey sample is based on official data suggesting that almost half of Albanian population in January 2010 resides in urban areas.

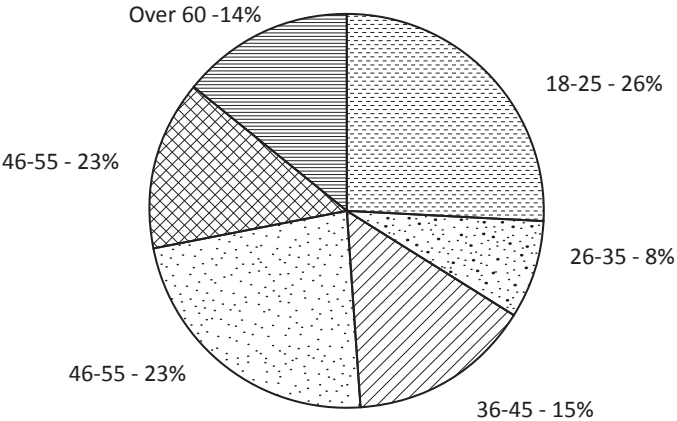
The survey was conducted during September – November 2010 with a total of 650 respondents from 23 cities, which are: Tirana, Berat, Shkodra, Vlora, Devoll, Dibra, Durrës, Elbasan, Fier, Gjirokastra, Kavaja, Korça, Kruja, Kuçova, Kukës, Lezhe, Librazhd, Lushnje, Malësi e Madhe, Mat, Pogradec, Puka and Saranda. The telephone interviews were carried out by a group of qualified interviewers, who were additionally trained for specific needs of this survey. The selection of respondents was made randomly from the latest telephone book of the Telecom Company in Albania. Although, this surveying technique is advantageous in terms of time and costs, one of its major deficiencies is that it deprives interviewers from direct contact with respondents. Another deficiency for this survey in Albania relates to the selected sample – coming only from urban areas due to lack of coverage by the Telecom Company in rural and remote regions. In order to ensure balanced representation of respondents' demographic data, (e.g. gender, age, employment, etc.) interviewers were given clear guidance on how to select respondents within a given household. For this purpose, the interviews were conducted in three different intervals – noon, afternoon and evening.

## **Sample description**

A total of 57% of the sample consist of female respondents. Overall, all age groups are relatively well-represented, varying with at least 8% for respondents from 26 – 35 years old up to 26% for the age group from 18-26 years of age. As shown in Figure 1, respondents over 55 years old stand at 28% of the sample, while the largest group is composed by respondents from 35 – 55 years old (38%). See Figure 1.

The majority of respondents (54%) have completed secondary education while some 40% have completed a university degree or postgraduate studies. Some 5% of interviewees stand at an education background with only primary education and 1% refused to answer.

Figure 1: Respondents according to age

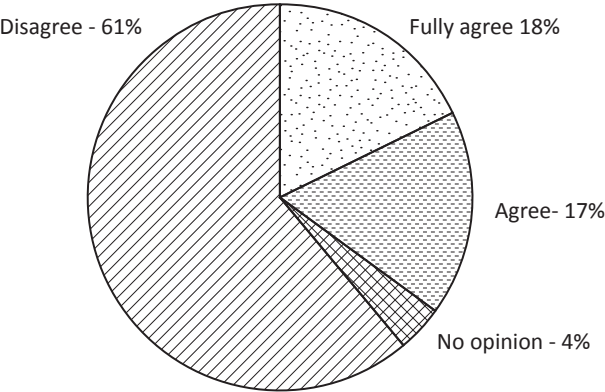


## Survey Findings

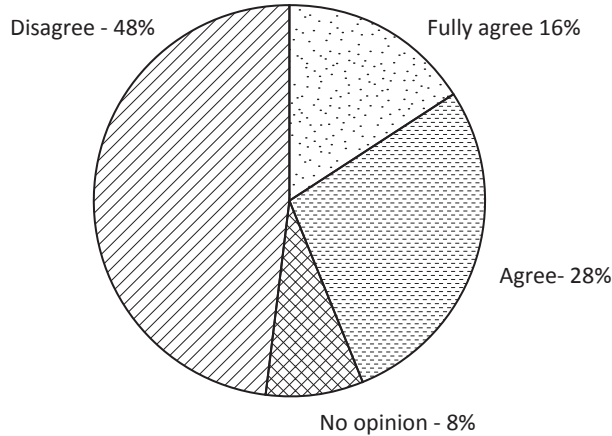
### Multiculturalism

This section reveals respondents’ perceptions on inter-ethnic relations and multiculturalism through a series of questions asking them about specific issues. Respondents are asked what they think about the following question: *Nobody chooses his/her country of birth; hence it is foolish to be proud of it.*

Figure 2: Nobody chooses his/her country of birth; hence it is foolish to be proud of it.



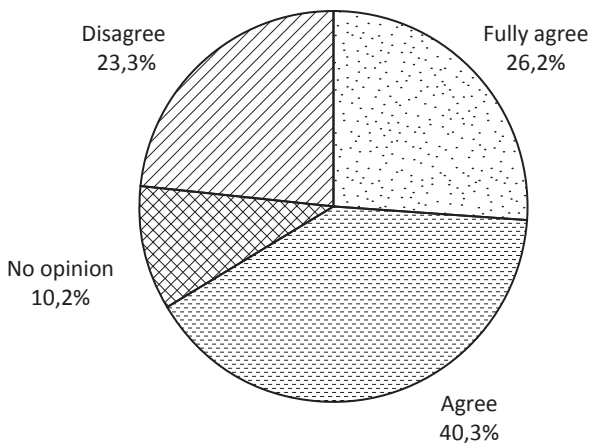
**Figure 3: “Our ethnic group has much superior qualities as compared to other nations”**



The vast majority of respondents, as shown in Figure 2, does not agree with this opinion while almost 1/3 of them say they fully / agree.

Almost half of respondents (48%) do not agree with the opinion that “*our ethnic group has much superior qualities as compared to other nations*”. Yet, some 44% say they fully / agree while 8% do not have an opinion about that. See Figure 3.

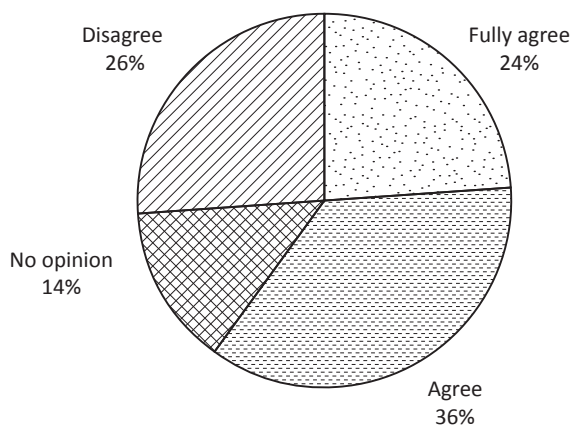
**Figure 4: “Involvement of ethnic groups in public institutions”**



When asked about the importance of involving ethnic minorities in public institutions, the majority of respondents say they agree (40.3%) or fully agree (26.2%) with the opinion that it is not important whether this involvement reflects the percentage of minorities in the overall population. Some 23.3 % do not agree with this opinion and 10.2% are neutral. See Figure 4.

Roughly 60% of interviewees believe that some ethnic groups can never be integrated in the society and 26% do not see this true. See Figure 5.

**Figure 5: “Some ethnic groups can never be integrated in our society”**

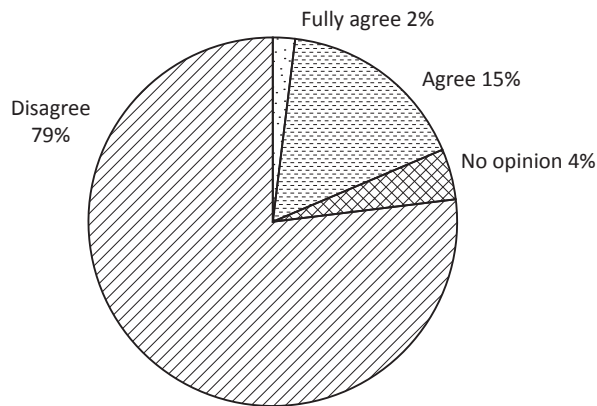


### Individual Liberties & Liberal Values

The survey asked different questions to understand the perceptions and attitudes towards individual liberties and general liberal values. Respondents are at odds when asked about abortion. More specifically, 46% do not agree with the opinion that “*abortion must be always considered illegal when the woman’s life is not at risk*”. Some 45% agree (24%) or fully agree (21%) while 8% are neutral.

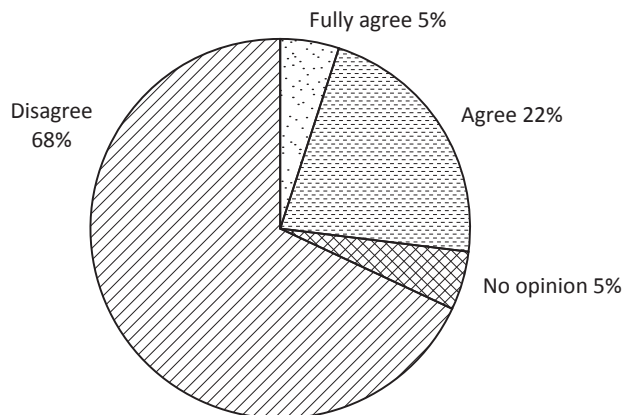
When asked about the possession of marijuana for personal use, as many as 79% of respondents say that this must be treated as a criminal offense and only 17% think otherwise (4% are neutral). See Figure 6.

**Figure 6: “The possession of marijuana for personal use should not be considered a criminal offence”**



Another very sensitive issue in this regard not only in Albania but also in many other countries deals with same-sex marriages. Some 68% of respondents do not favor this issue and only 27% declare that “same-sex partners with a stable relationship should be allowed to get married”. See Figure 7.

**Figure 7: “A same sex couple in a stable and loving relationship, should not be excluded from the possibility to get married”**



In relation to the subsequent issue, religious values in schools, respondents' perceptions come as no surprise given the history of the communist past. The majority of respondents (61%) do not support the opinion that “Schools must endow children with religious values”, while 31% do favor this option (8% are neutral).



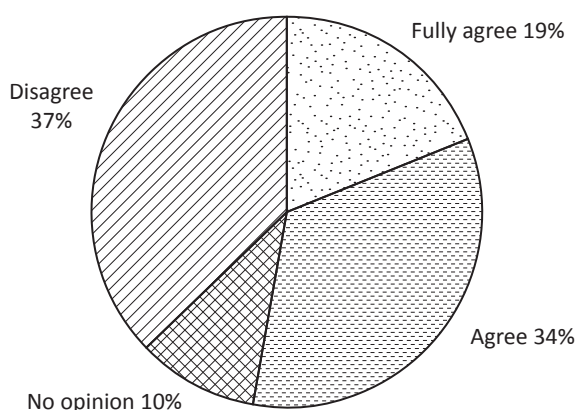
## Social Welfare and Equality

This section deals with social welfare and equality values as perceived in the Albanian society. Respondents were asked specific questions on issues such as taxation, healthcare, market economy, etc.

A significant majority of 79% of respondents fully / agree with the opinion that *“those who are able to work and refuse such opportunity should not expect support from the society”*. Only 16% do not agree while 5% are neutral.

Respondents are at odds when asked whether the rich class is being taxed more than it should. As shown in Figure 8, 37% do not agree with this statement and another 10% declare themselves as neutral.

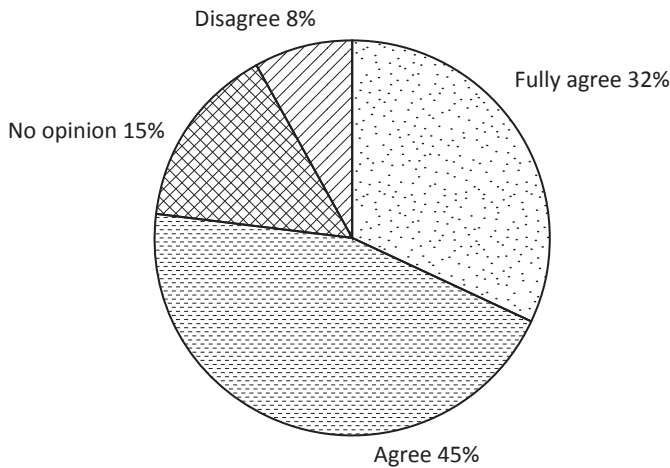
**Figure 8: “The richer are being taxed more then they should”**



Almost the same number of respondents (52%) hold that *“those who can afford, must have the right for higher standards of healthcare”*. Except for 5% of respondents who are neutral, a total of 43% do not agree with this opinion and they further explain this with the standpoint that high healthcare standards must be available to everyone, regardless of whether they can afford it or not.

Lastly, Albanians appear to be very supportive towards market economy and its (positive) impact on people's freedom. Namely, 77% of respondents agree with the opinion that *“the freer the market is, the freer the people are”*. Some 8% do not agree with this and another 15% are neutral. See Figure 9.

**Figure 9: “The freer the market the freer the people”**



## Gender Considerations

This section focuses on how respondents feel about issues such as employment and career opportunities for women, representation and equality, etc.

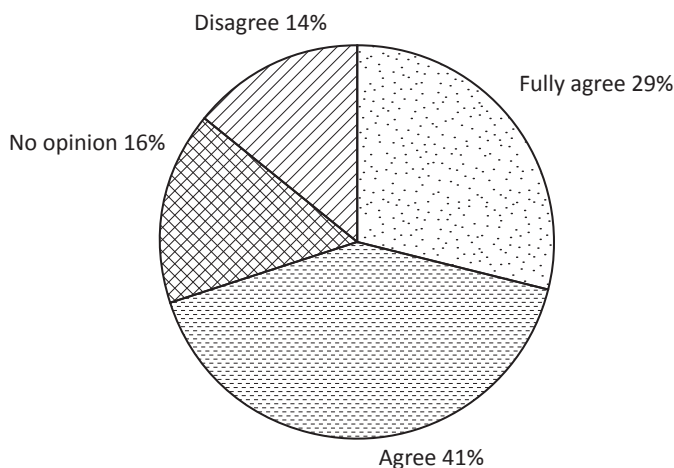
The majority of respondents agree (36%) or fully agree (42%) that *“women/mothers may pursue their professional careers but their first task is that of a housewife”*. Those who disagree barely reach at 18% and another 4% have no opinion. This is particularly surprising given the fact that more than half of respondents are females.

Despite this, 90% of respondents support the possibility to introduce positive measure encouraging women’s involvement in certain areas and sectors where they are underrepresented. Only 7% oppose and 3% are neutral.

Further, an even larger majority of 96% of respondents agree that *“women and men should receive equal pay for equal work”*. Some 2% are neutral and another 2% do not agree.

As shown in Figure 10, the majority of respondents fully / agree (70%) with the opinion that *“women must have the right to serve in a professional army”*, as opposed to 14% who do not agree. See Figure 10.

**Figure 10: “Women must have the right to serve in a professional army”**



The last few data in this section reveal some contradictory stands and perceptions of respondents on gender issues. Namely, while the majority of them see the primary role of women as a housewife, there is an even large number of respondents who do support measures encouraging greater representation of women in certain sectors or who think it's right to have equal pay for equal work for women and men.

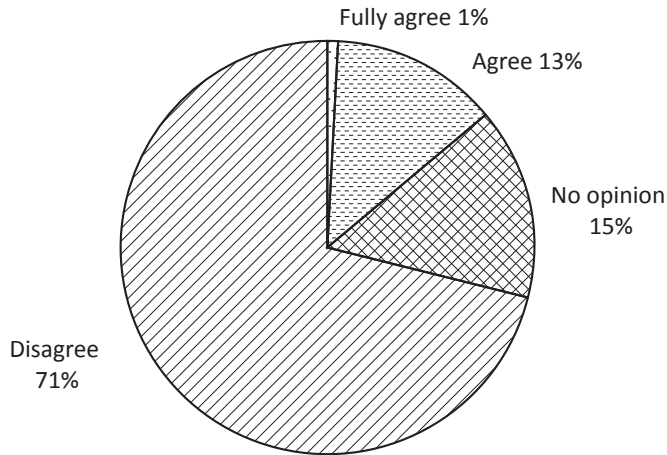
### **Perceptions on Elite Now and Then**

In this section, respondents are asked a number of questions comparing elites in the communist system (then) and the current elites (now).

Some 73% of respondents do not believe that the communist elite was better educated than the current one. A total of 19% agree with this opinion while 8% are neutral. Further, 71% of respondents do not agree with the opinion that the communist elite used to take better care of minorities (See Figure 11).

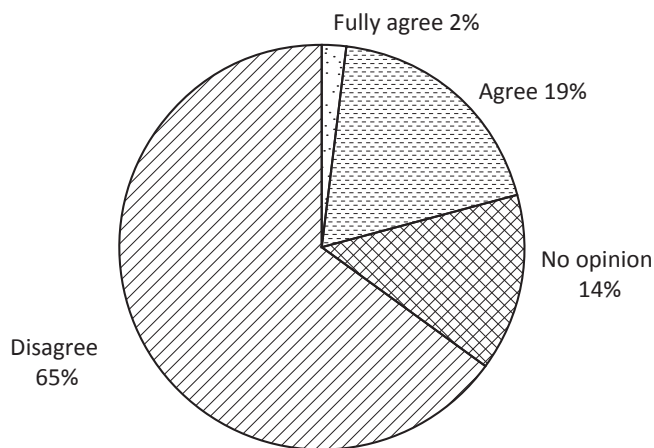
Another 65% hold the same opinion when asked about women's rights (See Figure 12).

**Figure 11: “The communist elite paid more attention to minorities than the current one”**



Respondents are at odds when asked about individual integrity of elites now and then. Namely, almost half of them (47%) do not agree that communist elite had more individual integrity than the current elite. The same view is not shared by some 42% of respondents while 11% are neutral.

**Figure 12: “The communist Elite took much more care about the role of women then the current one”**

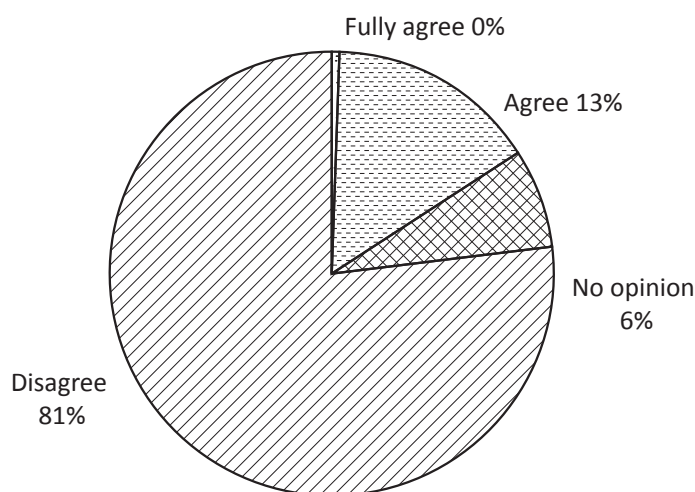


## Perceptions on the communist past

Respondents are asked how they feel about the following statement: “From ‘each according to his ability’, to ‘each according to his needs’ is a fundamentally good idea”. While 41% agree with this statement, some 39% of interviewees do not endorse this statement and roughly 20% are neutral.

Generally, respondents are not nostalgic about the communist system. Some 81% of them do not agree with the statement that “*life in the communist past was much better than today*”. As shown in Figure 13, about 13% of respondents do not have an opinion about this and another 13% agree.

**Figure 13: “Life in the communist past was much better than today”**



More or less the same percentage of respondents disagree with the statement that “in the communist past we were better off economically” (84%), as opposed to 11% who do agree with this and another 5% of respondents who are neutral.

Last, a vast majority of respondents (91%) do not agree that in communist times Albanians enjoyed greater personal freedom. Only 5% agree and another 4% are neutral about this statement. See Figure 14.

**Figure 14: “In the communist past we enjoyed more personal freedom”**

