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Pragmatic aspect of Albanian political populism in the formation of the foreign policy agenda

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Abstract

The study aims to address the question of the ability to implement democratic principles on a legal basis on the example of the Albanian political space. In a historical retrospective, the author analysed the formation and characteristics of Albania's political institutions, including the challenges of the transition period since 1997. The value orientations of the political space of a functioning democracy at the institutional level are defined. The study noted that Albanian political reality and behaviour are characterised by the prevalence of antagonistic principles, which can lead to the totalisation of society. At the same time, Albania's political space is characterised by the phenomenon of political absenteeism, which allows for the correlation of mass public opinion following the political interests of the ruling elite. The author traced the negative impact of political populism, which is curtailing basic democratic principles. This study is of practical importance, as it can be used during scientific seminars, narrowly focused or multidisciplinary conferences, and in discussions among academics and researchers.

Keywords: regulated institutionalism, antagonism, freedom without order, populism, post-truth, functional democracy.

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Aspecto pragmático del populismo político Albanés en la formación de la agenda de política exterior

Resumen

El estudio pretende abordar la cuestión de la capacidad de aplicar los principios democráticos sobre una base jurídica tomando como ejemplo el espacio político albanés. En una retrospectiva histórica, el autor analiza la formación y las características de las instituciones políticas albanesas, incluidos los retos del período de transición desde 1997. Se definen las orientaciones de valor del espacio político de una democracia que funciona a nivel institucional. El estudio constata que la realidad y el comportamiento políticos albaneses se caracterizan por la prevalencia de principios antagónicos, que pueden conducir a la totalización de la sociedad. Al mismo tiempo, el espacio político albanés se caracteriza por el fenómeno del absentismo político, que permite la correlación de la opinión pública de masas siguiendo los intereses políticos de la élite gobernante. El autor rastreó el impacto negativo del populismo político, que está cercenando los principios democráticos básicos. Este estudio tiene una importancia práctica, ya que puede utilizarse en seminarios científicos, conferencias de enfoque específico o multidisciplinar, y en debates entre académicos e investigadores.

Palabras clave: institucionalismo regulado, antagonismo, libertad sin orden, populismo, posverdad, democracia funcional.

Introduction

Ochlocracy as a manifestation of politicking is a phenomenon that has defined Albania's domestic political agenda since 1997, given the characteristics inherent in the political, legal and administrative space. Firstly, it is worth noting the phenomenon of political absenteeism of the general minority, which is caused by the corresponding steps of the political majority. Thus, at the institutional level, the basic principles of liberal democracy are being destroyed. The latter cannot be

considered functioning in the Albanian political space. Representative democracy as such has no implementation mechanisms. Throughout Albania's transition period, political institutions have not been able to get on a constitutionally regulated and legally backed track based on the principles of democracy without socialist impurities and a tendency towards anarchy (Kullolli, 2023). Given the challenges of the 1997 transition period in Albania, it is necessary to seek ways to implement the principles of institutional democracy as a mechanism for the functioning of constitutionally enshrined representative democracy. At the same time, the issues raised necessitated an application of Albanian experience in finding mechanisms to prevent crisis disorders in the political agendas of other young democracies. In this context, it is worth emphasising the limited opportunities for the existence and spread of pyramid schemes, problems of representation, and political and economic governance. Warnings regarding the uncontrolled transition in Albania in 1997 can play an equally important role as a “history lesson” (Morone, 2025).

The issue of the functioning of representative democracy and institutional communication based on the system of “checks and balances” was studied by Austin and Ellison (2008). He presents the path of decommunization on the example of the political space of Albania, strengthening the role of parliament as the highest representative body, i.e. determining the general political agenda for the transition period at the time of 1997.

Levitin (2017) studied the issue of determining the value orientations of liberal democracies. In conclusion, the study notes that the functional direction of modern mass media depends on the purpose of using mass media, and on the media culture of society in general. In other words, it is either a factor that will

contribute to human progress and spread the values of liberal democracy or a means of manipulating the consciousness of the population in the interests of political leaders.

In general categories, the phenomena of political absenteeism, the formation of representative bodies of power, and the electoral process in the post-truth environment were studied and presented by sociologist Bauman (Grabovska, 2016). Using a comparative perspective, the study examines the characteristics and impact of social media on the formation of a pluralism of opinions and analyses the reasons for the formation of a degrading comfort zone in the “information bubble”. The issue of “post-truth” is also raised in the works of journalist and writer Pomerantsev (2016) and scholar Levitin (2017). The article analyses the challenges of the postmodern world and proves the significant role of critical thinking as the basis for conscious analysis of the information disseminated.

Balladur (2006) studied the phenomenon of formation of the vertical of power, subordination and equality before the law of both the President and all branches of power, functioning of the latter through the provision of sufficient independence in decision-making, but at the same time transparency and accountability. Regarding indirectly about the Albanian political space, E. Balladur concluded that there is “Machiavellianism in democracy”.

The presented results raise the issue of the functioning of representative democracy and electoral processes. The challenge is the desire to maintain alienated control of power by each branch of government separately. However, the problem of the possible degeneration of the parliamentary majority with its tendency to authoritarianism is not well understood in the scientific community.

The political space of the post-Soviet young democracies has not yet enshrined a regulated legislative process with definite subjects at the constitutional level (Azemi, 2025 & Dinaj, 2024). Therefore, granting subjectivity to the parliamentary majority following the law with the right to amend the Constitution may harm the process of state-building (Abdrasulov et al., 2015). The study aims to analyse and present the characteristic features of the political space of Albania on the path of state and legal development before and after 1997. To achieve this goal, the author examines the peculiarities of the political, constitutional and administrative field of the latter, provides an overview of the mechanisms of functioning of representative democracy and, accordingly, the branches of power, the place of the President and the regulatory functions of the Constitutional Court.

1. Materials and methods

The study analysed in stages the broken aspects of the functioning of liberal democracy and the corresponding pragmatism in the implementation of foreign policy not in the national interest, i.e. in favour of ochlos. In the historical retrospective from the 1990s, the interdependence between the instability of electoral processes in Albania and the ephemeral functional capacities of institutional democracy was traced. The author analysed the possibilities for shaping institutional culture given the current state of domestic political agendas through the appeal to historical memory as a basis for the formation of national consciousness. The next stage of the study was to analyse the transition from the authoritarian past, which was not fully realised in the conclusion. To determine the reasons for such consequences, the study examined the mechanisms of transition of all branches of power to the control of the parliamentary majority,

even constitutional institutions that have lost the possibility of indirect political involvement. The author traces the dynamics of transformations in the political, legal, and administrative fields, which determines the dependence of Albania's state and legal development on foreign policy processes, and the inability to independently declare national interests given national security issues in the international arena.

To determine the manifestation of the features of liberal democracy in the general socio-political space of Albania, the method of abstraction was used. The analysis of certain models of socio-political structures, regimes, and democracy models was used to explore the democratic traditions inherent in Albanian culture and moral and ethical social order. To this end, the features of historical memory, which focuses on the patterns of authoritarianism in the implementation of the political system, were studied. The same method has become predominant in the search for answers to the question of how to form personalised institutions and the “cult of the leader” as opposed to representative democracy. Various models of democracy, civic institutions and the search for favourable ways to form a democratic society have been studied in the field of comparative political science to understand real political processes.

The study proved the factor of abuse of its fundamental means in the context of Albanian reality through the structural analysis of conceptual elements in the process of functioning democracy as a system. The study analyses the stage of formation and identifies the features of the turbulent period of change in Albania when the latter failed to get on the constitutional and legal track. The latter is rooted in deeply rooted democratic principles based on respect for legal mechanisms of regulation and order as a guarantee of freedom and equality before

the law. The political mechanisms of response and governance by the political elite and the top state leadership, in general, were studied.

The functional method in the field of state and law theory is used to understand the definition of “elite” (leading minority) as a function of its people. The internal capacities of the “elite” depend on the maturity and development of the people, on constant contact for their convergence.

2. Results

Given the political, legal and administrative space of Albania, it is possible to note the centralised formation of the ruling vertical through the destabilisation of synergy in the activities of the branches of power based on the principle of “checks and balances”. The party-state leadership demonstrated the feudal type of mentality of medieval society. Therefore, the phenomena of political absenteeism, which leads to the formation of mass society, and the degeneration of democracy into ochlocracy and internal political destabilisation through the intensification of the struggle of deprived strata of society for their rights without regulation and specific legal definition of responsibilities, are becoming relevant. The “mass society” is a direct threat to democracy, which is gradually degenerating, making it impossible for civil society to exist. Thus, Acemoglu and Robinson (2001), addressing the key values of liberal democracy, traced the following pattern on the way to the formation of a “mass society”: due to the similarity and equality of all people in democratic societies, they are subject to “the constant and harsh play of chance”, but because of the natural recurrence of their successes and failures, “the drama remains the same, and only the actors change”.

As a result, the actualisation of the concepts of “the end of the social” and “the end of history” is noteworthy. The media appear as a means of imposing their abstract logic in the postmodern era (Ternov et al., 2024). The issues of the dominance of paradoxical logic over dialectical logic, the prevalence of imitations and simulacra as opposed to reality, truth, and objectivity are on the agenda. This leads to the dominance of fake news over facts in the modern political space.

More than two decades marked a milestone, an indicator of the instability and ephemerality of electoral processes in Albania as a driver of a strong, functioning democracy. Under such conditions, the expansion of freedoms and the implementation of the basic elements of functional institutionalism cannot be discussed. Representative democracy is not a manifestation of majoritarian centralism, when one can observe constant synergy and convergence between the government and the people, even if the elections are not open but majoritarian, and therefore centralised and in one round. But it is precisely this perspective that could ensure delegation, responsibility, and openness (Varga & Bloom, 2018).

It is worth noting the growth of the phenomenon of politicking, mass participation and dysfunctional democracy against the backdrop of uncontrolled anarchy, as exemplified by the Albanian political space during the period of formal independence (Elmira & Perizat, 2023). To understand this, it is possible to refer to the partially repeated slogan of the opposition leader, Mr. Lulezim Basha, in front of a disgruntled crowd: “Everything for the people, with the people and nothing against the people”. This is a manifestation of a tendency to appeal to strong personalities in the history of not only one's own country, as this expression became the property of the transformations in Hungary more than 170 years ago and was uttered by Lajos Kossuth, as well as an appeal to the figure of Abraham

Lincoln, who shaped the national idea for American democracy. Thus, Albania once again proves the fact that politicians' focus on the national idea, on pragmatic domestic political transformations, on their sovereignty, which allows them to create an image of an “external enemy” is just a slogan on the way to consolidating power without responsibility to the voters (Austin & Ellison, 2008).

In this context, the transition phase in Albania can be analysed. Power was separate from governance mechanisms. Thus, representative democracy is a mere party agreement. The principle “I am taxed, therefore I am represented” does not apply at all. Liberal democracy has not become an important factor in transforming the mentality and behaviour of the subject due to the lack of tangible changes in the political field compared to the previous totalitarian system against the background of representative democracy. It is possible to observe an amalgamation, which is an expression of the typical Albanian appeal to the established course of development in historical memory from the point of view of a “victim of history” (Weber, 1997).

Democracy has given a form of “freedom” in the implementation of authoritarianism from above, which inevitably generates discontent among the masses against the background of existing amorphous theses, manifested in anarchic acts and unorganised protests from below. In a democratic society, ochlocracy becomes a functioning system (Amelin et al., 2024; Apakhayev et al., 2017). In this context, it is possible to draw a correlation between the implementation of democratic principles and the sustainability of economic development, since the lack of a long historical tradition of political democracy in the territory often leads to belonging to geographically disadvantaged and therefore underdeveloped parts of the world. The above research result is in line

with M. Weber's assumption that modern democracy in its specific outlines can function only under the special conditions of “capitalist industrialisation” (Lipset, 1959).

The early 1990s were marked by the promotion of the concept of “democracy through the rule of law” among former communist countries as a guarantee of stable climatic conditions, if not geographically, then politically for institutional culture. As a definition, it is primarily reduced to a system of “checks and balances” as a foundation for a functioning institutional democracy, in which each branch of government would have independence but at the same time coexist in synergy through respect for laws and decisions of the Constitutional Court (such a structure allows ensuring equality of citizens before the law when the latter does not become a political weapon and does not distort the idea of equality before the law) (Amelin et al., 2023). Based on anecdotal evidence, there was centralised, individual or clan control of the branches of power with regulated antagonism in the issue of coexistence. Public opinion was not educated in the spirit of a “plural political culture” based on the principles of multiculturalism and universal tolerance. Representative democracy as such implies the existence of more than one alternative for the healthy institutional functioning of democracy, regardless of one's affiliation with a particular political force. In a democracy, political discourse is aimed not only at the cognition of reality (cognitive function), but also at the electoral process, which involves the factor of competition, the existence of winners and losers, and the factor of holding power (manipulative function) (Serikzhanova et al., 2024). Therefore, according to Soros (2010), the conventionally democratic nature of political discourse does not always ensure a balanced political vector, given the mechanisms of implementation of the

authoritarian regime, which is designed to suppress the opposition element in one way or another.

Institutionalisation, given the Albanian political agendas, has not been a guarantee of a political climate that would have a foundation built on trust, as elections, whether local or legislative, have not solved the problems that have unfortunately occurred in succession in one decade or another. There are numerous comments on the electoral codes, on changes and additions to them, and the ups and downs in the electoral process. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe proposals for changes to the electoral process in Albania are discussed in an extended timeframe. However, regardless of the parliamentary or local nature, there was no certification by specialised international institutions as “free and fair”. Their results were perceived with or without reservations, accompanied by suspicions, criticism and boycotts of the institutions themselves in the wake of the election processes. Furthermore, there was a phenomenon of vote trading within the institutions, as well as a rotation of elected members between certain parties. Even including the factor of competence and the votes of a qualified majority in the parliament, this phenomenon was also partly the result of unprincipled compromises (Gjoni, 2004).

Where votes were traded within the parliament, members of parliament were elected through delegation of powers to a qualified parliamentary majority in a wave of general instability and chaotic socio-political processes, partly driven by self-interest. For example, despite the legislative changes, the President of the Republic was elected in the 3rd round of voting by a parliamentary majority. This practice has damaged the system of checks and balances. The distribution of power

was left to the will of circumstances, and interests that were limited to maintaining power positions and almost absolute control over the branches of government. If reduced to quantitative, understandable categories, institutional democracy was not about owning a piece of the “cake”, but about owning the “whole cake”. The rhetoric used by Mr. Edi Rama during the last election in 2017 can be considered proof. The reason for this was institutional representative democracy without trust mechanisms, so the delegated sovereignty of voters did not become an important factor in decision-making. Public opinion has become more of a controlled mechanism at the stage of electorate formation, given the general atmosphere of political absenteeism (Johnson, 2001).

This transition from the authoritarian past did not have clearly defined guidelines, the responsibility for which would be assigned to political parties as representative platforms of the majority interests in the overall political game. Political synergy has not acquired the character of a culture of tolerance, institutionalism as a necessary component of a functioning democracy, and the needs of public opinion and mentality in general, which hinders the functional mechanisms of democracy (Perizat & Elmira, 2023). Given the transitional stage, but prolonged in time, it is possible to distinguish two approaches that have found their place in the respective political moral and ethical climate (Glenny, 1997).

The study focused on the domestic political agenda of the young democracy on its way to becoming a young democracy and shaping its face in the international arena, the possibility of pursuing its policy given national interests or complete dependence on global processes through its dysfunctional state mechanism. Consequently, in 2014, the justice sector was reformed through a special parliamentary committee (Pajo, 2016). Based on several public opinion polls

conducted between 2009 and 2015, the study concluded that corruption schemes prevailed, that external factors interfered excessively, that there was a lack of transparent practices, and that cases were being heard for a long time without final decisions. A direct manifestation of democracy, when public opinion was used to formulate the Assessment Reports, which were used to form the Reform Strategy to prevent further conflicts of interest around wealth and property misappropriation. At the same time, this was the impetus for constitutional changes in 2016, when several legislative acts were adopted, including the Law on Re-Evaluation of Judges and Prosecutors. Based on several cases, the study concluded that there is a need to improve the verification system in Albania, to ensure the impartiality and independence of the National Judicial Council without the prevalence of certain interests beyond the requirements of Article 6(1) of the Convention, the criteria of a “fair trial” (Council of Europe, 2023).

The most pronounced approach was to take control of all branches of power by the parliamentary majority, even constitutional institutions that had lost the possibility of indirect political involvement and thus independence in decision-making. In other words, this situation in the modelled version takes the form of a political party that holds seats in the government and gains responsibility for electing the President, appointments to the judiciary and other institutions with ephemeral independence. Under these conditions, the parliamentary minority appears as a complement to representative democracy in general (Arabadjiev, 2013). It loses its decision-making powers if it ignores alternatives or expresses disagreements, or opposition as such. There is a kind of power grab that is horizontal on the one hand (other branches of the national government), but also vertical (regional and local authorities, private businesses or other non-state

institutions such as the media). In other words, democracy in the Albanian political system has undergone a transition from a totalitarian (centralised) monocratic system to a dual monocratic system, which through pluralism has allegedly acquired a democratic colouring (authoritarianism alternately manoeuvred following certain political beliefs represented in certain party slogans) (De Waal, 2005).

The excessive dependence of Albania's domestic political agenda on foreign policy processes, in particular, economic ones, was traced in the analysis of the consequences of the economic crisis of 2007-2009. At that time, eurozone countries such as Ireland, Spain, Portugal, and Italy had no mechanisms to address the consequences of their governments' rising debt levels and budget deficits, the increase in the required rate of return, and the issue of future long-term financing. Albania's economy has been significantly impacted and challenged by the crisis, with Greece and Italy as its main economic partners (Abdraimov et al., 2013; Vlasov, 2013). The bulk of Albania's foreign trade is with Greece and Italy, and the inflow of foreign direct investment is also indirectly tied to these countries. Albania's financial sector is also heavily dependent on a significant number of remittances from emigrants who prefer to live and work in Italy and Greece. In this way, it was possible to resolve the issue of Albania's current account deficit (Tables 1, 2).

Table 1. Albanian exports to Greece in 2008-2011 (in million euros)

Years		2008	2009	2010	2011
Level of experience	of	80.4	56.4	62.5	71.1

Source: processed by the author based on Bank of Albania (2009; 2010; 2011)

Table 2. Albanian imports from Italy 2008-2011 (in million euros)

Years	2008	2009	2010	2011
Level of experience	945.8	850.1	987.9	1200.7

Source: processed by the author based on Bank of Albania (2009; 2010; 2011)

In general, the basic principles of liberal democracy cannot be considered to be functioning in the Albanian political space. Therefore, representative democracy as such has no implementation mechanisms. The principles of institutional democracy do not properly define the mechanism of functioning of representative democracy. Human freedoms and liberties are not properly respected (Ivaniuk, 2024). The trust agreement is not valid because the freedoms of life, property and speech were violated. Democracy as a cultural factor also has no functional manifestations in the Albanian political space. This can be confirmed by Filippov and Kalotay (2011) opinion that Albanians are more likely to gravitate towards tribal organisation, given the mentality and public opinion in general. Therefore, Albania eventually became the home of “their short-sighted thoughts”, where a constant element of denial without compromise prevails, and therefore “anarchy and the absence of the rule of law to some extent become the soul and lifeblood”.

3. Discussion

The results of the study are of scientific value not only in the historical and political, but also in the philosophical plane for understanding and justifying certain political processes, changes, and transformations. The results of the study have significant similarities in the models obtained with Spooner's findings. The

system of secret ballot poses a challenge to a functioning representative democracy due to the lack of mechanisms to ensure transparency of state power at the stage of the election process.

The presented results raise the issue of the functioning of representative democracy and electoral processes when each branch of government tries to maintain control over the power in an alienated manner. In such political circumstances, resorting to the practice of forming and operating a parliamentary majority only accelerates the process of transition from a democratic to an authoritarian system. In addition, the following two functional dangers of democracy were identified: “tyranny of the majority and soft despotism”, which correlates with the conclusions of Acemoglu and Robinson (2001).

It is worth referring to the opinion on Albania's 2010 application to the European Commission, the decisions of the Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs on the path of Albania's integration into the EU, and the main results of the European Commission (2021) Accession Report. In the political sphere, there has been a large-scale electoral reform after the general elections on 25 April 2021, supported by the digitalisation process, and the adoption of several legislative acts, in particular concerning the judiciary (National Agency of..., 2022).

“Pragmatic national interests” are partly becoming a cliché in the general rhetoric of political leaders of certain countries with dysfunctional democratic mechanisms, which is reflected in the representation of the outlines of representative democracy in domestic political realities, as well as in the electoral system, which leads to the intensification of the phenomena of “mass society”, “silent majority”, and “political absenteeism” (Mukhtarova et al., 2024). In comparison, it is possible to mention the studies of Fenves (2023), Kaura-aho

(2021), Follert (2021) and Koçi (2024) on the “silent majority” as a synonym for “mass society”, explored the challenges for the political space of the postmodern world. It is possible to trace the interdependence of the definitions of “post-truth” and “mass society”. Postulating the mass media as a means of imposing their abstract logic in the postmodern era, the researchers actualise the problem of the dominance of paradoxical logic over dialectical logic. There is a predominance of imitations and simulacra as opposed to reality, truth, and objectivity, which in turn leads to the dominance of fake news over facts in the political space (Lyndyuk et al., 2023).

The results of the study determine the need to find alternatives and ways to implement the mechanisms of true democracy, rather than the features of ochlocracy through democratic cosmetic superficial transformations. Recent changes in the political space of Albania since 2021, based on the analysis of historical data and the main planned budget expenditures, demonstrate progress in the fight against corruption, crime, gender equality, the settlement of migration waves, and the creation of a solid foundation for a functioning market economy (Ketners, 2024). A specialised structure for fighting corruption and organised crime acts promptly to respond to certain challenges (European Commission, 2021).

The results of the study are not limited to the historical and political planes, as evidenced by the works of Biberaj (1999), Brzezinski (2000), Uruçi and Boriçi (2009), who studied the issues of deterritorialisation and denationalisation with a departure from the Westphalian principle of “territory – sovereignty – citizenship”. The world order at the beginning of the twenty-first century requires a revision and understanding of the models of governance of “nation-states” with

an understanding of linear borders as political and territorial institutions or an artificial invention of the human mind (Akhmetov & Zhamuldinov, 2025).

The study focused on the challenges in the implementation of the main components of representative democracy, including the implementation of the electoral process in Albania. However, global processes that have revealed the crisis of liberal democracy have been ignored (Yuliia et al., 2025).

In comparison, the study of Hansen (2020) not only raised the issue of the doom of democracy but also the experience of the functioning of not only young democracies. Rather, conclusions were drawn regarding the lack of experience in the historical perspective of implementing the main components of liberal democracy and, in the economic plane, the principles of a market economy built on neoliberal capitalist rails. Therefore, the study aims to determine alternatives and new models for the transition from ochlocracy or authoritarianism to direct democracy. It is possible to refer to the arguments of the proponents of the transition to epistocracy, which now, however, is also guided by some utopian alternatives.

The results of the presented study correlate with the conclusions of Hansen (2020) on the functioning of the electoral law but are not aimed at finding an alternative. Brennan's criticised system of representation was modelled with the theoretical advantages of multiple voices, defining the term “rule of the knowing”. In general, the problem is reduced to the ineffectiveness of the so-called democratic electorate due to partly misinformed electorate against the background of political absenteeism, which becomes a fruitful foundation for certain politicians who further distort the understanding of representative democracy as such, representing the interests of supranational financial circles rather than voters

(Llazo et al., 2024). Therefore, epistocracy can be perceived as a transitional stage to absolute democracy, even though new approaches to voting violate the basic principle of democracy: equality in civil rights.

It is worth addressing the statistics offered by the World Bank (1996), which represent Albania as a country with “lost opportunities”. The study focused on the transition period since 1997, when the collapse of pyramid schemes became a logical manifestation of the economic collapse, while a security vacuum was created, followed by metamorphosis into anarchy, and political and economic collapse. Despite the functional weaknesses of liberal democracy in Albania's political space identified in the results, the latter has significant potential for peace, order and rapid economic growth due to the absence of ethnic problems in comparison with other Balkan countries. It is also worth noting the favourable geographical conditions and geopolitical location in general, which provide access to a rich resource potential. In particular, the World Bank's 2015 data focuses on the significant hydropower potential, tourism and transport opportunities due to access to the Adriatic and Ionian seas (Bezemer, 2001).

To summarise, the example of Albania's political space shows a phenomenon of voluntary departure from the principles of a functioning representative liberal democracy based on the mechanism of “checks and balances”. The branches of power do not balance and restrain each other while ensuring transparency, do not contribute to political stability, and there is no sense of accountability to the law and decisions of the Constitutional Court. The decision-making prerogative is concentrated in the hands of the President or the top leadership of the winning party, and then there is a vertical delegation in the form of orders that must be executed without any resistance. The powers of some

state institutions may be more extended in time compared to the activities of the political party responsible for their election. However, deprived of a majority, they lose weight in political processes.

Conclusion

Political synergy in institutional life, which should normally be regulated through the Constitution and law, does not function as a mechanism. Alienation and distrust prevail among political forces, and political behaviour is reduced to mutual disregard due to prevailing institutional antagonism.

There is a centralised formation of the vertical of power through the destabilisation of synergy in the activities of the branches of power based on the principle of “checks and balances”. The party-state leadership demonstrated the feudal type of mentality of medieval society. Democracy as a political system, a dimension of worldview, and culture in general are degenerating under the pressure of certain excesses. The study did not produce any functioning alternatives given the political culture of Albania. The results boil down to the need to find options for suppressing sprouts of tyranny in the political space.

Decentralised government, voluntary associations, juries and the judiciary do not prevent soft despotism. However, the question comes down to which interests, and which majority will be represented by the government as such. Extrapolating these concepts to the political situation in Albania, their relevance is evident.

Instead of decentralisation, there is a centralisation of power. As opposed to a conscious, competent, depoliticised civil society, one can observe the features of a controlled mass society in the interests of the ruling elite. For 30 years, there has

been a systematic implementation of “cosmetic” mechanisms of representative democracy with a corrupt, politically regulated justice system tied to organised crime.

The study aim, based on the source base and historiographical data, was achieved. Further scientific steps in this regard should be aimed at finding ways to regulate the functioning of the social organism not based on anarchy but based on the principle of “liberal democracy”. It should be based on the thesis “first order, then freedom”. The study presented the mechanisms that determine the emergence of the phenomenon of politicking in the political space. In the future, attention should be focused on analysing the specific manifestations of populism in the political vision to find ways to address this issue.

It is worth addressing the prospects for further research in the context of the issue raised, which is not limited to the local regional dimension. The presented results mostly reflect the understanding of the definition of “border” as a political and geographical institution. However, Albania can be explored more extensively. That is, not only as a national state entity but also as a structural entity of Euroregions that share a common border and similar economic and administrative challenges. In particular, the Adriatic-Ionian Euroregion, which includes not only Albania, but also Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro, and Slovenia. In this case, new problems arise related to the organisation of the institutional field within the legal framework for regulating interaction vertically and horizontally, with the search for the most appropriate model of cross-border legal reality.

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