

# Modernization, Neo-Patrimonialism and Leader Cults in Western Balkan Countries. The Case of Hoxha-Albania.

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## Abstract

Leader Cults, whose evolutions are not specifically linked to the Balkan, are rooted in specific crisis situations and occur strongly in closed political systems. In addition I will analyze the link between these pre-conditions and the existence of Neo-Patrimonial structures as well as their impact on Leaders Cults. I will illustrate this on the case of Hoxha-Albania, where a strong patriarchal peasant culture transformed into the structure of the communist state led to an extreme closed political system and an isolated system, forming the roots for Hoxha's 40 year in power.

## Introduction

Political leadership in Southeast Europe seems to be a special issue since the beginning of statehood in this region. *Balkan strongmen* (Fischer 2007d) emerged and dominated parts of the nineteenth century and the whole twentieth century. Royal dictators ruled in Bulgaria, Rumania, Yugoslavia and Albania (Fischer 2007a, Schmidt-Neke 1987). Tito in Yugoslavia, Ceausescu in Rumania, Zhivko in Bulgaria, Hoxha in Albania and finally Milosevic in Serbia are all illustrating the dimension of a Balkan authoritarian and leadership tradition (Fischer 2007b).

At the end of communist dictatorships, ethnic conflicts and wars broke out, changing the map of the region totally - new states emerged. As a reaction to the communist dictatorships, all of the new countries oriented themselves towards western democracies, but the transformation to Democracy was – and still is - much harder than many hoped. Almost 10 years after the last Balkan strongmen stepped down, many Balkan states are still suffering under weak economies, corruption and organized crime. In 2006, the participation in Milosevic funeral

was still enormous. Recent polls demonstrate that the public support in Croatia to the accession to the European Union is very low (European Commission 2008).

These developments and the persisting disposedness towards strong leaders raise a series of questions. Will people, who aspire stability, turn themselves to the past and base their hope on nostalgia or will they continue their way of democratization and western integration? Is the Balkan strongman, as in the CFP for this Panel concerned, “so thoroughly engrained in the Balkan psyche that it is only a matter of time before their successors reappear?” Is Leader Cult in these countries rooted in a specific Balkan mentality without any way out? Or are all these presumptions of the western world just some prejudices against the Balkan peoples in the end?

Trying to develop an answer to these questions, I will firstly define what Leader Cult means and secondly I will point out in general what social preconditions abet such political developments. Furthermore, I will analyze these preconditions and present my own approach, which bases upon the ideas of Historical Modernization Theory (Sterbling 1993) and the impact modernization processes have on Social Capital (Putnam 1993) and the design of state institutions, linking them back to the preconditions for Leader Cults.

To illustrate my approach to explain Leader Cults, I will analyze the dictatorship of Enver Hoxha in Albania in the second part. Albania is particularly interesting because it has been dominated “for most of its short turbulent history as an independent state [...] by two unique personalities, Ahmed Zog[u] and Enver Hoxha” (Fischer 2007c: 239). The Hoxha cult was one of the strongest cults beside Stalin, Ceausescu and Mao (Stretenovic/Puto 2004) and his leadership was one of the longest. It was characterized by its rigidness, omnipresence as well as strong personal loyalty of the national elite and a strong degree of personalization.

### Leader Cult – a definition

E. A. Rees understands Leader Cult as “an established system of veneration of a political leader, to which all members of the society are expected to subscribe, a system that is omnipresent and ubiquitous and one that is expected to persist indefinitely. It is thus a deliberately constructed and managed mechanism, which aims at the integration of the political system around the leader’s persona” (Rees 2004: 4).

Modern personality cults are mainly expressed verbally or through visual presentation and can be characterized by three criteria, which can also be seen as stages of the development of a Leader Cult:

1. The first is the glorification of individual personalities by personalizing social circumstances. The historical role of a single person is *exaggerated*, for example the success of the socialist system as a personal reward of the leader.
2. The second criterion is the *monumentalization*. The leader is unrivalled; a genius, who obtains insights and can achieve attainments nobody else can.
3. And finally *mythification*. The leader is seen as impeccable, he is all knowing, omniscient in speeches and writings and omnipresent in portraits and statues. Companies, public buildings, schools, streets, places, sports fields and towns are named after the Leader – and at the end a penetration of the Leader Cult in everybody's everyday life take place. Examples can be observed during political celebrations like the leaders' birthday, political symbols, memorials, biographies and publication of collected works. Even after the death of the leader, the myth is exploited to maintain the current system. Mythic narrations and formulations like the leader as father, uncle, educator or savior are also characteristic. Mythification often goes along with the believe in immortality of the leader and the long-term sustainability of his achievements and ideas (Löhmann 1990: 10ff).

### Leader cult – A typical Balkan problem?

As previously illustrated, Leader Cults can be found in history of most of the Balkan countries. In order to predict the future development of the Leader Cults in the respective countries, it is necessary to analyze the roots of these Cults. Overall it can be observed that states, affected by economic failure and social conflicts or by a low consensus on ideological and programmatic goals, face an increasing need to strengthen symbolic legitimation, aiming at a reinforced loyalty of the citizens to the state, the party and the leader (Rees 2004).

But even in similar economic, social, ideological and programmatic constellations, Leader Cults do not develop in the same manner. Leader cults flourish especially in closed political systems (such as dictatorships) and in-group dominated structures as well as in systems, which are closed to the outside world. Authoritarian leadership traditions or strong patriarchal peasant culture can abet the establishment of Leader Cults. Also historic evolutions (such as

wars) or economic developments trigger the claim for a nations' unity, a strong state and influential leaders (Rees 2004).

There were similar Leader Cults in other societies at other moments of history, e.g. as the European monarchies, Stalin's Soviet Union and Marcos Philippines. According to this strong Leader Cults can not be considered as a specific problem to the Balkan. Flourishing Leader Cults are rooted in the persistence of pre-modern structures within the society and the institutions. Based on my research, in addition to the above-mentioned constellations, neo-patrimonial structures facilitate the exaggerated monumantalization and mythification of a Leader. Therefore my central thesis is that neo-patrimonial structures are the essential precondition for a flourishing Leader Cult.

### Theoretical Approach

The impact of modernization on pre-modern structures is therefore critical in the analysis of Leaders Cults. The Historical Modernization Theory assumes that modernization reinforces both, traditional and modern structural aspects and does not result in the replacement of the former by the latter. We are therefore not confronted with simultaneous but partial modernization processes, which lead to the institutionalization of relatively modern and less modern structures in one and the same society. This means that economic modernization can lead to social and cultural modernization, but also that this process can remain incomplete. There is no Evolution-Mechanism of Modernization (Sterbling 1993).

The Modernization Process affected the majority of South Eastern Europe only since 1945. As former "colonies" of the Habsburg Empire or the Ottoman Empire the region suffered from peripheral modernization and a development gap compared to the neighboring countries. In the Habsburg dominated region, the beginning of industrialization started in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Administration and therefore stateness impacted the people. But the Ottoman dominated regions stagnated mostly in agrarian, feudal or tributary, patriarchal structures with local self-administration instead of institutional pervasion (Kaser 2001: 42ff).

The communist regimes therefore have been confronted with still agrarian and traditional societies and one of their central aims was modernization.

Although there was a process of industrialization in the Balkans, the structural change, including the associated cultural change, has been blocked by the communist dictatorships, in order to hinder the democratization effects of such a successful development. Elements of

Social Capital (Gabriel et al. 2003, Putnam 2000)<sup>1</sup>, which would facilitate a more open society, could therefore not develop.

Contrariwise, the blockade of democratization effects led to the retreat in subcultures and informal networks (Welzel 1994) and thereby to a lack of support of formal structures, reinforcing already existing structural defects. Especially in the case of Southeast Europe, the informal Social Capital, which is characterized strongly by elements of *amoral familism* (Banfield 1958) was invigorated with an absence of civic virtue. These societies are based on the following principle: “Maximize the material, short-run advantage of the nuclear family; assume that all others will do likewise” (Banfield 1958: 85). Neither one engages in groups or for the community without a private interest nor the hope of material gain. No one follows official rules, unless threatened with penalties. Officials are corrupt and even if they are not, the society believes that they are (Banfield 1958). This creates a society of in-group and out-group and of distrust and fear. I will come back later to that phenomenon and explain the facilitating effect for establishing a strong Leader Cult with the example of Enver Hoxha and the Albanian society.

Hybrid systems establish where, due to the persisting traditional social structures, renewal is hindered. The socialist governments in the Balkan countries did not succeed in overcoming the traditional social structures on the social level (Hensell 2003). The contradictions between formal and informal structures resulted in hybrid governmental structures on the national level, which are characterized by the absence of elements of a modern state, by high personalization and missing separation of the public and the private sphere<sup>2</sup>, called Patrimonialism (Weber 1985). In most of the post-socialist states, as a result of partial modernization, the combination of traditional and bureaucratic governance, also called *Neo-Patrimonialism* (Erdmann 2002, Wimmer 2000), persisted. However, since the early 1990ies, the form of Neo-Patrimonial governance develops differently in the respective countries, starting from unequal points and at different pace. This differentiated evolution reflects the path-dependence of development and attracts our attention to the time before the communist

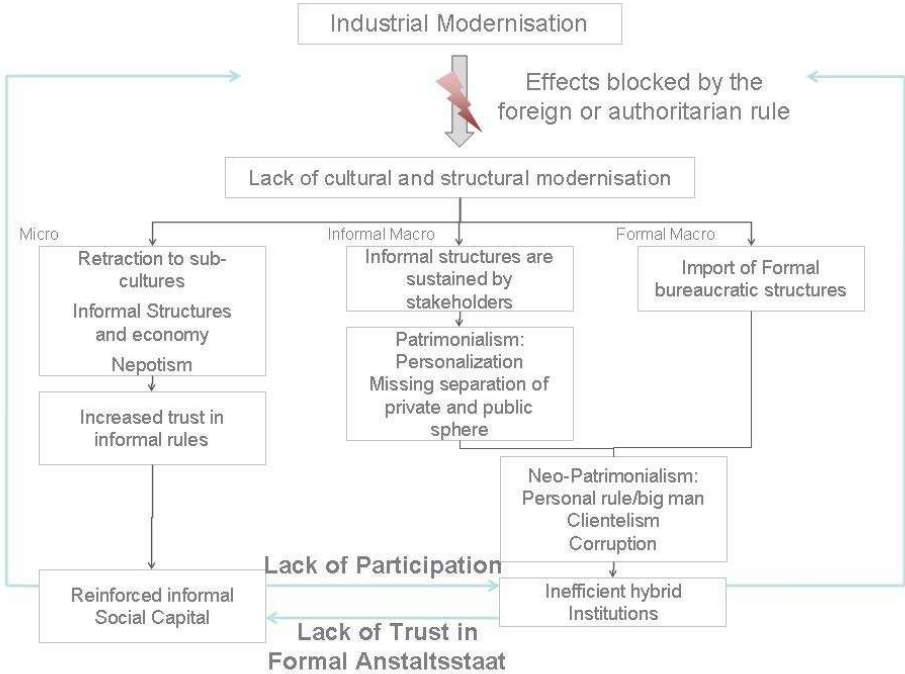
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<sup>1</sup> Social Capital is defined as the readiness of a society to cooperate with one another, on the basis of mutual trust. Over the years, researchers began to turn away from the exclusively positive definition of Social Capital and started to examine also the negative aspects of Social Capital (Gabriel et al. 2003, Putnam 2000). On the one side, there is the formal Social Capital, which is required for the division of work in a society. The Formal Social Capital is reflected by the co-ordination of social relations by national institutions and community-wide networks formed by associations etc. On the other side, there is also an informal Social Capital, reflected in communities such as family or villages, in face-to-face relationships. Formal and Informal Social Capital can coexist, but they are not inevitably complementary nor do they always support each other (Fukuyama 1995).

<sup>2</sup> Also discussed under key words, like clientelism, corruption and appropriation of economic resources, shadow economy, etc.

regimes. The more traditional structures such as Patriarchalism, Patrimonialism and/or Neo-Patrimonialism persist, the more informal institutional arrangements undermine the formal institutional arrangements and hinder the performance of political institutions and a successful democratization. In these societies, the informal Social Capital dominates the formal Social Capital. These structures are characterized by little generalized trust, by co-operations which are based on clientelism and corruption and by little participation (Putnam 1993). The vicious cycle is closed because the missing effectiveness of the state, triggered by the Neo-Patrimonial governance, negatively affects the evolution of Social Capital (Osterberg 2008).

Figure: Congruence of political institutions and Social Capital



The occurrence of Neo-Patrimonialism is the central element affecting the intensity of Leader Cults in Balkan societies. Neo-Patrimonialism develops out of and abets the mentality of amoral familism, which is part of the Social Capital. Therefore Neo-Patrimonialism favors closed structures. Personalization itself, as precondition of Leader Cult, is a central element of Neo-Patrimonialism. I will illustrate this approach by the case of Enver Hoxha in Albania. Traditional values, face-to-face and patriarchal structures were reproduced on a national level, with a strong personal loyalty of the national elite. The regime of Enver Hoxha based on the omnipresence of amoral familism and a strong degree of personalization.

## The case of Hoxha-Albania

As described at the beginning, there is a set of circumstances which could lead or at least favor the establishment of strong personalities and Leader Cult. The probability that a strong leader is accepted increases in

- 1) a situation of economic failure, social conflict and/ or low consensus on ideological legitimation – therefore a **situation of crisis**;
- 2) societies with a strong **authoritarian leadership or étatist tradition** or the strong patriarchal peasant culture, with its devotional respect for the elder;
- 3) **closed political system** and
- 4) societies which are **closed to the outside world** (Rees 2004).

In the following I will show that these four preconditions existed in Albania and extend the analysis by the neo-patrimonial aspect.

### 1. Situation of Crisis

In Albania, at the end of World War II, there was a strong need for unity and a strong state, and therefore for a strong leader. The problems of the past were not been solved.

When Albania, after more than four centuries under the Ottoman Empire, declared its national independence in 1912, the Albanian society was deeply divided. Linguistically there was a break between the *geg* dialect in the north of Albania and the *tosk* dialect in the south of the country. With these two groups also different economical and social structures collided. There were clan structures in the north, feudal beys in the south and a small group of educated urban population. In addition, four religious groups were represented in the small country<sup>3</sup>: Sunnites, Bektashi, Catholics and Orthodox (Fischer 2007a).

The provisional government of 1912 was confronted with the challenge to build a functioning state and to leverage the new independent state to international acceptance. The country ran the risk to be divided by the victorious powers of the Balkan War. This phase ended in 1913 when the government handed over the power to an international control commission and the government of the German Prince Wilhelm of Wied. His government ended up with the breakout of World War I. The real independence of Albania ended here. For the next twenty years, autonomy could only be reached as regional part of administration due to the guidelines of the respective occupying power (Schmidt-Neke 1987).

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<sup>3</sup> Albania is nearly as big as Massachusetts.

Between 1920 and 1921 there was a second attempt to create an Albanian state governed by Albanians. Albania became a member of the League of Nations, constitutional institutions started to develop as an own administration and the first election were held. But in 1921 a political crisis stopped these developments with the establishment of the Albanian royal dictatorship under Ahmet Bej Zogu. He was the first of two *strongmen* (Fischer 2007c) who dominated Albania since the beginning of its stateness. 1925 Zogu became president and 1928 king of Albania. But 1939 his rule ended and he fled because of the Italian occupation. With the invasion of Italian troupes the autonomy of the country ended again (Schmidt-Neke 1987). During his governance Zogu created an political dualism, which connected western and eastern ideas, western in it's form, eastern in it's substance (Fischer 2007a: 48). To this blend of imported formal structures and the traditional informal implementation I am referring to as *patrimonialism*. He accomplished a better integration of the northern clans. He succeeded to force some of them to hand out their weapons and to pay taxes, but never the less he was not able to establish a state structure there. Up to the beginning of the twentieth century about 60 tribes existed in North Albania with their own territory, own administration structure, tribal elder and tribal meetings (Kaser 2001). Also on the confessional level he did not succeed to become a representative of all Albanians. The Catholics still stayed dissociated from him (Schmidt-Neke 1987: 297). Of course he constructed a new state apparatus and consolidated a central state, but his administration was bad paid, corrupt, badly trained as well as badly equipped and focused to promote their wider and closer relatives. As under the ottoman rule, people did not trust the state institutions and these situation did not change up to the beginning of World War II (Kaser 2001: 46f).

To sum up, the Albanians stayed a divided society and the Albanian state neither independent nor internationally accepted – offering a first pre-condition to establish a strong leader.

## 2. Authoritarian traditions and patriarchal peasant culture

There was not only the dream of independence and unity Hoxha could build on his rule, but also traditional elements of a strong patriarchal peasant society and the respect for the elder. In 1920 still 90% of the people worked in the agrarian sector. There were no industry, no infrastructure like railroads or roads and most of the existing roads were only passable during the summer months. Zogu failed to modernize the Albanian economy and society and even his agrarian reform was bound to fail from the beginning (Schmidt-Neke 1987: 292). Still in 1938 industry accounted only 4,4 % of the national income and in 1939 no railroads and only 500 miles of roads have been build (Fischer 2007c: 256).

Therefore, Hoxha was confronted with a predominantly traditional agrarian society in 1945. The Balkan traditional agrarian structure is described by the *Balkan Family* (Kaser 1995) and their patriarchal cultural model. The Balkan Family differed from other traditional family structures in Western but even in Eastern Europe because of its values, standards and traditions. The epicenter of the Balkan Family has been in Albania, Kosova and the Albanian settled parts of Macedonia and Greece. The Balkan Family spread out over the rest of the Balkan and gained ground in the south-eastern part of Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and the west of Bulgaria. Whereas in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro the patriarchal culture disappeared due to modernization, the weak modernization in Albania, Kosova and the Albanian parts of Macedonia could not eliminate the predominant pastoral pasture farming, resulting in a persisting patriarchal culture (Mitterauer 1999).

Traditional families had strong hierarchical structures and all family members have been controlled by one head of the family – the patriarch. The individual did not have self-sufficiency on him- or herself, but was represented by the male family head. Therefore, inside the family federation, personal or group identities were weak (Hensell 2004). The head of family organized and controlled all activities and work of the family. These honorable elders, each one presenting his household, met for a kind of assembly of tribes or lineages to discuss the most important issues, to judge and to decide about war or peace with neighboring tribes. But even within this group of elders a small group of leaders existed. Their legitimation was based on the idea of patrilinear genealogy. The authority of the leader was untouchable and the leading positions remained in the respective households and were passed on to the following patrilineal generation. Any other lineage was perceived as a potentially enemy. Customary laws were the basis to deal with conflicts. Injustice and violation of someone's honor would be revenged with blood. Godparenthood or patronages were the only way to integrate a non family member into the family (Kaser 1999). In this strict division between friend and enemy, between loyalty and betrayal is one of the central value of Balkan Family (Kaser 2001, Schwandner-Sievers 1996) and is the basis of what Banfield (1958) calls amoral familism.

This logic of the familial community was transposed to the national level (Hensell 2004: 73ff). More than in any other socialist state Enver Hoxha succeeded to personalize the political regime (Hensell 2004). Of course personality cults existed in neighboring countries like Yugoslavia as well, but Hoxha must be named in the same breath with the extreme cases of Stalin and Ceausescu (Stretenovic/Puto 2004).

On the Albanian case the ambivalent role of the Balkan Family for the Leader Cult can be observed. On the one side, Enver Hoxha had to reduce the influence of the family leaders – and especially the clan Leaders – in order to avoid resistance to his own power. But at the same time he built his own rule on the values of the patriarchal culture and was himself the patriarch of the country (Schwanke 1969).

A common picture to describe the Albanian social and political system is the pyramid (Kadare 1993, Vickers/Pettifer 1997, Voell 2004). The basis of the societal pyramid is formed by the family household and the family head. In the rare case that family households are divided, the new households are build close to the root household. These two are the second level of the pyramid, the brotherhood. The next level is the clan, to which the families and brotherhoods are subordinated. On the top of the pyramid there is the common ancestor, to whom all members of the clan refer to (Voell 2004). This picture helps to understand the role of the clan or the extended family in rural Albania and describes a structure in which at the end the oldest and most notable men is the law. In the communist party of Albania and the Albanian political system Enver Hoxha played exactly this role (Vickers/Pettifer 1997) and used this traditional family structure for his totalitarian regime (Voell 2004). Since the beginning of stateness, the exercise of an office was like the leadership of a household (Kaser 2001: 137). Especially the founder of a political party considered himself to be, like the head of family, the absolute leader. Therefore parties existed as a publishing organ of the leaders personal opinions and were only held together by the leader's personality.

As Hoxha fought against the traditional structures to implement the nation state and to fight the economic backwardness of Albania, he also benefited from them. „In a way Hoxha used [...] the tribal structure and the blood feud to his advantage. With the new compliant tribal leadership the structure became a means of state control, and the concept of the blood feud was in sense nationalized – Hoxha emphasized the notion that all Albanians owed blood to the party and that only he and the party were allowed to carry out revenge killings” (Fischer 2007c: 260).

Also in the way how he selected his confidantes he followed the traditional way of family kinship and patronage. The party leadership became his clan (Fischer 2007c: 255). In the mid 50ies, half of the 53 members of the central committee were related to each other. And also in 1962, 1970 or later the composition of the central committees was led by kinship (Hensell 2004).

Family kinship also played a central role to purge rivals or enemies. Here again, the principal, that there is no individuality but only the family as a whole counts, impacts the legal practice

and the way how revenge is satisfied. Children were punished for the “crimes” of their parents and grandparents. Persecution was extended to the whole family and relatives (Stretenovic/Puto 2004). This kinship liability led to a strong differentiation of good and bad families. The enemies of the Peoples Republic of Albania were liquidated, imprisoned or banned in special villages or labor camps. There are no official numbers, but at least 26.000 people, of 3.5 million inhabitants, were imprisoned or sent to internal exiles. Most of the banished people were just family of the “criminals”. Such a “crime” could, for example, be escaping to Greece or Yugoslavia (O’Donnell 1999). These sanctions were not based on official judgments and people were totally isolated, even after they returned into society after some years.

Hoxha was the *Father of the Nation*<sup>4</sup>, to whom all citizens could write directly with all their problems or concerns (O’Donnell 1999: 223) and for many people he was the man who had the welfare of his people in the heart and who brought justice (O’Donnell 1999: 224) – a clear expression of the exaggeration and monumentalization of his person. Ramiz Alia, Hoxhas successor, wrote after Hoxha’s dead in a memory edition that “he inherited and personified the finest virtues of Albanian fighters of the past and added to them the new quality of the communist leader” (Alia 1986: 5). He was the only person with the needed ideological and political courage and “the first who saw the essential need for the creation of the Communist party as the link to save the Homeland and to bring the people into the light” (Alia 1986: 6).

This shows also the strong link between mythification and traditional testimony of deference and honor as well as the ancestor worship of patriarchal society (Hensell 2004, Kaser 1999). These testimonies of deference and honor were omnipresent. There were monuments, posters and slogans all over the country. One of them still existing today is his name written in big letters on a hillside. Portraits of Hoxha have been in every public building, in every school book, on stamps and in every private house (O’Donnell 1999). He was the great leader, teacher, educator and theorist. “The figure of Enver Hoxha is one of the great social value [...] all our people must learn not only from his theoretical works, but also from his practical activity as a leader and a man” (Alia 1986: 9). After his dead a memorial edition of all his work, his memoirs, diaries and letters of 68 volumes was published (Schmidt-Neke 1990). People should keep him in mind as a “legendary hero and immortal teacher”, whose work will be carried further ahead (Alia 1986: 10).

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<sup>4</sup> 1946 he became Secretary General of the ALP, President of the Democratic Front, Prime minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and commander-in-chief. Hoxha was the state (Hensell 2004: 77).

At the same time all the other inspiring sources have been criminalized, such as religion. In 1967 all kind of religion and practice of religion were forbidden. Albania was the first atheistic country of the world. It was part of an ideological and cultural revolution to enhance control. Even religious names became forbidden. People had to name their children after geographical features, Albanian mythology or they had to create new names. One of them is the combination of Marx, Engels and Lenin, called “Marenglen” (Fischer 2007c: 264).

### 3. Closed political system

Beside the solidarity within sibships another type of solidarity, the *Besa*, existed and is used to describe strong, loyal bounds to non relatives. There is no real translation for the term *Besa*, except some attempts like loyalty, alliance or word of honor (Schwandner-Sievers 1996: 116). It is linked to the godparenthood and patronage described earlier in this paper. Key to the concept of *Besa* is, that a relationship to a stranger is established, who will become a member of the family. For the society this means, that there is a strictly inner – family and *Besa* – and a strictly outer circle – strangers who are considered as enemies; with nothing in between.

This pattern of the amoral familism of friendship (inner circle) and hostility (outer circle) is the basis for the closed political and externally closed system, on which Hoxha reached to establish paranoia and a siege mentality in all parts of the society. Hoxha created an atmosphere of distrust in the inner society and in relation to all foreign neighbors.

Either someone was part of the inner circle and supported Hoxha, or was purged, banned or even executed. How quick someone could fall from grace with the system I will illustrate with the different Ministers of Interior of the communist Albania. Every single of them officially ended up as a foreign agent and therefore had to be liquidated. Purge was Hoxha’s tool to oppress any opposition and to secure his position of power (O’Donnell 1999) In 2004 Nexhmije Hoxha, the widow of Enver Hoxha, declared in an interview with the German magazine *Spiegel*, that the exterior enemies allied with adversaries inside Albania. That is why they had to “destroy” their families and had to banish these “troublemakers” including their relatives from Tirana and make them to “hostages”. She justified herself that “we had let suffer all [brothers, cousins, parents] to achieve our just aim. This was our education [...] but we never killed without reason” (Hoxha 2004: 135). We still can only assume what these reasons have been. In 1948 Koci Xoxe was executed because he was incriminated to be a follower of Tito. Liri Belishova and Koco Tashku have been executed as followers of Khrushchev in 1961. 1974 Minister of Defense Balluku and leading militaries were executed because of cooperating with the Chinese, Yugoslav and Rumanians. And the last famous example was

Mehmet Shehu in 1981. Shehu was a close confidant of Hoxha since the partisan war and it was widely believed that he will become his successor. Yugoslav sources reported that an exchange of fire took place between Hoxha and Shehu on December 17<sup>th</sup> 1981, during which Shehu was killed. The reason for the duel was, so the rumors, that Shehu recommended the liberalization of Albania. In the official Albanian version Shehu committed suicide, because he was an agent of the CIA and the Yugoslav intelligence service and could not stand that pressure any longer (Fischer 2007c, O'Donnell 1999). Nearly the whole government has been deposed after Shehu's death: The Minister of Interior, Fecor Shehu, a nephew Mehmet Shehu; the Minister of Defense Kadri Hazbiu, Shehu's brother-in-law; the Foreign Minister Nesti Nase; the Head of State Hadschi Lleshi; and the Ministers of Foreign Trade, of Economy, of Construction Trade, of Industry and Mining and of Light and Food Industry (Die Zeit 1983).

It is very likely that these publicly known examples mirror all the unknown tragedies of many Albanians who have been killed, imprisoned or banished during the 40 years of Hoxha's rule. Hoxha's Albania was one of the most repressive and rigid within the socialist regimes. He had the total control over all parts of life. Sigurimi, the Albanian intelligence service, had records on each citizen. Hoxha succeeded to create a society of distrust and fear, even in the last bastion of private life, in the families, the central element of Albanian society.

The importance to be part of the inner circle in order to survive combined to this climate of distrust and fear was one of the most important forces to maintain Hoxha's power, as it avoided any kind of criticism – even within the private sphere.

#### 4. Closed to outside world

Distrust and fear also characterized Albania's relation to its neighbors. In foreign affairs Hoxha acted also following the strict principal of friendship or hostility.

The alliance with Yugoslavia following the resistance to the fascist occupiers as of 1944 was ended by Hoxha in 1948, officially because of the Soviet-Yugoslav break. But more likely he eliminated, with the help of Stalin, the pro-Yugoslav fraction within his own party (Fischer 2007c) and ended his relation to Tito because of the liberalization tendencies in Yugoslavia and the permanent Yugoslav interest in the Albanian economy and policy (Stretenovic/Puto 2004).

With the death of Stalin and de-Stalinization, the Soviet Union broke up with Albania in 1961 because of its unwillingness to de-Stalinize as well. "Like Stalin, he [Hoxha] had by this point instituted a personality cult based upon a reign of terror. In defending Stalin and his policies

he was defending himself” (Fischer 2007c: 255). Liquidation of the pro-Soviet persons within the party followed, as described in the chapter before.

China became his new protector. But also this alliance ended soon, in 1978, when China gradually opened up to Western capitalism (Stretenovic/Puto 2004). China ended its economic and military assistance programs to Albania. Henceforward Albania was internationally totally isolated.

Beside these enemies within the socialist camp, which have been supposedly supported by the US and British imperialists following Hoxha’s opinion (Fischer 2007c), he also felt threatened by his Greek and Italian neighbors.

His paranoia led the Albanians into a permanent state of siege. The idea of foreign enemies became an obsession. The whole world seemed to conspire against Albania. As long as Hoxha was alive the population was bombarded by press, radio, television and propaganda with the need for alertness and being prepared to defend the country against its enemies. Up to today, more than 20 years after Hoxha’s death, this paranoia remains visible in form of hundred and thousands of bunkers all over the country. More iron was used for this bunkerization campaign than in housing construction (O’Donnell 1999). This bunker system was part of Hoxha’s concept of “peoples war” as “a sort of do-it-yourself air defense system that saw Young Pioneers fix long spikes to the tops of trees to impale enemy parachutists attempting to evade the bunkers” (Fischer 2007c: 263).

Traveling outside of Albania was not possible and private contacts abroad or even to foreigners was not conceivable. O’Donnell is giving the example of a Swedish visitor in 1966 who had the feeling people in a park ran away from him because of the fear to be seen together with a foreigner (O’Donnell 1999: 210). Foreign visitors were limited and could not enter the country with their own cars (Kaser 2002). Officially it was forbidden to watch foreign television channels, read foreign newspapers or books, although some succeeded to do.

The isolation, permanent paranoia and fear of the enemy legitimated the call for the strong man.

## Conclusion

Following Weber (1985) the primary form of traditional rule is patriarchalism, which also formed the basis of social structure in traditional Albania. In this context we can observe ideal preconditions for a flourishing Leader Cult in strong personal testimony of deference and honor and ancestor worship. In this system the single person is part of a given community. “The society had inherited from the past a respect of strong, and the first of first, and a hatred

for adversary groups” (Stretenovic/Puto 2004: 220). These values and traditions characterize the fundamental informal standards of the Albanian society. These patriarchal structures of society have been the breeding ground for strong neo-patrimonial structures of the communist state, and helped Enver Hoxha to establish his personal rule. The strong values of amoral familism persisted and these structures weakened confidence, co-operation and participation and strengthen personalization, clientelism and corruption.

Historical developments as the centuries of occupation and the resulting dream of independence, the economic and social backwardness of the country and finally the permanent situation of crisis, formed the necessary pre-conditions to legitimate the need for a strong state and a strong leader. But only because of these traditional values and neo-patrimonial structures Hoxha could rule the party and the state as the untouchable patriarch of the traditional Balkan Family. Hoxha himself was rooted in these traditions and values. Following the logic of amoral familism he created an omnipresent sentiment of siege. “Little” Albania was surrounded by enemies, the aggressive superpowers, the United States of America and the Soviet Union, Khrushchevite, Titoite, Eurocommunist or Chinese (Alia 1986). The distrust towards the outward corresponded to the dominance of conspiracy theory inside the country (Hensell 2004). The political system of Albania was the closest of the former communist world. Because of propaganda and never ending waves of political cleansing, distrust dominated the life in all social levels. Everybody could be a spy of the system. With the implementation of the strong social hierarchy of good and bad families, of loyalty and betrayal and the clan’s liability Hoxha created what psychologists call a paranoid society (Volkan 2004). The closeness helped him to defend his position of power for 40 years. He embodied all criteria of personality cult, exaggeration, monumentalization and mythification of his person. The strategic use of ideal preconditions and a strong traditional patriarchal culture made Enver Hoxha one of the most extreme cases in Leader Cult’s history.

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