

FES Policy Analysis Series

3

Party Attitudes Towards the Society:
Values, Religion, State and Individuality



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Policy Analysis Report #3: Party Attitudes Towards the Society: Values, Religion, State and Individuality

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1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

IQ Consulting and its current staff have engaged in political party profiling for over two years now. The experience built in this direction is very useful in terms of academic and political contribution for accumulating knowledge in Kosovo. Documents produced so far have been classified by various academics and practitioners as extremely valuable contribution that facilitates further evolution of political parties in terms of developing distinct ideological profiles.

This project should be regarded as a continuation of previous work and further stimulation of debate on political party profiling. While previous works in this direction have adapted more general approaches and aimed at providing political parties and students of political science with the basic concepts of ideological profiling, the current project aims at linking the theoretical aspect of profiling with policy decisions and attitudes towards certain issues.

1.1. Rationale

This project aims at generating debate over contested issues in the Kosovar society. As such, the project should stimulate internal discussion within political parties and at the same time, provoke public response from the voters (being that for the first time policy decisions and opinions will be interpreted in terms of ideology). Being that the process of defining the political status of Kosovo is completed, issue-based debate is expected to be at the heart of political life. While such debate has not been very much promoted during the last couple of years with the excuse that the parties have

more important things to think of, namely, statehood issue, after the resolution of the Kosovo status, there are no apparent hindrances to debates regarding policy choice.

The main political parties in Kosovo have been interviewed about various topics and issues of debate. These interviews have served as basis for assessment of political parties' attitudes towards various aspects of moral reasoning and issues that indicate the values upheld by the parties.

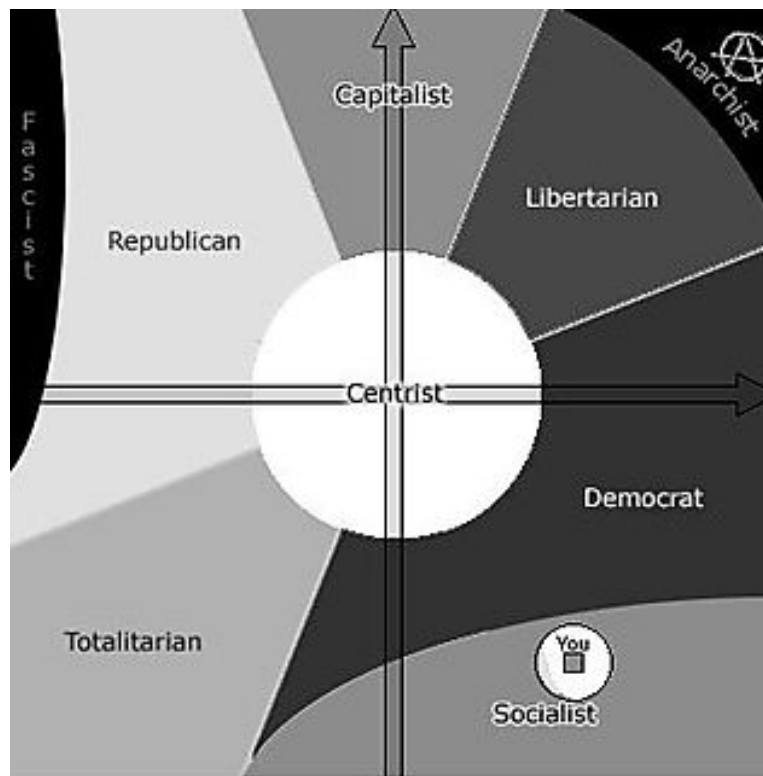


Figure 1. Graph of Traditional Political Profiling

2. METHODOLOGY

As stated above the project aims at utilizing both secondary data available (various reports, analyses, press clippings) and empirical research through face-to-face interviews with officials of political parties, in order to generate a genuine profiles for all parties vis-à-vis issues of concern. By doing so, the project aims at linking the theoretical and practical aspects of political party profiling. The reason behind choosing such methodology is the perceived lack of knowledge on the part of practitioners (party leaders and members) about ideological profiling of political parties. By doing so, both party leaders and their supporters, will create a more accurate picture of their ideological profile. The issue based debate should serve political parties to position themselves ideologically, a process that has not genuinely taken place so far. Moreover, the reports published during the course of this project should provide parties with a more in-depth understanding of political ideologies in terms of practical policy decisions, an aspect that is currently not considered a great deal.

The project has been implemented throughout 2008 and each policy paper has been presented publically. Parties are assessed at an ideological scale and indicators developed have been used to clarify party positions. Publications have been presented in various forums of discussion, hence, stimulating a wider social debate about political party ideological profiling in terms of policy decisions.

The policy papers have been published on quarterly basis, and have included analyses of parties' attitudes towards policy issues deemed important for Kosovo. The project has been implemented in three identical cycles¹ and as a result a total of three policy papers have been published. While the first policy analysis report concerned social policies and was titled *"Party Attitudes Towards Social Policies: Pensions, Healthcare and Privatization"*, the second policy analysis report focused on analyzing the alternatives for economic development suggested by political parties and was titled, *"Party Attitudes Towards Economy: Privatization, Fiscal Policies and Development"*

¹ Each cycle will be dedicated to one policy paper similar to this one.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Theoretical Overview: Values and the Sources of Their Development

The term “values” is a quite abstract. But in general it refers to the subjective beliefs of a person or a social group that is part of their broader “value system”. Values are the deep frameworks of mind which individuals and societies use in order to define what is good or bad, and therefore are closely related and often identical to *morality* or *ethics*. Values therefore have a behavioral aspect to them, since a person or a social group tends to express them and to potentially join others who share them in the form of political action. In this regard, values are also closely related to social norms. The latter however refer to the socially acceptable modes of behavior whereas values are judgments made on the behaviors. Whether the judgments are positive or negative is dependent on how the individual making the judgment views the norms.

Individuals and political parties have different value systems. Some may put greater focus and importance on cultural or national traditions, others on the principles of religion or other doctrinal ideologies. What is it that defines their choice of values? The most important factor to note is that values of individuals or social groups are very contextual and dependent on

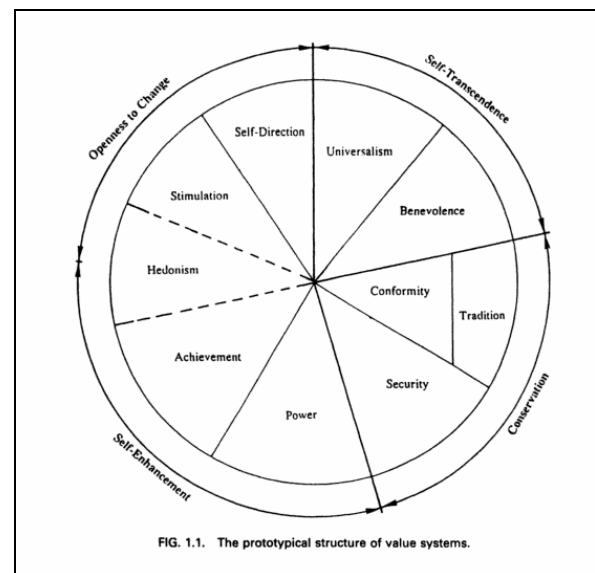
the specifics of their socio-political environment. As the Spanish philosopher Jose Ortega y Gasset suggested several decades ago, a human being is the product of *his ego* and *his circumstances*. In line with this view, we can suggest the development of value systems is determined by a combination of factors related to their psychological character and the context of their existence in society.

The subject of values has been vastly studied in psychology. The first point that needs to be noted in this regard is that individuals have a strong psychological need to give things and abstract phenomena an intrinsic value, to suggest in many cases that they are an end in themselves and that they have a meaning and purpose. The need for a value-based and moral framework of mind seems to be something hardwired into us. But why do different people hold different things as being valuable? A lot of the values which we hold as important are determined by psychological traits of different individuals. For example, one individual's tendency to empathize with others would make him more prone to value benevolence and, in political terms, support welfare policies for the more vulnerable social categories.

Cognitive psychologists such as Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg have developed theories which show how values develop in different stages of an individual's life as a result of the interplay between psychological traits and experiences during maturation.² This more constructivist approach suggests that the things that we give value to are the things that our external environment and experiences instructs us to. An obvious point of analysis in this regard would be to notice how demographic factors influence our values. For example, it is clearly visible that adherence to conservative principles is more visible in closely knit and more homogenous societies (small provincial towns, rural areas) whereas cosmopolitan and liberal values are more present in heterogeneous and diverse communities (large cities). The things that individuals hold as having intrinsic values are therefore those that they get from their different social units and discourses such as families, nations, the culture of their generation, etc.

An interesting point of view in describing the psychological nature of values is by looking at them from the perspective of motivational factors. Psychologist Shalom Schwartz offers a system of integrated value systems which

conjoin with one another in a circular form and reflect four different types of motivational orientations. Schwartz explains the system by stating that "the nature of compatibilities among value types is clarified by noting the shared motivational orientations of the adjacent value types. Viewed in terms of these shared orientations, the adjacent types form a motivational continuum around the circular value structure. In contrast, the motivational goals of the value types in opposing positions around the circle cannot easily be pursued at the same time."³



The motivational factors described in the figure can serve as a good basis for understanding the values of political actors and for predicting their

² Crain W.C., *Theories of Development*, Chapter Seven: "Kohlberg's stages of moral development" pp-118-136, Prentice-Hall, 1985

³ Schwartz, Shalom: "Value Priorities and Behavior: Applying a Theory of Integrated Value Systems". Paper from book: "Psychology of values". Edited by Clive Seligman, James Olson and Mark P. Zanna. Routledge, 1996.

attitudes and behavior. For example, those individuals who are motivated by conservation and who cherish the values of security, tradition or conformity will strive to make sure that the status quo of their society is protected, joining other individuals who share the same values. Some of these individuals might also be motivated towards self-enhancement – by cherishing the values of power and achievement – and will therefore seek to lead those that share their values.

But what is the substance of the values which those motivated by conservation might want to preserve? They differ depending on the socio-political context of a society. In most cases this

would mean national traditions, religious or ideological principles. In a particular society, a large number of individuals might think that national cultural elements such as for example the language, music, customs of social behavior, are an important value that needs to be preserved. In the same society, those who are motivated by values such as hedonism, stimulation and self-direction might constantly challenge the validity of these values and act in contradiction with them. This is why in the structure of value systems developed by Schwartz; the motivational categories of openness to change and conservation are opposite to one other in the circle.

3.2. Values and Politics

Politics is the mechanism through which the values of individuals compete at a wider social level. As stated above, individuals with different values find at least some of their values represented in the agendas of specific political parties or movements. An important thing to note at this point is that a modern liberal democracy requires a consensus of its citizenry on at least some basic fundamental values that would make value pluralism possible. One could say that belief in constitutional democracy is the most fundamental consensual value of a mature democracy. The late philosopher

Richard Rorty suggests this when he states that, despite their completely different worldviews, “leftwing democrats are as committed to preserving the US constitution as are rightwing Republicans”⁴ Despite the fact that the two sides might disagree with certain provisions of the constitution and interpret democracy differently, and despite their strong disagreements on core issues or values, supporters of one party accept the results of elections even when the other party wins

⁴ Rorty, Richard: “Democracy and Philosophy”: Lecture taken from <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2007-06-11-rorty-en.html>

because of their belief in the value of constitutional order.

In political science, values are seen as one of the most important elements in determining political attitudes and behavior. Values are therefore seen as being the strong “building block upon which less resistant psychological constructs such as attitudes and opinions are formed and maintained.”⁵ In political science they are “standardly conceived as being deeper, more enduring and causally antecedent to more proximal political preferences such as issue and candidate evaluations.”⁶ Political scientist Zaller states that “every opinion is a marriage of information and values – information to generate a mental picture of what is at stake and values to make a judgment about it”⁷.

Political scientists have stressed the importance of *core values* as perhaps the most fundamental variable in determining the voting choice of individuals in elections. The main assumption about these values is that they have a long-term stability and are resistant to change. Going back to the motivational orientations presented by

Shwartz, it would be easy to assume that a person whose core values are motivated by conservation would be prone to vote for a conservative party. Nevertheless, studies in political science have shown that values are a flexible variable because they are partially constructed by external experiences. A series of events or the process of maturity might make a person change their minds about certain worldviews. For example, a young and liberal individual who is motivated by openness to change might develop a more conservative approach as he grows older, a phenomenon which is perhaps best illustrated by the famous Winston Churchill quote: “Show me a young Conservative and I’ll show you someone with no heart. Show me an old Liberal and I’ll show you someone with no brains”.

Debates on core values have been waged between the adherents of political ideologies ever since their emergence in modern times. The democratic political revolutions that started in Europe during the 18th century marked the end of a centuries-long period of moral absolutism in which the values of society were established by the Catholic Church. The emergence of Protestantism and later of normative political philosophies (classical liberalism, communism, conservatism, nationalism, etc) created a situation of competitive value systems which claimed

⁵ Patrick Sturgis: “Party Allegiance and Core Political Value Change” – Economic and Social Research Council, Working Paper nr. 5

⁶ Sturgis, Patrick. "Causes and Consequences of Core Political Values" - Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association - Aug 27, 2003

⁷ Patrick Sturgis: “Party Allegiance and Core Political Value Change” – Economic and Social Research Council, Working Paper nr. 5

superiority based not necessarily on divinity but also secular ethics. Whereas previously the values of a good life determined by the Church and the Monarchs as “divinely legitimate” sovereigns, now they were determined by principles such as “liberty, equality and fraternity” (the French Revolution) or “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” (US revolution) and the electorate as the sovereign.

Classical liberal thinkers such as John Locke and John Stuart Mill were among the first ones to eliminate the need for moral absolutism in the legal domain of the state. This is the reason why the first democratic constitutions saw the need to separate the state from the church. Liberal philosophers argued at that time, and continue to do so today, that the role of the state is to merely provide and defend rights and freedoms, not to constrain them in the name of any values which arbitrarily claim superiority. The fundamentals behind such beliefs lie in a generally more pragmatic and relativistic epistemology of liberals who claim that there can be no claim of universal and timeless values, but a plurality of them which may all be equally correct. The contemporary liberal philosopher Isaiah Berlin later called this approach “value pluralism”⁸.

Conservative political theory had on the other hand emerged as a reaction to the democratic revolution in France and the relativistic approach of liberalism on social values. For conservative thinkers like Edmund Burke, the moral basis for governance could not be derived from the abstract reason of enlightenment ideas, but rather from the knowledge passed through traditional social institutions such as the family and the Church. At the core, conservative thought is therefore marked by a more Platonist worldview and a belief in the existence of timeless universal values which they saw as being threatened by the French revolution. A continuity of this belief is visible in the twentieth century with thinkers like Leo Strauss and the contemporary neo-conservatives in the United States.

Marxist political ideology had also developed as a reaction by the workers and underprivileged classes to the unfulfilled promises of the democratic political revolutions, most notably the principle of egalitarianism. For the workers and the Marxist intellectuals, equality and benevolence were seen as the most important political value. Marxism therefore became opposed to both liberalism and conservatism, political philosophies which in the economic sphere served the vested interests of the new dominant bourgeoisie and the traditional elites. What Marxism as a philosophy has in common

⁸ [Berlin, Isaiah](#) (1969). *Four Essays on Liberty*: [Oxford University Press](#).

with conservatism is its rejection of the value pluralism promoted by liberalism, sharing with it a platonic and value-centered view of history. The difference is that the progressive Marxist views of the correct and just moral world were the complete opposite of traditionalist conservatism.

The rise of nationalism during the industrial revolution created a new value in Europe that

did not exist previously: that of national identity. The spirit of romanticism and idealism made citizens of European countries were for the first time willing to sacrifice themselves in the name of the nation, an abstract category defining the ethnic or cultural group to which they belonged to. The preservation of the nation, which was seen as having historical roots and had a projected common future, became an intrinsic value in itself.

3.3. Contemporary Debates on Values and Politics in the West

The main political doctrines of modernity have evolved and merged some of their dimensions in many ways since their classical conception, and the scope of moral issues with which they deal with is now much more diverse. Nevertheless, at a fundamental level, some core principles have remained pretty much the same in almost every developed democratic society. If in the past the debate between conservatives and liberals might have been waged on the legal position of the church with regard to the state, today the debate might be on specific issues such as the role of the state in limiting individual rights with regard to homosexuality, abortion, etc. Similar parallels may be drawn for discussions between any other two modes of thought. But no matter how different, these

debates are fundamentally a reflection of some core values.

In the United States for example, one can notice a strong role played by religious values in determining political party preferences among voters. An illustration of this point is the fact that a majority of Americans would not vote for an atheist in a presidential election, even if he would be qualified for the position.⁹ The assumption here is that an atheist would not share what they thing is very valuable – namely, the belief in god – and would not adopt policies that adhere to their values. This illustrates once

⁹ Jones, M. Jeffry. Some Americans Reluctant to Vote for Mormon, 72-Year-Old Presidential Candidates. News story in link: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/26611/Some-Americans-Reluctant-Vote-Mormon-72YearOld-Presidential-Candidates.aspx>

again the fact that cultural values are one of the strongest variables in determining voter preferences, occasionally even more so than direct economic interests of voters. It is also known how religious views on issues such as abortion, homosexual marriage or the teaching of creationism alongside evolution in public schools, play a role in determining the vote of a religious individual. For them, the positions of political candidates on these issues are more important than positions on economic public policies because they put a priority on the preservation of cultural values.

Voters who are motivated by a desire for conservation might also oppose other policies which they view as threatening the cultural identity of their society – for example, immigration or policies which promote multiculturalism. Despite the fact that immigration has shown to have brought positive economic effects in both the United States and the European Union by providing fresh workers, we have nevertheless witnessed the rise of strong anti-immigration sentiments which has culminated with an increased voter share among far-right parties in different EU countries. The segments of society which support these parties do not see immigrants merely as economic units, but also as a threat to the “purity” of their cultural or national

identity, or as it is often described, “their way of life”.

Nevertheless, voters who are not conservatives might support immigration policies, abortion or gay marriage because they have a different value system and, in line with Schwartz’s structure of value systems, are motivated more towards self-transcendence and openness to change. For example, even if they might respect their culture or national identity, a segment of voters might value benevolence and would attempt to understand the economic hardships of immigrants and thus support their rights. A segment of voters who reject any notions of moral absolutism appreciate individual’s freedom to choose their own lifestyles and make decisions regarding moral issues.

In the contemporary political scenes of the Western hemisphere, the last decades saw the rise of specific issue based political movements such as for example the *human rights movement* or the *green movement*. Societal awareness on these issues has created segments of society or voter blocks whose political values are defined by their support for the environment or human rights. For example, a voter who has green values in the United States will most probably vote, although not necessarily, for candidates coming from the Democratic Party because the latter is more in

favor of green initiatives such as the introduction of caps on carbon emissions, imposing better gas mileage standards for vehicles, etc. Nevertheless, some of these environmentalist voters might come from socially conservative environments and not share other values with the Democratic Party –

such as for example individual rights which go against religious principles. For these types of citizens, the voting choice will most probably be made after weighing the different options and prioritizing values in terms of personal importance.

3.4. Values in the Context of Kosovo Politics

In fragile democracies such as those in Southeast Europe classical ideological debates are combined and often overwhelmed by the problems arising out of the complex political transitions from authoritarianism, colonialism, ethnic conflicts, etc. The nature of political debate in these societies is therefore much more different than the ones in a typical Western liberal democracy where these problems have been surpassed a long time ago. For example, in Kosovo one can notice that the delays in the processes of modernization in society today reflect an almost pre-modern political environment in which political legitimacy is derived mainly through a patronage system of tribal allegiance or attraction to irrational mythical narratives.

No widespread study has been made so far to categorize and understand the most important values that Kosovar voters hold to be important. Nevertheless, one could make an ad-

hoc analysis and categorization based on a simple observation of some of the more visible patterns in voting behavior and the public political discourse. The first and most important thing to note is that Kosovo is a predominantly conservative society. The structural cause of this is the fact that it is a mostly rural country in which modernizing processes such as urbanization and industrialization have occurred very late—even in comparison to the rest of region—and are reaching their climax only now. The mindset of society therefore still holds strong attachments to the cultural values of the pre-modern and rural lifestyle. This adherence to tradition was further reinforced during the resistance against Serbia.

In this regard, it can be clearly suggested that, at the macro level, the largest share of the Kosovar electorate find *national identity* and a set of traditional cultural values that are associated with this identity as something with

an inherent value. This belief explains one out of many cleavages in voter perception about political parties and candidates running for office. In this regard, a political party which portrays a more cosmopolitan, urban and civic image will to a certain extent be seen as a threat to the traditional national values and not relate to the vast majority of voters. One could say, for example, that this is one of the reasons why the Kosovar electorate was highly skeptical towards the political party ORA – a party comprised mostly of more cosmopolitan and urban intellectuals.

Within the parties operating within the “national project”, the key political cleavage in the post-1999 political scene in Kosovo was the highly quarrelsome division between the “pacifist wing” led by Ibrahim Rugova’s LDK and the “militant wing” comprising of the parties which were led by the former commanders of the KLA. Voter allegiance towards these parties had nothing to do with their ideological agendas on public policy but on their past deeds during the struggle for independence from Serbia. In public political discourse, supporters of the “militant wing” constantly spoke of their respect for the *war values* – a term which indicated that those who had fought the war against Serbia now had an inherent political legitimacy to govern the free Kosovo. Conversely, most supporters of Ibrahim Rugova

consistently spoke about his persona and his political vision in almost mythological terms, giving him something close to the divine legitimacy of pre-modern European monarchs.

The highly divisive nature of this cleavage has now softened, especially after the LDK-AAK and now the LDK-PDK coalitions, but the same type of allegiance is still there. With time passing by, the ideological emptiness of these political attachments uncovered another reason for the persistence of these allegiances – namely, the value that voters give to *the regional belonging* of political candidates and political brands. This feature provides one of the strongest indications of the non-ideological and significantly pre-modern nature of Kosovar politics. To voters in the villages and small towns of the Dukagjini and Drenica regions, the simple fact that the leadership of the AAK and PDK respectively comes from their region is an inherent value in itself – despite other more rational factors that might be taken into consideration when making a voting choice. Of course, this tribal type of attachment of voters with a political party is often also associated with a perceived tangible benefit from the patronage system, such as getting a job, if the party from their region wins.

The introduction of a liberal political system based on the market economy is now beginning

to bring Kosovo closer to the usual social and class dichotomies of a modern Western democracy. During the last couple of years there has been a sudden increase in wealth disparities between new business and political elites on the one hand and the workers or the unemployed in the other. This will increasingly bring values such as *solidarity* or *social justice* in the center stage of the political discourse and will provide an opportunity for left parties to appeal to larger voter segments who share those values. The economic dimension will gradually lead to a realignment of the political scene more and more along the classical left – right divisions.

Discussions about values come to the surface mostly after controversial cases in which individual choices and lifestyles confront standard social norms deriving from various sources of tradition (national identity, religion, etc). There is a highly political dimension in the fact that individuals are not allowed to do certain things in their private sphere and are intruded by society or the state. To this end, Kosovo has a very liberal and contemporary constitution and legislative framework with regard to individual rights. Nevertheless, there is quite a lot of mismatch between the liberal constitution and the conservative values dominating society. This is mostly a result of the international presence in Kosovo and the top-

down nature of the way in which laws were written and approved during the last years.

But despite the legal aspect, if an individual in Kosovo does something that goes against some tradition, there is often the complaint that this is against “our values”. Take for example the issue of homosexuality, which is seen by the vast majority of the citizens of Kosovo as something completely unacceptable and against traditional values. Kosovo’s constitution on the other hand guarantees protection against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. But political parties in Kosovo have so far not taken concrete positions on such issues because the country is so conservative that they are rarely discussed. In relation to another controversial issue such as for example the legalization of light drugs; the legislation is in line with the social mentality in disallowing them. It would be a typical position of liberal or libertarian parties in the West to promote either softer punishments or legalization of several soft drugs, but such subjects are not discussed in the political discourse.

Kosovo is largely a secular society, but there are segments of society that are religious in various degrees. At the more extreme levels, religious voters think that parties should promote or govern in accordance with religious values. Only one political party has so far promoted a more

religious discourse – the Justice Party – but it failed to pass the census in the previous parliamentary elections. In Western Democracies, it is usually religious and Christian oriented parties which politicize individual choices related to *abortion* or *euthanasia*. In

Kosovo, the weak role of religion in politics has not made these issues important in the political discourse. For example, legislation allowing abortion was passed by Kosovo's parliament without any obstacles or serious opposition from any of the important political parties

4. KOSOVO PARTIES AND VALUES

4.1. Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK)

The representatives of the PDK interviewed for the purpose of this research were the Mr. Xhavit Haliti Member of the Kosovo Assembly Presidium and Mr. Memli Krasniqi, Member of the Parliament and Spokesperson for the Kosovo Government. The two interviewees from PDK state that the core values supported by this party include personal and group (community) freedoms, poverty eradication, gender equality, development of market economy, European integration and democracy among others. Mr. Haliti and Mr. Krasniqi have slightly different opinions regarding these values and the way in which they are determined. While one claims that there has been some unstructured debate among the membership base, but the final decision has been made by the party leadership, the other claims that there is no formal party decision and

that these values derive from the origin and the tradition of the party.

According to Mr. Haliti, the values embraced by the PDK are not very important for the electorate as he believes that the voters are not very informed about the value system of PDK. On the other hand, Mr. Krasniqi claims that voters are very well informed about the values, programs and platforms of the PDK and that this comes as consequence of continuous direct interaction with party voters and affiliates. Additionally, the two representatives also disagree with one another about the relations between party values and the voting in the Kosovo assembly. While one of them believes that the two represent a constant trade-off with one another and that this occurs because of insufficient debate in the Assembly, the other representative believes that the party attitudes

expressed through voting are very much in line with the party values.

When asked to rate the importance of the individual vis-à-vis the collective/society, both representatives of the PDK claim that the individual has supremacy in their value scale. This attitude is argued with the general party position on guaranteed freedoms and rights of the individuals, their active engagement in the society and equal opportunity for all individuals in the society. Such society according to the PDK representatives should also be secular and religion should be completely separated from the state. However, it should be noted that PDK asserts that despite the secularism of the state, freedom of belief is defended and upheld. On the same topic, both representatives of PDK state that religion should not be included in the public education system. However, one of the respondents claims that the party does not have an official attitude towards this issue.

Concerning abortion, another issue that in other countries is usually linked to the party attitudes towards religion and the influence of religious groups, both PDK interviewees agree that abortion should be legal, but closely controlled in order to prevent potential abuse. Despite the uniform attitude towards abortion, the MPs tend to disagree about the time until when this should be allowed. While one of

them believes that the current law is too liberal and that abortion should be permitted only within six weeks from inception, the other respondent believes that the current ten weeks period is the most optimal boundary for allowing abortion.

Contrary to abortion PDK MPs do not have a common position towards euthanasia. While one of them claims that there is no point in maintaining people alive on life support systems, the other PDK MP asserts that the right to live is guaranteed by law, while the right to die is not, hence asserting the negative attitude towards applying euthanasia.

Homosexual marriage is another issue for which parties were requested to provide their positions and attitudes. While one of the respondents believes that the right to marriage should belong to anyone who wishes to exercise it, regardless of sexual orientation, the other representative believes that it should not be allowed in Kosovo. The discrepancy in positions whereby one claims that gay marriage should be allowed and the other goes as far as claiming that the constitutional provisions do not specifically allow this¹⁰ is a clear sign that

¹⁰ Second paragraph of **Article 24 [Equality Before the Law] of the Constitution of Kosovo states;** "No one shall be discriminated against on grounds of race, color, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, relation to any community, property, economic and social condition, sexual orientation, birth, disability or other personal status."

there has not been much discussion at the party level concerning this phenomenon and clearly there is no consensus within the party about this issue.

The generally liberal views on issues discussed above are not valid for one of the most contradictory issues in terms of values. PDK representatives believe that light drugs such as marijuana should not be legalized. Contrary to the position on abortion, religion, secular state and partially towards gay marriage the PDK members of the parliament believe that light drugs should not be liberalized or completely legalized. Instead, one of the respondents claims that drug addicts should be rehabilitated and treated in special institutions.

PDK does not have an official attitude towards prostitution, but both representatives tend to believe that uncontrolled and criminally affiliated prostitution should be combated. One of the respondents displays a more liberal attitude and does not completely overrule the possibility of considering prostitution a legal profession if medical check-ups are regularly performed.

The attitude towards the state, national interest, minorities and migration policies shed light to a more conservative and traditional set of values than those portrayed about the other issues addressed above. Both PDK

representatives believe that the primary identity of the majority population is the ethnic one, hence, claiming that the national identity is Albanian, while statehood is Kosovar. The supremacy of the ethnic identity over civic/state nationalism is one of the most traditional in the view of the party and it indicates the loyalty to tradition, conservation and deeply rooted national identity.

While immigration has been one of the most abstract phenomena for which the interviewees were asked about, the opinions are still diverse. While one of the PDK MPs claims that the laws regulating migration should be adhered, the other interviewee is more liberal and perceives the phenomenon as a positive thing. The example provided by the supporter of liberal immigration policies indicates the increasing number of Chinese citizens settling in Kosovo, an occurrence he believes is quite positive.

Constitutional provisions should be the basis for the treatment of minorities in Kosovo according to PDK. They both claim that constitutional provisions should be implemented in practice and not only to remain on paper. The rights indicated by one of the respondents include preservation of language, cultural heritage, tradition, religion and other distinguishing traits of minority communities and cultures.

PDK does not have an official stand on the national interests and what do they encompass. While one of the representatives focuses more on natural resource management and control of territory as issues of national interests (aside from political interests), the other MP focuses on state building, rule of law, stability, international recognition and active engagement in the international affairs.

While there is no value requirement for joining the party and new members do not necessarily have to share the values upheld by the party,

one of the interviewees claims that party members need to share at least a minimum of universal values. Such attitudes and the discrepancies in attitudes towards some of the issues covered by this research imply that there is no clear value system embedded in PDK and that common vision based on clear political and social values is not a pre-condition for association with this party.

4.2. The Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK)

The representatives of the LDK interviewed for the purpose of this research were the Mr. Lutfi Haziri, Chairperson of the LDK Parliamentary Group and Mr. Armend Zemaj, Member of the Parliament. The two interviewees from the LDK indicate that the source of the value base for the party have been the circumstances in which has emerged as a movement. Founded to counter the communist system, the party's core values are independence, democracy and liberty. Other values upheld by this party include tolerance, family as the nucleus of a healthy society. Mr. Haziri and Mr. Zemaj believe that the values embedded in the philosophy of LDK have been developed in the time of its inception and inherently accepted by

its membership and leadership. Because of this, these values entail the vision of the late president Rugova about the society and future political aspirations. According to Mr. Zemaj and Mr. Haziri, the voters of LDK can be categorized into two groups, the traditional loyal voters that are very familiar with the values that this party upholds and the voters who like certain aspects of this party, which may not be as familiar. Nevertheless, the respondents believe that the political values of LDK should continuously be reaffirmed and they should serve as the source of support within the electorate.

Concerning the relation between party values and the voting practices in the parliament, one of the MPs claims that the two aspects are in perfect line with one another and that all concrete measures or decisions are based on the beliefs and values of the party and that they are not subject to personal beliefs of individual MPs. This statement is not as strong when considering the hesitation of the other MP, which claims that the value set of the party, especially when voting is concerned, has increased and been enriched with time. Such response indicates that the MPs of LDK not always follow the same set of values when deciding to support or not support given policies and laws.

The relevance of the individual in comparison to the society as a whole is another issue on which the two MPs have shared their views. In their opinion, the individual has until now been perceived as the core of their philosophy, but that has changed in recent years and the party strives for the promotion of the collective (group) culture. The two MPs believe that this value shift has not been completed yet, but are committed to working in this direction.

The collective and individual rights according to LDK representatives should be nurtured in a secular state where freedom of religion and belief is guaranteed and where religious

tolerance prevails. In the opinion of Mr. Haziri and Mr. Zemaj, the religious tolerance is deeply rooted in our culture and society and is a value that should be nurtured in the future as well. Despite this attitude towards religion, LDK does not support creationism or study on religion to be included in the curricula of the public education system. They believe that in the secular state promoted by this party, religion should be separated from all public institutions.

Following the same line of argumentation, the LDK supports the right to termination of pregnancy. The two representatives claim that the right to abortion strengthens the value concerning family and contributes to the developing of sound social moral and norms. However, the MPs claim that such right should be allowed to be exercised only within acceptable before the embryo has developed into a fetus. It should be noted that one of the MPs interviewed for purposes of this research insists that LDK does not refer to this right as the right to abortion, but instead, the right to premature termination of pregnancy. This qualitative difference is especially interesting as it refers to the liberal perception on life whereby the individual is entitled to the right to live only after it has developed into a fetus and not as the conservative perception whereby life is considered to begin at the time of inception. In line with this attitude, LDK MPs state that

they have supported the law on abortion that has been passed by the parliament.

Euthanasia is another controversial issue linked to the right to live, but also the right to die with dignity. While the interviewees claim that there is no defined party position towards this dilemma, personally they lean towards not allowing the practice of euthanasia. Such attitude in their view is not based on the political philosophy and values, but instead, it is based on the traditional perception on life which is rooted in the culture. One of the MPs interviewed also claims that the right to live is an undeniable right that can be traced in the primordial law of nature.

The attitude of LDK towards same sex marriage is a little confusing. While on one side the tradition and values of sound family and conservative attitude to such phenomena are acknowledged, the voting of the constitution shows significant degree of tolerance and progressiveness. The two MPs indicate their disapproval towards gay marriage, but at the same time recognize their support for the Kosovo Constitution, which implies that such right should be guaranteed. The logical explanation about this issue could be that the constitution was voted for its symbolic and political relevance and that objections of parties towards given aspects or provisions in this

document have been treated as necessary for achieving the greater goal.

Prostitution is a negative phenomenon that should be combated without compromise. LDK considers prostitution as part of the organized crime chain and claim that strict laws should be passed to eradicate the practice of prostitution. Similarly, LDK's attitude towards legalizing light drugs is negative. According to this party, marijuana, hashish and other substances that in some countries have been declared legal should be banned and their consumption prevented and not promoted through liberalization.

The other dimension of values concerns the perceptions of the party vis-à-vis the state, nationality, minorities and immigration. Similarly to PDK, the Democratic League of Kosovo stands between ethnic nationalism and respect for the state. While the primary identity is considered to be the ethnicity and that they firstly perceive LDK to be an ethnic party, they claim that a strong Kosovo state is the objective. The division between national and state identity cannot be considered as a philosophical or moral issue, but instead a consequence of socio-economic and political circumstances in which Kosovo is presently positioned. While at the core the parties claim to be ethnic and refer to the traditional, ethnic, cultural, historic ties with Albania, they strive

for a civic culture and identity for the Kosovo state. Such mixture of feelings can also be ascribed to the international presence and pressure on the political parties and their fear of being labeled as overly nationalistic.

LDK is not xenophobic towards immigration. The MPs of this party believe that immigration should be regulated and that same immigration rules should be applied to all foreign nationals regardless of their national or ethnic origin. Instead, LDK believes that the regulation of immigration should be done on the basis of the motives of immigrants. If analyzed in terms of the values promoted, the attitude of LDK representatives can be characterized as being non-discriminatory, but rather reserved. Contrary to the perception of the society being over the individual, the attitude towards immigrants shows that they favor policies focusing on individual cases of migration instead of various ethnic, racial or other groups.

The position towards minorities further strengthens the metropolitan values of the LDK. They claim that their party has never used the term minorities as they do not differentiate between Kosovo citizens of different ethnic or religious background. Moreover, one of the MPs claims that minority communities are an inseparable part of our culture and contribute towards the overall diversity of our society.

Integration of minority communities in the Kosovo society is perceived to be of outmost importance by LDK.

Education and dignified representation of the state is the national interest of Kosovo according to one of the LDK respondents. The other representative shares a similar vision but ensures the specific goal of Kosovo to be achieved in the future—Euro-Atlantic integration is depicted as the national interest of outmost importance that could be even compared to the countries' independence. Such attitude falls in the category of traditional perception of the state and its interests and implies that the great socio-political goal of the society should be placed before the interests of its individuals.

In order to become a member of LDK, a Kosovo citizen needs to share at least some basic values of citizenry, moral rigor and culture, but by no means can the absence of such be an impediment to join this party. The representatives of LDK believe that individuals affiliated with them will gain by enriching their moral and value system, hence contributing to civic emancipation and culture. The tolerant attitude towards new or existing members and their values and beliefs indicates that similarly to PDK, the Democratic League of Kosovo perceives the electorate from a more

mathematic standpoint (number of votes), than from a position based on clear set of moral

values.

4.3. The Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK)

The representatives of the AAK interviewed for the purpose of this research were the Mr. Ardian Gjini, Chairperson of the AAK Parliamentary Group and Ms. Gjylnaze Sylaj, Member of the Parliament. According to them, the core values on which AAK relies include family, tradition, the individual (subordinate to family), unity and diversity. These core values have been determined after lengthy consultations with party members and they represent the common denominator of the value set of its membership (and leadership at the central level). The process of determining the party orientation along a clear value system has been initiated by the Leader of AAK, but has had the support of the entire leadership. This evolutionary process has lasted in AAK for almost five years, and is still ongoing as the party constantly seeks a clearer vision for itself.

The voters are not very familiar with the values represented by AAK. The reason depicted as being the most relevant for this situation is because until now, the party has not been determined what the most appropriate way to follow is. One of the AAK MPs claims that their

party has followed a path different from other parties in terms of propagating its values. While other political parties in Kosovo have rushed to label themselves in ideological terms, and latter began internal discussions on what should be the values upheld by them, AAK has firstly determined the values internally and now these values will be communicated to the public. The same representative states that the values for which AAK stands will be the most important tool used to communicate effectively with the voters.

The value system of AAK MPs can according to the interviewees also be noticed in the voting process in the parliament. In most cases, the parliamentary group of AAK votes in line with their values and beliefs, however, there have been instances of different practices. An example provided by one of the respondents is that of privatization of publicly owned companies, whereby, the party was not against privatization as a concept, but considered that the timing for conducting this process was not adequate. Such instances may have been a lot less in number than those where the AAK MPs

have upheld their core values, and they have been motivated by circumstantial reasons and not solely on moral judgment.

The individual is extremely relevant in the philosophy of AAK and is a precondition for a sound and healthy family, consequently contributing to the society. The wellbeing of the society in the view of AAK depends on the wellbeing of its individuals and that instead of individuals serving the society; the latter should promote its individuals and their rights. However, it should be noted that one of the respondents believes in group representation during decision-making. This dimension indicates a very interesting characteristic not mentioned by the other parties, whereby, the interests of individuals should be promoted and defended through interest groups and organizations.

The Alliance for the Future of Kosovo strives for a secular state where the religion is clearly separated from the state. They perceive religion to be an individual matter for all citizens, but should not be part of the state affairs. Religious tolerance and mutual respect towards religious views and diversity is one of the hallmarks of AAK and they support all individuals in realizing their right to belief. On the same note, the AAK MPs interviewed state that they do not support teaching of creationism in public schools. One

of the respondents explicitly states that only scientific teachings are acceptable in public educational institutions and that religion can be taught only in religious schools.

Religion is not the basis for the AAK position on abortion. While the two respondents believe that abortion should be allowed to be performed legally in Kosovo, there should be limitations to exercising this right. In the view of one of the respondent, the limitations to the right of premature termination of pregnancy are not linked to ethical or religious norms, but instead regard the health of women. Consequently, the position of AAK is shaped as such that abortion should be allowed to be performed unless it jeopardizes the health and lives of mothers. Following this logic, the parliamentary group of AAK has voted in favor of the abortion law in Kosovo, as the law is based on the individual's right to choice (mothers), and it also contains limits to the period of pregnancy in which it can be performed.

Unlike the consensus reached for abortion, AAK does not have a unified party position concerning euthanasia. While at the core, abortion and euthanasia revolve around same moral dilemmas, the right for the latter has not been embraced by AAK. The reason behind the

lack of unity concerning this issue is that AAK strongly supports the right of individuals to live, even if those individuals are terminally ill. The conclusion drawn from the different attitudes towards abortion and euthanasia is that AAK does not perceive individuals having a right to live from inception time, but instead, when the individual reaches a certain stage of development (transformation from embryo into fetus).

The position of AAK towards same-sex marriage is also independent from any religious beliefs. While the party is generally opposed to this phenomenon, individuals within the party may share different opinions. It is important to note that the position of AAK towards gay marriage is not justified in terms of universal norms of behavior, but instead is presented as a consequence of their perception of the family. One of the AAK MPs stresses this argument and justifies the position of the party through the perceived function of the family. In his opinion, the family serves the purpose of uniting opposite sex partners and enabling the continuation of family and leaving descendants. More than a religious concept, for AAK representative, the family is a social invention that serves the purpose mentioned above. In this sense, the same-sex marriage does not fulfill its purpose, hence becoming obsolete.

AAK does not have an official standpoint on the issue of liberalizing light drugs. Despite the lack of an official party attitude, the two AAK MPs believe that drugs should not be liberalized. The reason for such attitude provided by one of the respondents is that because of the mentality prevailing in Kosovo, the only result that may be that the market will be regulated and smuggling reduced. Additionally, in his opinion, legalizing light drugs would increase the number of drug users as the price would most likely decrease.

A similar attitude is also portrayed towards the phenomenon of prostitution. While in principle both AAK representatives believe that it should be combated and are against legalizing it, they claim that they do not have a set party position on the issue. One of the respondents goes further when elaborating on the issue by stating that given the circumstances in Kosovo, where this activity is semi-legal, any solution would bring better results. The argument is further developed to argue that both complete prohibition and regulation of the activity would improve the situation for the better. The experiences from other countries are used as an example of both scenarios, and in his view, the conclusions are logical. If the activity is to be legalized, it would be controlled, public health risk would be reduced, trafficking would be

combated more effectively, while complete ban, would also yield similar results.

The last set of values for which AAK representatives were asked to provide feedback is that of the nature of the state and the overall vision of state identity. The important distinction stressed by AAK that does not appear in other parties is of semantic nature and regards competing identities. The MPs from the AAK state that the Albanian identity is to them equally important as the Kosovar identity and that these two not necessarily are exclusive to one another. While they consider the issue to being a matter of personal choice and depending on the feeling and emotions of individuals, they also stress that such competing identities can also be found in other aspects (i.e. religion, gender). Another important point stressed by one of the representatives of AAK concerns the definition of nation. The argument constructed to this end concerns the distinction between ethnic nationalism (linked to ethnicity) which is predominant in Kosovo, and the state nationalism, a more modern concept widely applied in the west that links the nation to the boundaries of the state.

According to AAK representatives, immigration policies should be liberal in Kosovo. Being that this is not an issue that requires immediate response (is not problematic); they do not have

an official party position. While they do not see this issue as becoming problematic in the short term (Kosovo not being very attractive location for migrants), they believe that it should be clearly regulated by law. Similarly to LDK, AAK representatives claim that immigration policies should not be based on the origin of migrants, but instead, on the type and purpose of migration.

Minority communities in the viewpoint of AAK should be treated equally with the majority population. While their representation is considered to be of great importance, they also claim that it should be proportional to their real percentages in the society. To this end, AAK has initiated changes in its charter to ensure minority representation in party structures at all levels of party hierarchy. One of the respondents claims that minorities should be protected from discrimination; however, no affirmative action should be endorsed.

National interest is considered by the AAK MPs as a state or action (or lack of thereof) that forwards the interests of citizens. According to one of the respondents, national interest should not be perceived as an abstract notion, but instead, as an objective that improves the quality of life for the citizens. On the other hand, the other representative believes that issues that should be treated being of national

interest include functioning of the state, international recognition of Kosovo, education and economic development. Such instrumental view of the national interest is not very common for parties belonging to the right specter of political axis. Nevertheless, such an approach could be regarded as a very pragmatic way of determining the issues that could be categorized as being of national interest.

There are no preconditions linked to certain values for joining the AAK. While they would not be keen in accepting members with history

of criminal activity or bad reputation, a person does not need to have any specific sets of beliefs to join this party. This attitude is justified by Mr. Gjini and Ms. Sylja with their perception of value exchange that takes place within the party. They appear to consider the exchange of values as an interactive process and that the party offers an environment for exchange of these ideas and beliefs. Consequently, the ideas and values that receive more support can be accepted, while those not receiving such endorsement will eventually fade away.

4.4. The Alliance for New Kosova (AKR)

The two AKR representatives interviewed during this research are the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Group Mr. Ibrahim Makolli, and Ms. Myzejene Selmani, Member of the Parliament. These two representatives of AKR state that their party stands for upholding the rights of the individual as the core of the society, equal treatment of all citizens, and meritocracy. These three core values have been the basis of AKR philosophy from its foundation. The process of developing the value structure of the party appears to have been inclusive in AKR and has aimed at developing an equal opportunity society that share a common vision and liberal values in which there is rule of law.

The role of the party leader Mr. Behxhet Pacolli is perceived to have been crucial in developing such vision and value system. Despite the existence of such values and the party vigor, the representatives of AKR are aware that their electorate is not fully aware about them. One of the MPs interviewed claims that this is not to be considered as a problem as the actions speak of their values more than words do, namely, that the citizens will very soon realize what AKR stands for. When asked whether the guiding values are always taken into account when voting in the parliament, the AKR representatives provide two different opinions. On one hand it is claimed that the decision to

support or not support an initiative or policy is a trade-off between the citizens' interest and the party program. The other representative however, claims that such decisions are firstly made by the party council and latter communicated to the MPs, however, the latter always have the chance of opting out from the official party attitude. One aspect that should be noted is the perception of AKR on decision-making process which in their view is a fluid and flexible.

The individual is at the heart of AKR philosophy and the value system as without cherishing the individual, the whole is unimaginable. The activity of AKR focuses on improving the life of citizen on day-to-day basis, hence giving the individual unquestionable primacy over the group. The link with the individual is also made when discussing the issue of religion and its specific role in the society. AKR representatives consider religion to provide spiritual fulfillment for the individual as the latter has a natural urge to believe in something. While promoting faith in God, AKR at the same time strives for religious tolerance and the right of every individual to express and nurture his/her beliefs.

Despite the quite uniform attitude towards religion in general, the two AKR representatives tend to disagree on the matter of including

creationism and religion in the curricula of public education institutions. While one of them claims that such alternative is not acceptable, the other states that not only it should be included, but also that the party has already attempted to achieve this. The reason behind such attitude is justified with the claim that religion helps in forming individuals and embedding moral values in the character.

The attitude towards abortion supported by the AKR representatives is by far the most conservative of all. Both of them state to be against abortion in principle and that this action should be allowed under special circumstances (i.e. rape) or when the pregnancy jeopardizes the health of the mother. Regardless their common positions on this issue, the arguments used by them are quite different. While one of them argues against abortion through claiming that life is granted by God, the other uses the demography argument whereby claiming that the natural growth of the population is in the down slope and that abortions without solid reasons should not be allowed. For both of them family planning is not considered a valid reason for terminating pregnancy. Despite this conservative attitude towards abortion, the AKR MPs have voted in favor of the abortion law. Such decision according to the interviewees has been based on experts' opinions who consider that abortion until the 12th week of the

pregnancy is allowed. A similar attitude with that on abortion is also portrayed by AKR members when discussing euthanasia. While both of them express disapproval for legalizing this process, they show a significant dose of sympathy for subjects of euthanasia. One of the MPs claims that both assisting the terminally ill to die or leaving them suffer a painful end are very sad options, but euthanasia is an action against God's will. The other MP considers euthanasia as something abnormal.

Marriage is a personal choice for all individuals and AKR does not support nor is it against same-sex marriage. While the party does not have an official position on this issue, the matter is being discussed internally. One of the MPs interviewed claims she hopes that the constitutional provisions allowing gay marriage will hopefully be changed in the near future, as she is not in favor of such provisions.

Prostitution presently takes place in Kosovo but is considered immoral by AKR representatives. They firmly believe that it should be illegal and banned. One of the respondents argues that the immorality of prostitution consists in the fact that it forces people to sell their body. The other MP considers prostitution to be the same as smuggling and that it should never become legal.

The AKR MPs are also in favor of maintaining the ban on the light drugs. One of them claims that similarly to prostitution, drugs are also part of organized crime and trafficking chains that harm families and the society in general. The other representative claims that the society should construct mechanisms to combat drug usage and the first step in this direction would be by removing the term 'light drugs', as this is the source of youth trying them. Additionally, drug abuse is seen by this MP as a source of the increasing number of suicides that we are lately witnessing. While being aware of examples in other countries where legalization of light drugs has led to a decrease of their usage, the AKR MPs persistently argue against the option of legalizing any kind of drugs.

Same as the other parties, the MPs of AKR were asked to provide their views on the notions of the state and nation, as well as other aspects regulating the functioning of the state. While one of the MPs is quite brief and only states that we (read Kosovo) have asked for a state and now we need to construct our state identity and values, the other elaborates more on the source of such attitude. It appears that the reason behind the support for creating a Kosovar identity is one of the most controversial documents in Kosovo's recent history, namely, the so called Astisaari Proposal. She argues that implementation of this proposal

ensures Kosovo statehood, and that Kosovars need to be careful with their actions. When discussing on the issue of the nation, the MP labels the process of the creation of a Kosovar nation as painful. Such positioning reveals the true sentiment of the respondent, whereby the primary identity and allegiance is oriented towards the ethnic identity.

AKR appears to be in favor of light immigration procedures and shows no signs of xenophobia. The reason behind the attitude that Kosovo should welcome foreigners expressing interest to live in Kosovo is justified by the bitter experience that Kosovars have had trying to migrate to other countries. For AKR, it is sufficient if in the near future Kosovo would be able to prevent further migration of its youth abroad.

The word minority is not recognized by the two representatives of AKR. Both MPs claim that the party does not recognize the notion of majority and minority populations, but instead, it sees individuals that are citizens of Kosovo and those that are not citizens of Kosovo. This notion of the individual and non-recognition of ethnic groups or minorities is very much in line with the position of AKR concerning the society as a

whole, where the state is perceived as the service provider for the individual.

Despite the focus on the individual, AKR interviewees believe that there are issues that can be treated as being of national interest. It could be argued that these two positions are somewhat contradictory, as if the individual is the center of the society, it is impossible to identify the common interest of all citizens. In the contrary, if a decision is argued in terms of the will or interest of the majority of citizens, AKR does not recognize the division in terms of majority/minority (i.e. in terms of ethnicity). This contradiction is further strengthened when analyzing the issues of national interest depicted by AKR representatives, which among other include Euro-Atlantic integration, of which the Serbian minority representatives have often declared to be opposing.

Similarly to other parties AKR does not have a specific set of values that may condition membership of individuals in it. The interviewees claim that the values embedded in AKR are quite universal and that freedom of expression of ideas allows for all individuals to exchange ideas and values, hence contributing to the liberal character of the party.

4.5. Democratic League of Dardania (LDD)

The two representatives of LDD interviewed for the purpose of this research are Mr. Lulzim Zeneli, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Group of LDD and Adem Salihaj, Member of the Parliament and former Deputy Prime Minister of Kosovo. These two representatives state that the core values defended by LDD are those of European civilization, and those of the people of Kosovo, whereby democracy is a basic principle of the Rugovian philosophy nurtured at LDK. The two representatives tend to disagree on the source of these values and the process for embracing them. While one of them claims that the party program that embeds core values is determined and adapted by the general convention of the party, the other representative claims that this was a decision made by the party Leader Mr. Nexhat Daci.

The two MPs believe that the values promoted by the party have been successfully disseminated to their electorate through party structures, electoral campaigning and the media. In addition, one of them claims that each representative of the party displays part of the values promoted by LDD. To this end, he emphasizes that professionalism is one of the values that LDD promotes and that because of this sectoral experts are always those presenting the party's position in each sector.

The interviewees also state that all decisions and voting within the parliament are in full harmony with party values and ideology.

The role of the individual in comparison to the group is very important to LDD as the two are closely linked with one another. This party holds that the notion of the individual and the group have no meaning without one another. However, when ranking them according to their importance, the LDD representative claims that the group or the whole is perceived to be more important.

The state is and should remain secular in the view of LDD. While religion is considered as a personal issue and choice, and religious diversity respected, they also assert that the spiritual and state authorities should be clearly separated. They also claim that their attitude towards religion is founded on the provisions of the Kosovo Constitution. In line with this secularism, LDD representatives believe that creationism and religion should not be included in the curricula of public education. The reason provided by one of the respondents is the religious diversity present in Kosovo, because of which tensions may arise if religion is taught in schools.

A secular view is also shared by the two LDD representatives on the issue of abortion. Both MPs state that premature termination of pregnancy is already regulated by the law on abortion and that they fully support the right of women to terminate pregnancy at an early stage (as described in the law). In support of this law the parliamentary group of LDD has also voted in the parliament, despite the unclarity related to the time period in which pregnancy can be terminated. On an issue that is similar to abortion—euthanasia, in terms of its relation to terminating one's life, the LDD MPs claim not to be supportive. The argument provided against this phenomenon is that euthanasia is not natural and that it is against natural laws. It is interesting to note that both abortion and euthanasia concern the termination of life, with the only difference being that in the former a mother decides on the fate of her child, while in the latter, the decision is made either by the terminally ill themselves (assisted suicide), or by family member (in cases of unconsciousness of the patient). From the information obtained from the two representatives, it remains unclear why the LDD MPs treat these two issues differently, and consider one to be natural or acceptable while oppose the other on the same grounds (not being natural).

LDD MPs are also against same-sex marriage. While they consider gay marriage as an unnatural act, they do not provide any feedback on the constitutional provision that could be interpreted as being in favor of gay marriage.

Prostitution is considered a crime by both LDD representatives and by no means would they support an initiative legalizing this activity. A similar disapproving opinion is provided by LDD representatives on the possibility of legalizing light drugs. In both instances, they do not believe that legalizing these activities would decrease the number of users (of sexual services and drugs). They believe that other means and forms should be used to combat these two very negative phenomena.

The MPs from LDD make a clear distinction between the Kosovar identity and the Albanian identity. While the later is considered to be the primary identity of the majority population, they also assert that the Kosovar identity is very important and the only identity we should represent and promote in the international arena. The state/civic identity is supported on the grounds that 90% of Kosovo citizens have supported the creation of the state. In the opinion of one MP, denying the Kosovar identity would imply the denial of the much wanted state.

The Kosovo state in the vision of LDD respondents should have strict immigration policies. While one of the MPs claims that the immigration laws should be similar to those in European countries, the other respondent claims that being an underdeveloped state, uncontrolled and unlimited immigration can cause significant problems. It should be stressed however, that both interviewees believe that immigration policies should not be discriminatory towards certain states or nations.

Non-discriminatory attitude is also supported by LDD concerning the minorities living in Kosovo. In the view of the two MPs minorities should not be treated as such, but instead, they should be treated as Kosovo citizens. Regardless of their ethnic, racial, or religious origin, LDD believes that communities should be equal before the law and enjoy equal opportunities

with the majority population. Additionally, one of the MPs claims that the treatment and rights of the communities should be based on internationally recognized norms and standards. It should be noted however, that unlike the other parties, LDD does not support affirmative action for minorities.

Same as the other parties, LDD considers that national interest exists and that Kosovo's national interests relate to international recognition of the country's independence, membership in the UN and other international organizations, effective control of territory and full sovereignty, economic development and other issues of similar nature.

Values are not a precondition for joining LDD. However, the two interviewees stress that they are more welcoming towards individuals sharing the same values with the party.

4.6. Social Democratic Party of Kosovo (PSD)

The only respondent interviewed from the PSD is the former leader of this party Ms. Kaqusha Jashari, who at the same time is the only member of the parliament coming from the social democrats.¹¹ Ms. Jashari states that the

core values of PSD are equality, solidarity, freedom of movement and freedom of speech, human rights with special emphasis on the right of workers and small and medium businesses. These values have been determined as the core party principles through a long process of party

¹¹It should be noted that Ms. Jashari is officially a member of the PDK parliamentary group as in the

last election, PSD has joint forces with them in a formal election coalition.

development where all members have been engaged. While the final decision has been made by the party leadership, the values have been developed as a result of an all-inclusive process. The knowledge of voters about the values embedded in the PSD philosophy is quite unsatisfactory and is limited to the knowing that PSD is a party with leftist orientation. According to PSD, this has happened because of the independence issues, which has overshadowed all other issues, but with the status settled, Ms. Jashari believes that the party can now work for promoting its identity and values. Her voting practices have so far not been based on the values upheld by the party. Ms. Jashari believes that internal dialogue should be strengthened and more assertive stand taken with regards to pensions, labor law and healthcare.

The Social Democratic party places its focus on the society, which is considered as being of higher priority than the individual. However, it should be noted that PSD believes that the state is responsible for giving value to the individual. This position is quite different from the rest of the parties interviewed during this research and PSD is the only party that stresses the importance of the group before the individual. Such approach is not strange in any way and it is very much in line with the traditional social democratic perceptions on the relation

between the individual and the group, whereby the individual is only perceived to be part of the group.

Freedom of practicing religion is an undeniable right of every individual according to PSD. This freedom is part of the equality value, whereby everyone is entitled to believe in whatever they choose. Religious tolerance is also promoted by PSD. In harmony with this, the PSD representative claims that because of the personal nature of religion, it makes no sense to teach religion in the public schools. Additionally, inclusion of religion may yield negative results as a consequence of religious diversity in Kosovo. For those wanting to take religion classes, the PSD representative believes that they should be addressed in religious institutions.

In principle, PSD is not against the right for premature termination of pregnancy. This party would support a law allowing abortion, but has not voted in favor of the law passed by the Kosovo Assembly. The reason behind the position held vis-à-vis the abortion law promulgated by the Kosovo Assembly has been the technical criteria and definitions encompassed in this law, more precisely, the time-frame during which abortion is permitted.

Euthanasia is considered to be inhumane by PSD. While acknowledging the cost to the

healthcare system for life support of terminally ill or unconscious patients, the representative of PSD claims that her party is categorically against euthanasia. A similar parallel with that of LDD can be drawn also with the position of PSD concerning abortion and euthanasia, whereby the support for termination of future life is considered acceptable, while termination of the life of a person with no chance of recovery is considered inhumane. Again, the only conclusion that could explain such potentially contradictory attitude is the perception on when life begins.

Gay marriage has not been discussed at the party level and PSD does not have an official position concerning this issue. The representative of PSD interviewed did not provide any opinion (even personal) on what the future position of her party will be concerning this issue. Unlike with the issue of same sex marriage, PSD has an official standpoint regarding the legalization of light drugs. They believe that they only cause harm to the society and that their legalization cannot possibly bring anything good. Instead, they believe that the youth, as the most affected category of people by this phenomenon, should be oriented towards social activities and sports, from which they can obtain real benefits.

Prostitution is perceived by PSD as a very degrading activity. While they would like to eradicate this phenomenon, the only way to achieve this according to PSD is through raising the standard of living of the general population. While there is poverty, PSD believes that there cannot be effective measures taken to combat this phenomenon while a great portion of the population lives below the poverty line.

Kosovar and Albanian identities are not competing paradigms in the view of the PSD. They see Albanianism having a strong influence, but not necessarily as being in competition with the Kosovar identity. The representative of PSD believes that it all comes down to the mentality and culture of people and is not related to the nation or nationalism. In such a Kosovo state, PSD goes beyond the traditional perception on foreigners and believes that opening itself towards other cultures would actually be to the benefit of Kosovo as it will strengthen its ties with other cultures. Despite the fact that the social democrats are in favor of cultural diversity, they do not support affirmative action in favor of ethnic minorities. While they strongly support the equal treatment of minorities and the realization of the cultural rights and education in their native language, they do not support forfeiting the rights of the majority for achieving this.

PSD believes in the existence of national interest issues and the highest priority to this end, is the creation of a functioning state and international recognition of the same. It is interesting to note that PSD believes that the latter can be achieved by proving the former, namely, creating a state that is fully functional, stable and worthy the recognition.

Unlike any other party interviewed, the PSD representative believes that only citizens or voters that share the party values should join this party. The representative of PSD believes that anyone who considers joining the party should firstly read and analyze the party program.

5. CONCLUSION

Similarly to the other dimensions studied in the two previous policy analysis papers, political parties in Kosovo do not have their value system clearly defined and in line with their proclaimed ideology. An additional phenomenon that is worth noting and that it should be considered as problematic is that political parties in Kosovo do not have strong attachment to values. Such instrumental approach or quasi -adherence of parties that is often limited to public statements and political rhetorics is very dangerous as it can lead to public's disapproval and devaluation of politics.

It could be argued that the hesitation of political parties to embrace a clear set of values and act based on them is caused by the lack of public debate about controversial issues and the uncertainty of parties about the reaction of the electorate if they were to declare their value base. Additionally, the frequent

discrepancies between representatives of political parties interviewed testify to significant deficiency of debate within parties concerning issues affecting the society and its moral norms.

Most attitudes of parties vis-à-vis the issues addressed in this paper have been closer to what it could be described as the traditional or more conservative. The reason behind such positions is the perceived conservative mentality of the general population and parties are not willing to take the risk of distancing themselves from the voters. As a result of this conservatism on the part of all parties in Kosovo, the young voters who also represent the largest age group of voters can develop an aversion towards political parties and politics in general, hence remaining out of the political scene and often even do not voting. It is important to stress that not all social groups share the same values and according to the

current party priorities, programs, and positions towards issues addressed in this and other studies, hence, a significant share of the electorate remains 'unaligned'. The more progressive segments of the society have no voting alternative and this should be perceived by parties as an opportunity to enlarge their supporters' base.

A concluding remark on this analysis would be that parties are not the only ones to blame concerning the lack of discussion on important topics that are of public interest. The media in Kosovo have been really ineffective in generating such debate and as a consequence

great deals of topics remain a taboo for the society. Moreover, as a consequence of this silence, many social phenomena are not being addressed, creating grounds for larger problems in the future. If Kosovo is to develop into a truly democratic society as it is often proclaimed by politicians, it should rest on well-founded values that are constantly challenged by debate and scrutiny. Lack of discussion on these issues increases the gap between the Kosovo society and the societies we aspire to join in the future (read the EU) and strengthens the backward mentality that prevails in a fair portion of the newest country in Europe.

ANNEX 1: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

#	Name	Parliamentary Group
1.	Xhavit Haliti	PDK MP and Member of the Presidium
2.	Memli Krasniqi	PDK MP
3.	Kaqusha Jashari	PSD-MP (under PDK list)
4.	Lutfi Haziri	Head of LDK Parliamentary Group
5.	Armend Zemaj	LDK MP
6.	Ardian Gjini	Head of AAK Parliamentary Group
7.	Gjylnaze Syla	AAK MP
8.	Lulzim Zeneli	Head of LDD Parliamentary Group
9.	Adem Salihaj	LDD MP
10.	Ibrahim Makolli	Head of AKR Parliamentary Group
11	Myzejene Selmani	AKR MP

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