



**The Kosovar Family Revisited. The Question of Its Social Cohesion One Decade after
War and Political Unrest**

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Kosova has been exposed to radical breaks of the political as well as socio-economic and sociocultural framework. The decade from approximately 1989 to 1999 was characterized by an increasing suppression of the Albanian population by the Serbian regime, which, as reaction, strengthened the social cohesion among the Albanian population. The NATO bombardment of 1999 and the subsequent installation of international security and administrative bodies in the region lifted suppression and paved the way to liberty, which peaked in the declaration of an independent Republic of Kosova in February of 2008.

The Kosovar-Albanian family has been frequently signified from a predominantly emic perspective as the last European stronghold of patriarchal ideology, of big family compounds as well as strong and extended kinship networks. The research project offers a unique opportunity to Albanian and Southeast European studies, migration studies as well as European family studies, which consists in the analyses of the adaptation of a relatively closed family and kinship system, based on a pronounced patrilineal ideology, to a rapidly changing economic, political and social environment. In order to understand the ongoing processes having impact on the cohesion of the Kosovar family deep qualitative research has to be conducted and more precise research questions have to be formulated than in recent research. Moreover, the project is of political brisance in relation to the future of Kosovar society because if the social cohesion of the family ruptures present social politics, based on efficient family and kinship networks, is at stake. Based on the findings of an initial project under the guidance of the applicant, the project's aim consists in the investigation of the social cohesion of the Kosovar-Albanian family one decade after war (1999), forced migration and re-migration and the introduction of liberal economy. Based on methodologies of the grounded theory ap-

proach, temporal as well as regional comparison and the integration of international perspectives, it will provide answers to 6 research questions:

- (1) Which are the factors of change of family structures over time (late socialist period – present)?
- (2) What is the impact of considerable internal and international migration?
- (3) What is the impact of changing demographical and generational relations?
- (4) What is the impact of possible factors of re-traditionalization such as customary law and religion?
- (5) What is the impact of changing ideals with regard to family, marriage and gender relations?
- (6) How is change over time reflected and readable on the symbolic level?

The project team will consist of an experienced German researcher (social anthropologist), a Kosovar-Albanian sociologist and a Kosovar-Albanian historian and will be coordinated on site by a qualified project coordinator. The team is gender-balanced as well as interdisciplinary and will be supported by an international advisory board.

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