**HOW THE CUSTOMARY LAWS AND THE KINSHIP SYSTEM HELPED PRESERVE THE FUTURE ALBANIAN NATION-STATE – A CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACH**

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**Abstract**

Albania proclaimed independence during the First Balkan War and its borders were defined by the London Conference of 1912–1913, which left out of the actual borders many territories of Albanian speaking language populations. The Albanian territories has historically been under the attack of raids and occupations and yet throughout the history, even with the lack of strong governments, Albanians managed to keep hold of most territories. How did they manage this? Well, many arguments can pop out, but I would like to present an anthropological one, based on traditional customary laws and cultural schemas defined by the last, which touches the very core of the ideal nation-state and the inclusion of people of the same ethnicity and cultural traditions.

Albania has been largely governed by customary laws and norms of *kanun* (canon), which helped isolated tribes and larger population, preserve independence even under the long domination of the Ottoman Empire and under foreign or national governments. This canons were spread throughout the whole country, even beyond the Albanian actual borders, connecting Albanian speaking populations not only under the umbrella of the common language, but even under the umbrella of common culture, customary laws and norms. A special article in the ***Canon of Lek Dukagjini*** defines *“family”,* the core cell of this tribal societies as *made of the people of one house, which generates into brotherhoods, brotherhoods in marriage alliances, marriage alliances into kinships, kinships in flags and all get together in a wider family which is named Nation and has the same country, the same blood, the same language and customs*. It is exactly this strong claim of the ***Canon of Lek Dukagjini*** and other cultural schemas defined by many laws of this sort, which helped Albanians in a subconscious level (and not only) preserve throughout the history their territories, and which draws once again attention on the long discussion of territorial disputes about the Albanian borders, which I would like to address on a cultural anthropological approach.

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