

<b>FULL NAME</b>	<b>MARTIN BERISHAJ</b>	<b>FIELDS OF INTEREST, RESEARCH AREAS, FIELDWORK</b>
<b>YEAR OF BIRTH</b>	1963	Political history of the 19th century
<b>POSITION, TITLE</b>	Director, Albanica institute, Ph.D.	Albanian traditional society and Albanian customary law
<b>DISCIPLINE</b>	Sociology and political science	Sociology of South-eastern Europe – perspectives on gender structure



#### RECENT RESEARCH INTERESTS

1. The political history of the 19<sup>th</sup> century reflects the falling apart of the Ottoman Empire, and the emergence of new Balkan states. The problem of Albanians is traditionally conceived of as that of a nation with a “belated” realisation of its political identity. The great Eastern Crisis is seen as formative of the changes in the period between the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Berlin Congress. This history of Albanian state making is represented as alike to its stateless neighbours with weak political elites. The question of “ethnic territory” was paramount in the shaping of the “national interest”. Until the Berlin Congress, the so-called Albanian question was but a marginal topic in the political deliberations in the area; however, it proved to be crucial in the disputes regarding the territorial delineations between Serbia and Turkey; Greece and Turkey; and Montenegro and Turkey. The Albanian question kept re-emerging as the stumbling block not only because of Albanian demands themselves, but because the emergent states failed to adequately incorporate the predominantly Albanian areas of their new state territories. In these circumstances, the Albanian political elite located outside Albania obtained support from the decaying Turkey on the one hand, and the support of Austria and Italy on the other. These tensions culminated with the so-called Prizren league in 1878; the Albanian territorial demands made there were subsequently referred to as the plan for the “Greater Albania”. In the light of these historical developments, I was particularly interested in the repeated demands on the part of Albania’s neighbouring states to shrink the Albanian territory, which were consistently perverted and presented as Albanian territorial pretences on “foreign” land.

2. Traditional Albanian society as reflected in Albanian customary law remains to this day a pet topic of all Albanology. This, in turn, reproduces and enforces Albanian “traditionalism” as a strong identification point for Albanians. In this vain, the so-called *Cannon of Leka Dukagjini* indeed represents a key cultural text for any anthropology and sociology of Albanian society. I have dealt with this topic extensively in my doctoral dissertation that is soon to come out of print in Slovenian. I paid special attention to, for example, the institution of *besa* (the sacred word or promise) in the traditional Albanian law, and the cultural nexus of vendetta. Many researchers saw especially the latter as the ultimate sign of Albanian social backwardness, and their inability for modern resocialisation. This intersection between representation, self-understandings and perpetuation of stereotypes and beliefs was the central point of my research.

3. In my studies of Albanian society and history, I have endeavoured to contextualise them with the broader area of South-eastern Europe, from a particular perspective: that of comparative systems of gender(ed) statuses, relations and institutions in the context of traditional (customary) law, and specific social institutions and rituals. I was interested in these institutions especially through the optics of gendered structures and gender relations that are in the core of the so-called honour code (the codification of erotic relationships, notions on sexuality and marriage, special marital forms like sororate, levirate etc).

#### LECTURES GIVEN

#### RECENT TEACHING EXPERIENCE, PRACTICE, METHODS

1.	1998, 1999, 2000: Columbia University, New York: The challenges of the Albanian situation Albanians in future Balkans Political situation among Albanians	My lecturing has so far been sporadic and in the capacity of an invited external lecturer, so my presentations were very much within the ex cathedra method.
2.	1999-2001: Universiteti i Prishtines, Fakulteti filozofik, Kosova: The roots of Serbian-Albanian conflict	
3.	1999: Universiteti i Tiranës, Albania: Sociological and cultural differences among Albanians	
4.	2001: Univ. of Michigan, Michigan: Albanian customary law	
5.	2003: Princeton Univeristy, New Jersey: Kosova in the post-Daytonan light	

#### MAJOR PUBLICATIONS IN LAST FIVE YEARS

1.	1990. Mednarodni pomen Prizrenske Lige. (The international impact of the Prizren League). Ljubljana: Krt.
2.	1992. Politika shqiptare dhe mbreti Zog. (Albanian politics and King Zogu I.) Tirana. Eurorilindja.
3.	1996. Kisha ortodokse autoqefale shqiptare (Albanian Orthodox Autocephalous Church). Tirana: Cabej
4.	1995: Les Albanais de la diaspora (Albanian Diaspora). Paris: Fayard.
5.	1996. At the roots of Europe. In: Gjonlekaj P.C. (ed). New York.
6.	2000. Tridhjetë vjet të Besëlidhjes, 1970-2000 (Thirty years of Albanian covenant, 1970-2000). Podgorica: Iliricum.

#### MEMBERSHIPS IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS, PROJECTS, FORUMS ETC.

1.	Slovenian society of political scientists
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