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Causes, Effects, and Possible Solutions to Blood Feuding in Albania

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Causes, Effects, and Possible Solutions to Blood Feuding in Albania

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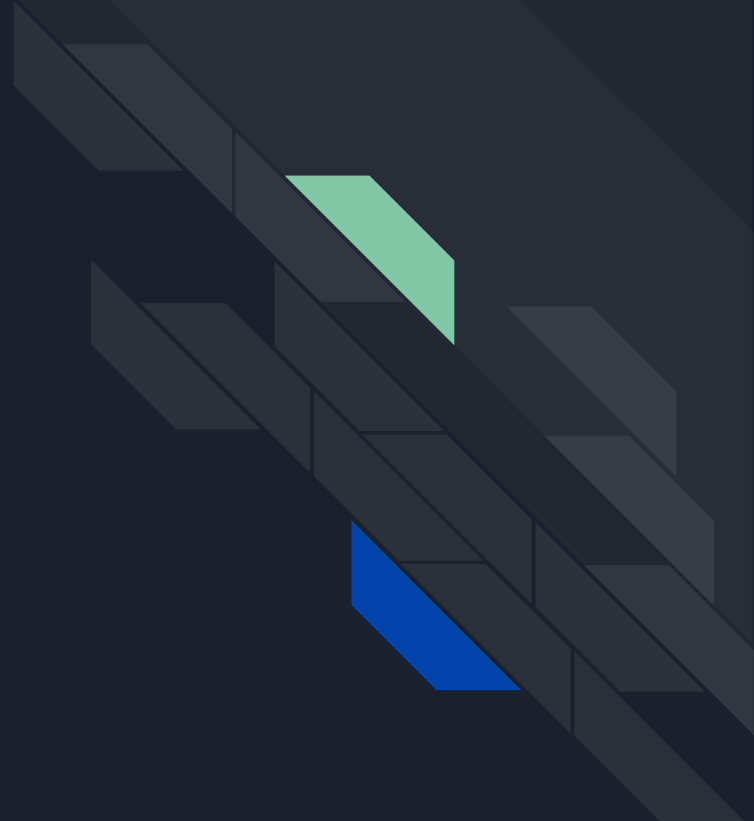




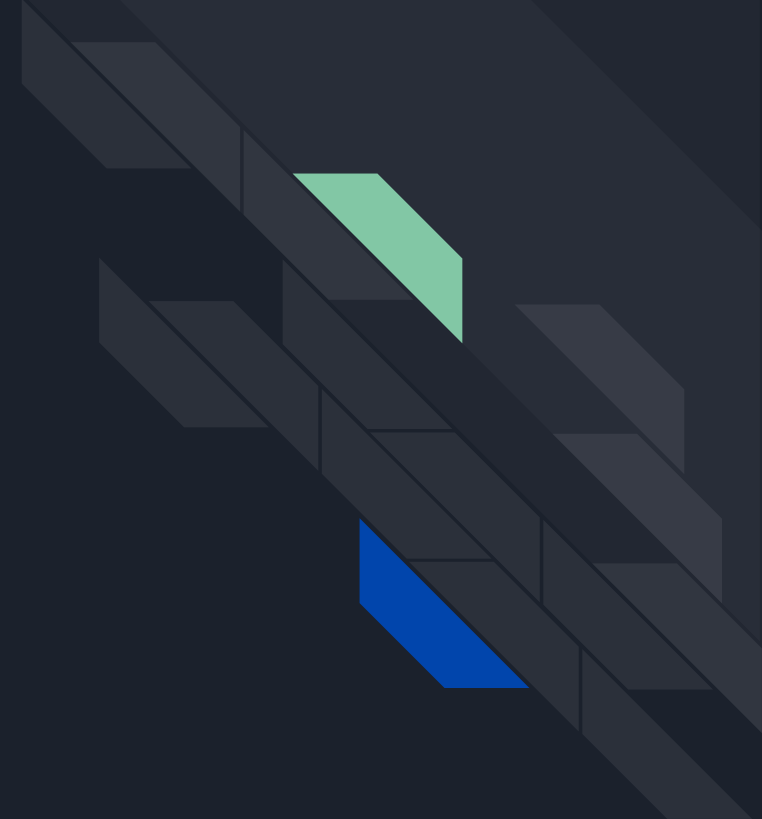
From 2013-2016,
260 individuals
were killed as a result
of blood feuding

Preview of Main Points:

- Overview of History of Blood Feuding
- Cultural Structures and Values that Propagate Blood Feuding
- Effects of Blood Feuding on Individuals and Families
- Effects of Blood Feuding on the Community
- Existing and Possible Solutions



Overview of History, Causes, and Rules of Blood Feuding





History of Blood Feuding - The *Kanun*

The *Kanun* is a set of traditional, customary laws containing **12 sections** that govern day-to-day life in Northern Albania

1. Church
2. Family
3. Marriage
4. House, Livestock, and Property
5. Work
6. Transfer of Property
7. The Spoken Word
8. ***Honor***
9. Damages
10. ***Law Regarding Crimes***
11. Judicial Law
12. Exemptions and Exceptions



Causes of Blood Feuding

“Gjakmarrja” & “Hakmarrja”

A blood feud can start in one of two ways...

1. An insult to another’s honor (“*nder*”)
2. The shedding of blood (“*gjakmarrja*”)

Ideally, the shedding of blood is satisfied by the shedding of blood through revenge killing and the conflict ends.

In reality, a cycle of “*hakmarrja*” is perpetuated.



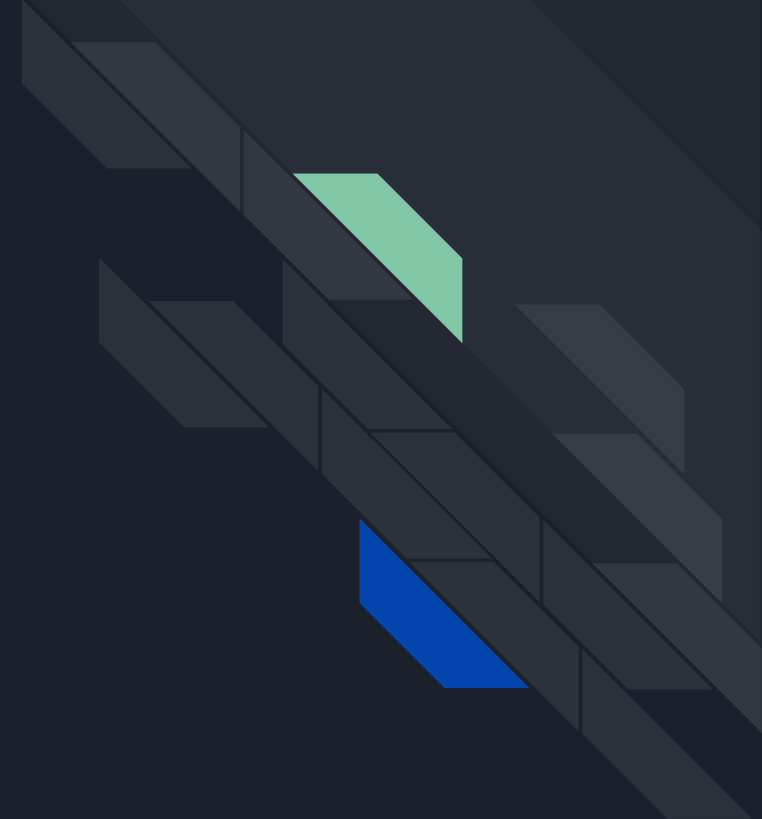


The Rules of Blood Feuding

Rules from the *Kanun*

1. *An individual cannot be killed in the home*
2. *Women and children cannot be killed in a revenge killing*
3. *A male cannot be killed in the presence of a woman*

Cultural Structures and Values that Propagate Blood Feuding





Three Main Cultural Values

1. Value of Honor
2. Value of Justice
3. Value of Forgiveness



Value of Honor

- Perceived as the most important part of society
- Must restore honor back to individual and family name
- Societal pressures for young men



Value of Justice

- There is always a price to pay
- Life for a life
- “Spilled blood must be met with spilled blood”

“Families feel that they are entitled to take vengeance. We have seen many cases where the family members of a victim have given a testimony clearing the accused so that they can settle the scores themselves”.



Value of Forgiveness

- In order for forgiveness to take place a certain amount of bloodshed needs to occur.
- Cannot forgive someone until you get what you deserve.
- All goes back to the value and maintaining of honor.



Importance of Tradition

- Something that is seen as highly important
- Kanun is a source of tradition
 - Persisted throughout years of trial
 - Changed to fit what the people wanted
- Blood-feuding is a tradition that is held with high honor.

“Do you regret killing him?” I finally asked.
“No,” he responded quickly, “I was insulted,
my family was insulted and I needed to
restore the honor that was taken from me.”

- Land of the Vendetta by Amanda Petrusich

Effects of Blood Feuding on Individuals and Families

An abstract graphic on the right side of the slide. It features several parallel, dark grey lines that create a sense of depth and perspective, receding towards the top right. Two distinct shapes are highlighted: a light green parallelogram and a blue parallelogram, both positioned within the lines.

Family Attitudes

- Distrust in government
 - Self enforced Kanun
- Trauma Informed Practice

Men

- Patriarchal System
- Weight of the family
 - High unemployment rates and shame
- High alcohol use

Women

- Kanun states that women are property of their husbands
- Culture of Domestic Violence
- Sworn virgins/Men-women

Children Caught in Conflict

- Children are forced to grow up
- Social Disorganization Theory
- Growing up in isolation

“If anything happens to my brother, I’ll take revenge... of course.”

Effects of Blood Feuding on the Community



Economy

- Population: 2.9 Million
- GDP: \$34.2 Billion (18.6 Trillion)
- Per Capita Income: \$11, 840 (\$57,436)
- Economic Freedom Score: 64.5 (18)
- Ranked 32nd among 44 countries in European Region



Rigid Communist dictatorship of Enver Hoxha eliminates private property and cuts country off from outside influence.

1945 - 1985



Rise and collapse of Albanian Financial Pyramid Schemes

1996 - 1997



1991



Transition from communist rule to European multi-party democracy (Market Economy)



Current

More open and flexible market system with need of more reform (Rule of Law & Gov. Integrity)

Box 1: The Dynamics of a Pyramid Scheme

Pyramid schemes work on the principle that money paid in by later investors is used to pay artificially high returns to earlier investors. The example below shows the simplest variant.



Early investors are drawn in by advertising promising high interest rates, or huge capital gains after a short period. Most schemes have a gimmick, often based on some real or imagined market inefficiency or loophole in the law.



News of the high returns spreads by word of mouth or advertizing, and more people invest. Their payments are used to pay interest and if necessary principal to the early investors. More often, though, the early investors will reinvest their principal, and sometimes their interest in the hope of still higher gains. Most people, however, remain skeptical.



With a reputation for solvency based on a good payments record, which overrides doubts about the feasibility of the scheme, many more investors come into the scheme. Some remain skeptical but invest anyway, believing that they can make a quick profit and then get out before the scheme runs into trouble. For a time, the scheme appears successful, But then...



The interest and principal due to the old investors exceeds the money the scheme is able to attract from new investors. As soon as payments are interrupted confidence in the scheme evaporates. The investors rush to get their money out, but there is little to be had. What has not been paid to the early investors in interest has usually been used to buy highly visible but often not very valuable assets to make the scheme look prosperous, or has been stolen outright by the operators.

- Government Involvement?
- $\frac{2}{3}$ of Albanian population invested in Pyramid Schemes.
- “Tirana smelled and sounded like a slaughterhouse, as farmers drove their animals to market to invest the proceeds in the pyramid schemes”
- Total liabilities = 50%
- Government was a passive spectator.

Economy

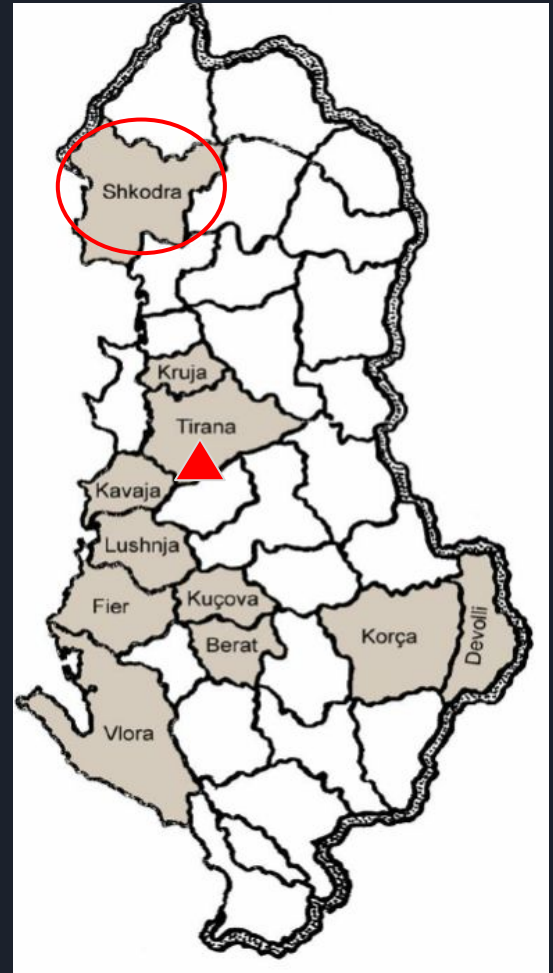
Effect on Albanian Economy:

- Rioting, Fall of the Government, Anarchy, and near civil war (more than 2,000 people killed)
- Civil Disorder
- Loss of confidence in Albanian Government.



Criminality

- Blood feuding is most present in district of Shkodra
- 15% of all homicides in albania were related to blood feuds.
- 2nd highest crime rate among Balkan countries



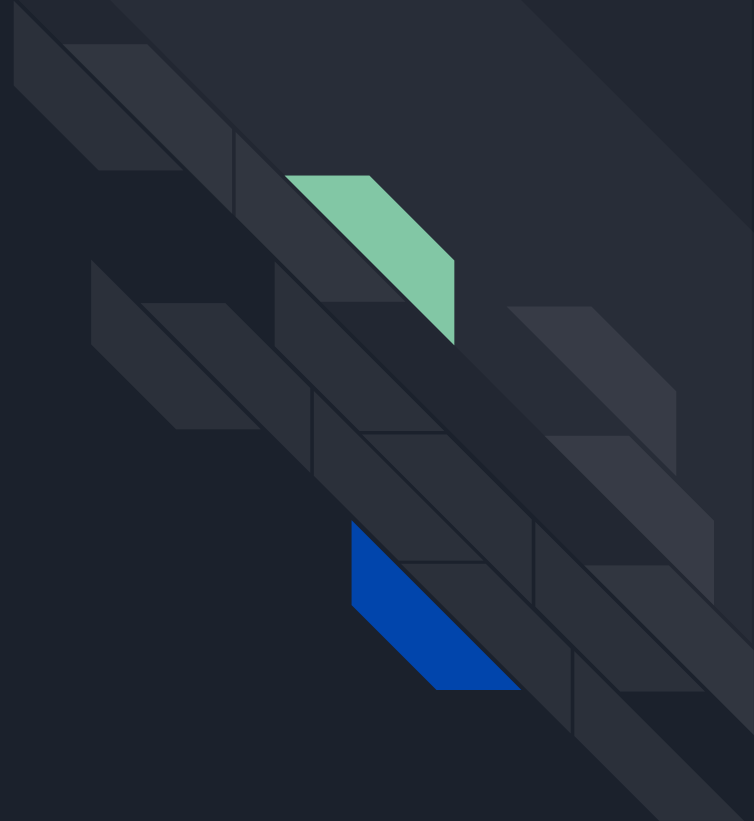
Education

- Social Isolation
- In-Home Education
- Shelter Schools
 - Mrs. Luani
 - Education, Life Skills,
and Persuasion



(Albanian teacher Liljana Luani teaching a student)

Existing and Possible Solutions





Justice System Reform

- The government has increased the sentence for murder to fifteen years to life
- Wealthy individuals can bribe judges to have their sentence reduced (~\$6,000 per year)

"It's not a matter of having a strong state institution but rather of having a just state institution. It is a matter of justice and a justice that is collectively shared." -Dr. Olsi Lelaj



Traditional Mediation

- Punishment by the government does not always restore the sense of honor to the family- the court punishes perpetrators but mediators reconcile the parties and prevent further bloodshed
- Mediation focuses on healing the rupture instead of determining right and wrong

“Tradition is stronger than the state laws and you cannot apply the laws without taking tradition into consideration (Celik & Shkreli)”



A Radical Shift

Education

"I think that this is a problem that can be solved by all of us. I also work hard with the parents, especially with the mothers of these children because the mothers are those who teach and pass on to their kids tolerance, forgiveness and how to forgive and let go and not to continue with the cycle of violence."

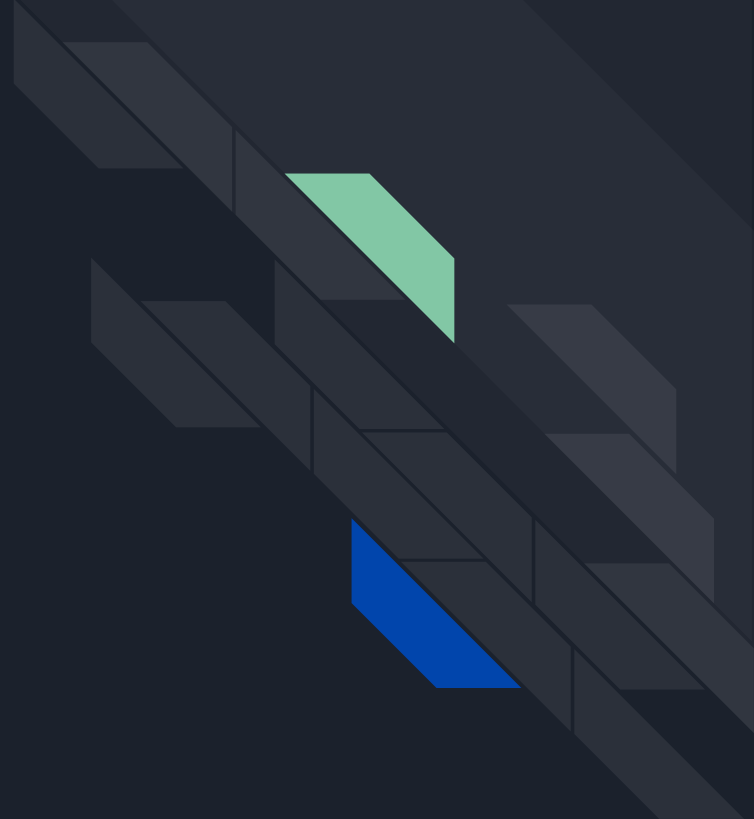
-Liljana Luani

The Gospel

"Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins." Hebrews 9:22

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." Matthew 5:38-39

Any
Questions?





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