



## Research Article

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# Shaping “New Man”, Reconstructing “New Woman”: A Return to Albanian Totalitarian Socialist Past

**Aida Goga**

*Department of Philosophy, University of Tirana,  
Elbasan Str., Tirana, Albania*

**Ardita Prendi**

*Department of Psychology, Wisdom University College,  
Rruga Medar Shtylla 40, Tirana Albania*

**Brunilda Zenelaga**

*Department of Sociology, University of Tirana,  
Elbasan Str., Tirana, Albania*

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## Abstract

*The totalitarian socialist regime, which was installed in Albania in 1945, lasting until 1990, was expressed and articulated as a consistent effort led to modernism or civilization, as a kind of “social engineering” incarnated to the inner individual and society dimensions. Fighting old and traditional mentality, the totalitarian socialist countries created the infrastructure for spreading the model of the “new man” according to new principles, aiming to make everyday life productive and disciplined. Under the implementation of the “new man” approach, especially the image of woman was reconstructed. The purpose of this paper is to analyze how the ideal of the “new man” and “new woman” were socially constructed and how they have influenced the everyday life of people, under the totalitarian socialist regime, referring to the case of the Albania. 18 in depth semi structured interviews with woman and men from 55 until 85 years old have been conducted and the poetry and text songs of that time have been explored. The research showed that through the trinomen “education-work-tempering”, the “new man” and “new woman” was socially constructed. People’s social status, during the socialist regime in Albania influences their perceptions and their attachment to the “new man” and “new woman” portraits.*

**Keywords:** *new man, new woman, totalitarian socialist regime, Albania*

## 1. Introduction

Studies on totalitarianism and the “new man” take an important place especially in post-socialist studies and include fields as diverse as psychology, sociology, philosophy, anthropology, ethnology, etc. (See: Cheng, 2009). It seems that the social construction of the “new man”, during the totalitarian socialist regime, have influenced the everyday life of the individuals, especially those who lived a significant

part of their lives during that regime, thus modeling, to some extent also their behaviors.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze from a mixed perspective: socio-philosophical and psychological one, how the ideal of the “new man” and “new woman” were socially constructed and how they have influenced the people’s perceptions and their everyday life, under the totalitarian socialist regime, referring to the Albanian case. The study is oriented towards an approach, that seeks to strike a gender balance, exploring both “new man” and “new woman” modeling.

In order to better understand the social construction of the “new man” and “new woman”, it is worthy to explain some important terms.

Firstly, we need to understand the definition of the ideology. The ideology of the socialist regime sought to enthrall and shape man with ideal traits. Since, for Lenin, the working masses cannot develop their own ideology, “the only choice is – either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course” (Lenin, 1960-70, p. 384). Bauer, identified ideology with the ‘superstructure’ of society, so that ‘ideological relations’ could include both ‘forms of consciousness’, as well as ‘social institutions’, in which people ‘become aware of their. . . interests and . . . shape their actions’ (Bauer et al., 1974, p. 23).

As mentioned above the focus of the paper is to explore the social construction of the “new man” and “new woman” during the totalitarian socialist regime and its implication in people’s perceptions and their everyday life.

The “new man” itself includes a calculated and systematic cultivation of ideas and perceptions, consciousness and subconsciousness, personal character, psychology, and even physical constitution. This term was created not just to ensure that new ideas would replace old ones and that the party’s tasks would be carried out, thus avoiding becoming merely a topic in political history, but also to stand up as an alternative human model that dwarfed all prior or contemporary types of human being (Cheng, 2009, p. 3).

Fighting old and traditional mentality, and especially the capitalist approach, the totalitarian socialist countries created the infrastructure for spreading the model of the “new man” according to new principles, aiming to make everyday life productive and disciplined. Under the implementation of the “new man” approach, especially the image of woman was reconstructed. With the aim of promoting gender equality, women became participants in works that required physical strength such as building railways and roads, driving tractors etc. Their image was socially constructed by the morality imposed by the state, which aimed to become part of individual consciousness.

This study tries to answer to the following questions: How the social construction of the “new man” and “new woman” can be explained through the socio-philosophical and social- psychology approaches; through which mechanisms the figures of “new man” and “new woman” have been shaped in totalitarian socialist regimes in general and in Albanian case in particular; how the people perceptions have been constructed and in which ways the model of “new man” and “new woman” have influenced their everyday life.

In the first part of the paper the methodological approach, which drove the study is explained.

Second, a theoretical analyze of the concept of “new man” and “new woman” has been developed, starting with the idea of Karl Marx, followed by an explanation of the symbolic interactionism of George Herbert Mead, functionalism of Emil Durkheim and psychology of William James, continuing with the ideas of the contemporary scholars such as Hannah Arendt, Jose Ortega Y Gasset and many others.

The third part of the article is focused on the contextualization of the “new man” and “new woman” social construction in Albanian society.

Next, some findings of the empirical work, basing on the narrations of the interviewed people’s have been featured, with the aim to explore their perceptions and the implications in their everyday life during the socialist regime. An exploration of the poetry and song’s texts have been developed as well

Last, the paper gives some conclusions and recommendations for further studies.

## 2. Methodology and Study Limitations

To fulfill this paper's purpose a qualitative methodology has been used. On one hand we explored the secondary data from international and national bibliographical sources and, on the other hand, we gathered primary data through 18 semi-structured interviews with both woman and man, from 55 to 85 years old. Through the latter, we aimed to explore how the construction of the "new man" and "new woman", has influenced in their perceptions and their everyday lives, during the socialist regime.

We also tried to explore the role of education on the ideology formation of the "new man" and "new woman", exploring the poetry and text songs of that time. "From the communist point of view, people's culture had to turn into an ideal projection of the fixed idea of the communists as builders of a new emancipated world, a New Man and a new culture" (Abazi and Doja, 2016, p. 164).

In this paper, the unique experiences of 18 people have been explored, the construction of the "new woman" image through the ideology of the "new man" in general has been theorized and

A purposeful sampling has been used. It is a type of non-probability sampling and is commonly used in qualitative research that focuses on exploring and interpreting experiences and perceptions (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p.167). In communist and pos-communist studies this methodology is frequently used. For example, Kaleva used histories interviews of 100 women and man born from 1920 to 1930 in Bulgaria to examine how socialist lives have been described and justified in post-socialist times (Kaleva, 2016, p. 334).

We chose to interview people from 55 to 85 years old, because they have spent an important part of their life during the socialist regime and are able to express their perceptions about the topic. According to Max Weber the interpretive understanding (*verstehen*) of social realities is very important and can be realized through sociological studies (See: Sokoli, 2009, p.164-68).

The semi-structure interview guide was based on three main topics: (a) the description of the role of the new man and new woman during the totalitarian socialist regime; (b) the role of the education during this regime on the "new man" and "new woman" construction (c) the influence of this ideology in the proper everyday life.

The thematic analyze was used to sift the data.

The research faced some limitations:

First, the number of the interviews is limited, because the aim of the paper, as in all qualitative researches, is not to generalize the findings, but to explore the unique experiences of people, in order to understand the process of the "new man" and "new woman" ideology formation and the role of education on it.

Second, previous studies, with sociological, philosophical and psychological focus on this topic, especially in Albanian context are limited, so comparing the findings with similar studies was almost impossible.

Third, there is a lack of similar studies in this field.

## 3. Theoretical Approaches of the "New Man" and "New Woman"

In this section, the creation of the "new man", as a social construction, will be examined, based mainly on the Marxist perspective, that of symbolic interaction and functionalism and exploring the ideas of many other scholars such as Arendt and Ortega.

According to Karl Marx "The mode of production determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual process of life. It is not the consciousness of man that determines their existence, but on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness." (Marx, 1904, p. 11-12). More specifically, he said, "the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of social relations." (Ibid). According to Marx "All history is nothing but a continuous transformation of human nature," (Marx, 1936, p. 124).

The Bolsheviks put into practice Marx's idea of an early integration of work and education, the

key concept in educating the new man. The Soviet Man was the first variant of the new man. The October Revolution and the subsequent establishment of the Soviet regime constituted the first time in human history that a government attempted to carry out social engineering to reshape people on a large scale (Cheng, 2009, p. 31-33). By describing the global impact of the Socialist New Man, Cheng (2009, p.190) emphasis: "The most immediate sphere of influence of the "Soviet man" was, of course, in Eastern Europe after the Second World War, when a number of countries were kept behind the "iron curtain" and became laboratories for the "new man" experiment.

In a Study in the Psychology of Communism, Kosa (1962, p. 368) assessed that, by the end of the Second World War, the plan for the new man had succeeded in the production of the "first generation," or the "Soviet man," and now it was time "to apply the same formula to the citizens of the freshly conquered countries, to form a second generation of Soviet man out of Albanians, Bulgarians, Czechoslovakians, Germans, Hungarians, Poles and Rumanians."

After the idea of the new man was embraced in Albania, it was intended to form a new worldview and a new mentality, where through education the aim was to reach an evolutionary phase of man through a new moral authority.

Durkheim asks: What is a moral authority, if not the characteristic which we attribute to a real or ideal being we conceive of as constituting a moral power superior to our own? (Durkheim, 1974, p. 56). According to him the characteristic of all moral authority is that it imposes respect, because of this respect our will defers to its imperatives. It remains for us now to see whether in fact moral rules derive from this source the authority which makes them appear to us obligatory. Durkheim emphasizes that society is the end of all moral activity because, while it transcends the individual, it is immanent in him. Society transcends the individual's consciousness. Society is something more than a material power; it is a moral power (Ibid, 54).

The idea of social construction of the new man, as well as the new woman, can be explained also from the perspective of symbolic interactionism paradigm, that was strongly influenced by pragmatism, according to which the reality does not exist out there in the real world but is created by interacting with the world. This influence is more visible in the monumental two-volume work of William James entitled "The Principles of Psychology" (James, 1983, p. 62) divided the "social self" along in its two components of "I" (the subjective self) and "Me" (the objectified self). For the symbolic interactionists, the self is first and foremost a reflexive process of social interaction. The reflexive process refers to the uniquely human capacity to become an object to one's self, to be both subject and object. Reflexivity is not a biological given but rather emerges from the social experience (Callero, 2003, p. 19). The concept of the self is so important, it has been studied for many years by psychologists James and Mead, and is still one of the most researched topics in social psychology (Dweck & Grant, 2008).

According to Mead "Me" and "I" are two phases or processes of myself. "I" means the creative aspect of the self, in which the most important values are found, and it represents that aspect of the self that is related to the development and achievements of the self. So "I" represents that part of the self that expresses individuality, authenticity and creativity as a very important part of personality. "Me" is represented as an organized grouping of other people's attitudes that one takes for granted. "Me", according to Mead, includes conscious responsibilities. The more social control there is over the individual, the more ground is created for "Me". Through camaraderie dominates the individual. For example, conformists are dominated by "Me". It's important to me and it needs to be developed significantly. But "Me" dominance means there is less room for "I" (Mead, 2001, p. 210).

This relationship of Mead is perceived by Hannah Arendt as paradoxical and elaborated through the elaboration of action in the individual. Referring to the concept of "human plurality", Arendt states that, "the plural refers to the fact that people, not Man, live and inhabit the world." (Arendt, 2006, p. 31). It is a paradoxical concept, insofar as it implies that all human beings are human and as such are equal, and at the same time every individual is unique; "We are all the same, that is, human beings, in such a way that no one is ever the same as another who has lived, lives or will live" (Ibid), because every human being brings something new to the world. Everyone is unique and by appearing

in the realm of human action, the individual can express this to others who are also unique. We find the same idea in Mead who emphasizes that the common values of a society are very important for our existence "but nevertheless there needs to be a space for the individual where "I" can express myself" (Mead, 2001, p. 267).

Seems that totalitarianism destroys the human plurality and the space where individuals can unfold. Their identities can disappear, argues Arendt. This is what happens in totalitarianism, as it claims to organize the infinite and distinct majority of people as if all people were a single individual. In a space without plurality people are deprived of being human. These tendencies are present in modern society, which in similar ways threaten the majority. Arendt's attitude is a response to this threat and a form of protecting the human plurality, through the separation of politics (as a sphere of plurality and interaction) from other spheres that are those of physical labor and work. The "new man" is the ideological metamorphosis of totalitarian government, which extinguishes this plurality. "In a perfect totalitarian government, where all people become one man, where all action aims to accelerate the movement of nature and history." (Arendt, 1951, p. 467). Given the importance of Arendt's concepts, it must be said that what is achieved is not the result of human behavior as such, but of individuals who function automatically, and what is achieved is nothing but the emptying of the individuality of individuals, through the suspension of action and the transcendence from the dimension of freedom to that of necessity, thus leading to the disappearance of the human condition and as such the political condition. (Canovan, 1992, p. 57-62). While Ortega conceives of a society composed of plurals and minorities, "minorities are individuals or groups of particularly qualified individuals, while the crowd is a group of particularly unqualified persons" (Ortega, 2003, p. 61). In the sense that Ortega gives the crowd as plural, the "new man" is the crowd or plural, since obviously the "new man" is a man undifferentiated from the other, though very conspicuous. To affirm oneself as an individual in itself means to be separated from the crowd, but the "new man" is a statistically conformist. Individuals in socialist society "feel themselves like everyone else and moreover feel happy to be like everyone else" (Ibid, 62). Was the "new man" an ideal? Was the "new man" brought to life? If the "new man" is found embodied in all traits in a part of those people who had internalised these traits and were not inevitably differentiated from the other, he no longer remains an ideal, but part of a reality. In this way the "new man" is the experience of identifying himself with anyone else. The "new man" creates a new self, as a result of interaction in a new society or a new life and creates a new worldview. So, through identification with others a collective identity is created. The idea that in a totalitarian society a common sense would be obtained among the people, is apparently created. According to Arendt, the common sense ensures that everything we receive from our sensibilities refers to the same phenomenon, enabling people to have "a common context that equips each object with its own particular meaning and through the perception of this object from completely different points of view, people accept its identity" (Arendt, 2006, p. 50).

During the totalitarian socialist regime, the general idea of "new man", was easily adopted for woman as well, by cultivating on them the ideology of "new woman". "Where are men there are women" is the slogan, according to the demands of many Marxists. This goal could easily have been achieved if working-class women had traditionally been made by men and if ruling-class women had moved towards the powerful positions of their husbands (Blunden, 2012, p. 386).

As Barbara Evans Clements summarized, the new Soviet woman eventually emerged as "modest, firm, dedicated, sympathetic, courageous, bold, hard-working, energetic, and often young" and "gave no thought to her personal welfare," ready to endure any physical hardship, torture, and sacrifice (Clements, 1985, p. 220).

Albanian scholar Artan Fuga (2001) assessed that: "The most virtuous, the most worshiped by the government are the simplest, the poorest, the weakest from a social point of view. First of all, a better world belongs to them, it belongs to them to accomplish a great mission and to implement in practice an important message. There is definitely an absolute truth that belongs in the first place to some individuals and that, through these reporters, spreads throughout society. But, according to Fuga, the "true man resisted not to enter the prefabricated models of the 'new man'" (Fuga, 2001,

p.11).

This “prefabricated” model rises above the world-view criteria of socialist society which propagated to set the woman free with full rights equal to the man in society. Gender equality was an ideological concept, where women should be alienated into an individual with new traits and a new morality to gain gender equality.

#### 4. Shaping “New” Man and Reconstruction of “New Woman” Through the Trinomial “Education-Work-Tempering” in Albanian Context

The totalitarian socialist regime, which was installed in Albania in 1945, lasting until 1990, was expressed and articulated as a consistent effort led to modernism or civilization, as a kind of “social engineering” incarnated to the inner individual and society dimensions. As Cheng has asserted, like in the Soviet Union, education was a major vehicle in Albanian’s social engineering to create the new man. The integration of ideology with knowledge, work with study, social and political participation with classroom activities, and eventually school with society was the goal of such a transformation. Model emulation was a major vehicle for transforming human nature and creating the new man. The Soviet regime produced numerous models of the new man, ideological symbols in the flesh, represented by civil war heroes, model workers or labor heroes, exemplary cadres, and scientists who conscientiously worked for the new state (Cheng, 2009, p. 33).

In Albania, during the totalitarian socialist regime, the whole state functioned as an ideological machine, through the education of masses about all areas and sectors of life. Through the trinomial “education-work-tempering”, the new man’s features and those of the new woman were pinpointed and modeled. It is the woman who rises up against old customs and morals by abolishing the old and empowering the new man. The new man is the socialist consciousness; he is the individual through whom this society would take life. The education of the socialist man was a major task of society and the individual. Teachers, professionals, artists were in the support of the Party in the process. The essence of socialist education was the attitude towards oneself, towards the other and society, through the internalization of socialist values and norms, through the slogan “education-work-tempering” requiring an active movement of society to form the individual. Education was ideological and meaningful; where institutions had the main role “people are educated even during everyday life, while working” (On some socialist education problems, 1964, p. 5). Education in socialist society was an organized and systematic process and included both the education of younger generations and the reeducation of adult generations. “All people are subject to education, ideological processing, processing of understanding, psychology, moral physiognomy and aesthetic taste” (Ibid, p. 6). The tasks were very explicit and clearly emerged though the binomial, “education and work” for the young people in school and “work and education” for adults in the world of work.

The work has quelled differences between male and female and has given authority to the woman in society “In conditions when she works the same as a man in society and at the same time carries the weight of the domestic economy and the wellbeing and education of the child, she is often burdened... It is certainly up to the man to understand this condition of the woman, helping her more both in doing the work and easing her nervous and psychic tension” (Beqja, 1983, p.112). The semantic weight “woman works” means that it is equally useful for society and family, where one of the most important norms of well-educated behavior is respect for women and girls, because the woman has gained this respect authority through her honorable work. According to Albanian scholar Hamit Beqja, “the woman participates extensively in all manufacturing work, ideological life, physical tempering and military preparation, in massive schooling, etc. The participation of women in all these areas of social life is almost equal to men” (Beqja, 1983, p.148). According to him “the full emancipation of the society will occur when the woman will be fully emancipated, and the woman will be emancipated when the socialist society will eradicate the old patriarchal and conservative attitudes towards women and this will be achieved by educating the younger generation...Therefore, it is good that we teach and educate boys to respect girl, starting from their sisters, to their

classmates and colleagues" (Beqja, 1983, p. 149).

Totalitarian socialism brought women out of the narrow circle of domestic work into the productive economy. Already, the ideal for the Albanian woman was sculpted through the earliest models of the woman who took part in the anti-fascist war and were called the daughters of the people, which became inspiring models for the socialist woman. The woman started the battle for independence in the war and in order to gain her independence and rights, she had to work wherever men worked. So the women's participation in the war was the first stage of emancipation for her. "Women were trained, taught and raised in war and through it" (Gjoleka, 1979, p. 19). Albanian scholar Zyhdi Dervishi (2011, p. 36-37), stress the role of the Albanian nurses, which have voluntary served during the Second World War, mentioning the contribute of the nurse Justina Shkupi for the freedom of Spanish people from the fascist occupation. So, the second stage was the voluntary work, that marks the transition of women to the construction of the new socialist society, where she put the general interest above the personal one. The woman was modeled through criticism and self-criticism, working and tempering. "They grew up like this in the fire of war and were hardened in the waves of work, in the anvil of actions" (Gjoleka, 1979, p. 45). The ideology of the Party, for modeling the new man, was the algorithm of work and the technical-scientific revolution.

Under this ideologization in Albania as the sociologist Zyhdi Dervishi explains "especially from the mid-1960s until the beginning of the democratic process, girls and women generally aspired to become someone in society and have their own voice in social, artistic, etc. life, rather than to provide some kind of economic wellbeing" (Dervishi, 2001, p.101).

On the conceptual side, the woman embodied the ideals and norms, she was indoctrinated and has no personal space and characteristics, but her typology is carved in every woman's face. The distinctive and supportive epithet that pervades how the woman is constructed is the "emancipated woman".

On a symbolic level, the propagandization of the new man was supported even by tempering, especially by using the physical culture (*fizkultura*) and sports, as well as military training. The 'new man' was usually depicted as a worker and an athlete in excellent physical shape, perennially ready for all difficulties that laid ahead in the establishment of a socialist society (Roberts, 2007, p. 11-12). The slogan "all the military people" was widely used during the socialist regime in Albania, to promote the readiness of the mass to be part of military exercises. So, the "new man" must be also a "military man" in defense of the homeland.

##### **5. "New Man", "New Woman" and "New Life": People's Perceptions and Poetry. The Implications in Everyday Life**

Through interviews, two main perceptions toward the figure of "new man" and "new woman" have been identified. The first was a negative perception of the "new man" figure, a depersonalized, a conformed man, without creativity and naked from the critical thinking.

*"The new man was like a robot. He was denied from the liberty and everything was done only for the party. He was a party obedient soldier" (woman, 64 years old, ex-teacher).*

According to the interviews the Party morality and the Party control drove the "new man" construction. According to Mead social control is precisely the expression of "Me" over the expression of "I" (Mead, 2001, p. 254).

*"The new man was the individual who lost in socialist society. In his name and in the name of the people everything was done. He was seen as an object serving to the party and not a subject with dignity and personality" (man, 67 years old, ex-professor of Albanian language).*

Collecting people perceptions about the "new man", another feature of it has been identified: the new man is a man without religion.

*"I remember once a parent got a letter in front of everyone, because he had circumcised his sons, breaking the rules of the "new man" and going against the party morality" (man, 67 years old, teacher)*

Other people have a positive perception about the ideal of the "new man", but a negative perception about the way of implementation of this ideology. The embodiment of the ideal values of the "new man" was strongly proclaimed by the leaders of the socialist regime of that time in Albania, but was not implemented by themselves.

*"The new man was the ideal man, but its implementation in practice was problematic. The leaders of that time themselves deviated from these ideals, using the idea of the "new man" in their service, inventing the class war. Thus, the ideals of the new man were embraced by the masses, but not implemented by the leaders of that time." (man, 84 years old, medical doctor).*

A similar perception was identified for the application of the "new woman" ideology.

*"The woman at that time began to be respected, but again the man was the one who said the word first and the woman were suppressed, they did not dare to come forward. The difference was the "socialist woman" who took the floor firstly, because they were part the party" (woman, 79 years old, ex-teacher).*

As mentioned by LaFont (2001, p.205), rather than experiencing complete emancipation, socialist women were forced into a pseudo emancipation, mainly because their labor was needed for socialist industrial development.

An important factor that influences the people perceptions is the social status and social prestige (See: Bradley et al, 2017; Kimberly et al, 2008). During the interviews we tried to explore how the perception about the "new man" and "new woman" has also influenced the everyday life of people with different social status.

*"The persecuted woman made overlooked works. They washed the dishes, some plowed and others watered the land. For us only the Party decided, we had no right, except to obey the orders of the party" (woman, 69 years old, ex-persecuted).*

The research also identified positive perceptions about the role of the "new woman" in the society, mainly from the interviewees with a privileged social status of that time.

*"The woman was properly positioned in all sectors and was supported in family affairs also, which led to the emancipation of men too. The role of girls and women has been very important, both in economic and education sector. Without wanting to increase the values of the role and contribution of women and girls, in that period, an extremely great work was done to make the woman free from the chain of slavery. Many efforts were made for woman emancipation, by giving her the right place in the family, school, work and society. This brought about her empowerment in all walks of life even in politics" (woman 72 years old, writer).*

The ideologizing process is also reflected in the interviews taken. The working woman, under the influence of ideology, glorified the work and minimized the difficulties throughout it.

*"I was a turner and I worked in 3 shifts ... Women took advantage in that time, because the party created spaces by giving her posts and involving her in many activities ... Women at that time were highly respected. Those of us, who did heavy work, mainly shift 3, due to the difficulty at work, get paid for 8 hours, even though worked 7 hours" (woman, 77 years old, ex-turner).*

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*'The circumcision was considered a religion act and the mortality of the "new man" was opposed to religion morality at that time.*



But, beside this, a negative perception toward the denaturalization of the woman was identified. Spreading the doctrine of the “new woman”, based on the ideal of emancipation and gender equality, the woman was depersonalized and “used” by the socialist regime.

*“The feminine features of the woman were masculinized quite a bit. She wore overalls and was far from the embellishments of feminine delicacy” (woman, 72 years old, writer).*

The third session of the interview guide was focused on the formation of the “new man” and “new woman” through the trinomen “education, work and tempering”.

*“The slogan “education-working- tempering” was pasted in every school. The scientific education in schools was mixed with the ideologization, which was very damaging for the new generation. The propaganda of creating the “new man” was very strong everywhere and in schools as well. The new man was the one who was “the first in sacrifices and the last in claims” (man, 75 years old, ex-officer).*

Through education and ideology, if we refer to Mead for merging “I “with “Me”, we manage to gain an attitude where everyone becomes one with the other. As long as we manage to maintain this attitude, as long as we nurture that sense of control that hangs over us because of the responsibility we have to face difficulties and try to find social solutions (Mead, 2001, p. 326).

*The formula “education-working- tempering” led every activity of life at that time. Tempering was done to defend the homeland. There were special training hours and the student performed with wooden rifles and other tools. So, the pickaxes, rifles and books were inseparable at the time. The socialist morality was internalized through books. I remember a character from the book “Back on Foot”, named Din Hyka, who had lost one leg at work. He was the symbol of self-denial, sacrifice and the devotion to serve to the society” (man, 67 years old, teacher).*

According to the interviewers the creation of the “new man” and “new woman”, was glorified even through songs and poetry.

*“Many songs at that time were dedicated to women. The woman in art was presented with more advantages than in real life and this was due to the ideology of the party. According to the ideological axis, the poetry and songs must present the woman happier than she really felt” (woman 79 years old, teacher).*

The identity of the woman emerges through daily life, “in the cultured attitude, in all the circumstances, where the way of life appears” (Beqja, 1983, p. 57). The cultured attitude had to do with the appropriate behavior towards the socialist way of life and is against the violation of the rules of socialist coexistence and inappropriate behavior. Through citizenship books, new life was intended and propagated. In the text of the “Song to the new life”, life in the socialist regime is glorified, evoking exalting emotions to the people for the development of socialist Albania (Instituti i Folklorit, 1968, p. 40).

*A song let us sing  
For our new life gals  
In the soul to be felt  
Full of joy our hearts  
Will melt  
Let our song go up  
Like a volcano in this earth  
Let Albania talk up  
We are hers  
Look how our country  
Is embellished  
Like a young bride  
How happily spring is born  
Beautifully reaching this land.* (Instituti i Folklorit, 1968, p. 40).

The new life and the new mentality were propagated through learning and reading books. "The book expands the mental horizon and life experience. It teaches you, educates you, awakens your talents, and develops your interests. Reading enriches man's vocabulary, helps him to understand new ideas" (Tabaku, 1963, p. 26). Cultured behaviour is human behaviour that adorns man and his life. "In socialist society, human behaviour is based on sincere and honest relations between people, respect and attention to each other" (Ibid, p. 56). Were there real models of people who had embraced the new life, the new mindset and that inspired society with their model. Examples of modest heroes abound in the examples brought up in the books of this period. The value of the hero is measured by modesty, self-sacrifice and self-denial. Man should be educated and self-educated to improve oneself and the qualities of character. "Care and punctuality, sensitivity and modesty, taste and culture of speech, are not innate qualities. Every man can cultivate in himself these qualities of character" (Tabaku, 1963, p. 99).

*"Men, woman, old and young  
A pick in one hand  
And the rifle in the other  
Our life to you  
Dear party belongs.  
These men and woman  
do your soldiers remain". (Gjoleka, 1979, p. 87).*

As we discussed in the above issues the woman not only embodies the features of the "new man" but through these features she now resembles more with the man and calls herself "manly". In the text of the song "Brigadierja mirëditore" it is shown how the woman from Mirëdita (a city in the north of Albania) beats the canonical norms and just like a man, leads a brigade in the work to open the belts and succeeds even in hard work. Also, in this song, the role of the Party, which provided women with equal rights with men, is strongly glorified.

*"Today the right of equality  
With man  
You won  
You woman from Mirëdita  
Who conquered the canon  
So wave Your handkerchief  
And lead this dance  
With the party at the head  
It is your right.  
And common sense" (Instituti i Folklorit, 1968, p. 57).*

Although communism promised to liberate women through increased opportunities in education, employment, and political representation, it failed, because it failed to eliminate patriarchy (LaFont, 2001, p. 217).

A form of education was also the punishment, as a way of reformatting individuals who had violated the principles of "new man", proclaimed by the Party at that time.

*"We, persecuted women, were educated only through work as the party did not allow either the persecuted women or men to go to school" (woman, 69 years old, ex-agricultural worker).*

The role of the organizations was very strong at that time. They served as instruments to help the governmental institutions to implement the socialist ideology, including the "new man" ideology.

*"I can mention the role of woman organization (Organizata e gruas), The Popular Front (Fronti popullor) etc. These organizations worked to "improve" the society. For example, if something went wrong inside the family, these organizations interfered". (man, 59 years old, plumber)*

## 6. Conclusions

The “new man” and the “new woman” were social constructions, which guided the behavior of people during the period of the totalitarian socialist regime in Albania. What was considered “new”, tried to create a “me” in the sense of Mead, imposing on men and women, what the system proclaimed, the “ideal man”, a conformed man or woman, ready to respond to the demands of the totalitarian system, and far from being himself/ herself, or “I”, using the term of Mead. Referring to Arendt we can conclude that socialist ideology fulfilled the function of the totalitarian regime by emptying the individuality of individuals as well as the education did not achieve the goal of making people better or more virtuous by remaking or reshaping them.

The research show that, using three strong mechanisms: education-working-tempering, people, both man and woman, have been obliged to interiorized the values of “new man” and “new woman”. Especially the “new woman” was the model of the woman equal to the man, not only with the same rights, but also with the same obligations as the man. This is clearly reflected on poetry and songs of that time.

The interviews with people who have passed an important part of their lives under the socialist regime in Albania showed that, today, thirty years after the collapse of the that regime, their perceptions have become more objective, evaluating the process of creating the “new man” as a way that had strongly influenced their own lives. What was achieved in Albanian socialism was to control and manipulate other people’s lives.

The perceptions of the interviewed people were influenced by their social status at that time, so both positive and negative perceptions have been identified. The Albanian case supports even more studies that the “new man” was never the reality but an ideal human type.

Considering the findings of this study, further studies can be undertaken with the aim to explore how the image of the “new man” and “new woman” still continues to affect the lives of individuals, and how it is transmitted from one generation to the other, in post-socialist countries.

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