

ENGAGEMENT AS A LEGAL INSTITUTION IN THE PRE-COMUNIST ALBANIAN CULTURE AND ITS TRANSFORMATION AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION DURING THE POST-COMMUNIST PERIOD

Blerina Hamzallari (Doctoral Candidate)
Department of Sociology, Faculty of the Social Sciences
University of Tirana, ALBANIA

ABSTRACT

This research paper focuses on the analysis of the social institution of engagement prior to marriage. First, the research will look at the engagement as a legal institution in the pre-communist Albanian society. This will be followed by an exploration of engagement to the present days as a socially regulated institution. The questions will be asked as to how this particular phenomenon has changed, what are the new social dimensions? The study uses a qualitative approach. The data were collected using the in-depth interview. Interviews were conducted with 30 women who were married at an early age (before their 19th birthday). The empirical findings indicate that engagement is no longer an institution regulated by the law, and that the woman's engagement as a step towards marriage has undergone changes in its function. The existence of engagement as a social institution comes out of a need to mesh the novelties of the couple relationship in contemporary times with the cultural inheritance of the past.

Keywords: Engagemet, marriage, matchmaker, cohabitation, union, legal institution, social institution.