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Candidate

Erida CURRAJ

Supervisor DA / Polis

Prof. Gëzim QËNDRO

(UniFe Matr. N. 118603)
(Polis Univ. Reg. N. PL581N020001)

Supervisor DA / Ferrara

Prof. Giuseppe MINCOLELLI

(Years 2014/2017)

Sezioni



Dottorati di ricerca

Il tuo indirizzo e-mail

erida.curraj@unife.it

Oggetto:

Dichiarazione di conformità della tesi di Dottorato

Io sottoscritto Dott. (Cognome e Nome)

CURRAJ Erida

Nato a:

Sarande

Provincia:

Sarande

Il giorno:

29.05.1983

Avendo frequentato il Dottorato di Ricerca in:

International Doctorate in Architecture and Urban Planning

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SUMMARY

The dynamics of the Albanian market in lieu of the multifaceted transformations following the collapse of the communist regime and moving towards the accession processes in the European Union as well as the demographics of the Albanian society as a whole, deeply impact the ways in which home furniture products are designed, development and produced. This study is interested in exploring the development of the home furniture product design in Albania and its transformation from communism to post-communism and free market economy. Furthermore, the study looks into ‘Do-it-yourself’ (D-I-Y) product design as an emerging pattern in home furniture in Albania responding to both the consumers’ needs as well as global trends.

This constitutes an under researched area in Albanian scholarship. First, a thorough and systematic study on the furniture design process and development in communism has not been conducted earlier. Second, a comparative framework of furniture design between two different main time period, i.e. communism and free market economy, has been missing in Albania. Third, studies on the ‘D-I-Y’ market in Albania has also been scarce. ‘D-I-Y’ market is recently established and currently attempting to catch-up with the regional and international advancements and respond to the Albanian customers’ needs, interests and demands.

The central aim of the study is to explore in what ways and to what extent the home furniture design and development process has been transformed from communism to post-communism and free market economy by exploring dynamics of the political and socio-economic context. The cutting point for the analysis here is the early 1990s that represent major social, political, cultural and economic changes in Albania towards democratization. The chronological analysis is divided into three main segments: from 1950s to 1990s; from 1990s to 2010s and after 2010s.

This doctoral study puts forward the hypothesis that: the impact of moving from mass production in a centralized economy to free mass customisation in market economy has not radically transformed the fundamental properties of home furniture but has affected the design, development, delivery and materiality of products.

This is done through a qualitative research approach, which is flexible, inductive and exploratory. A single case study is analysed and archival research, interviews and systematic observations are the key data collection methods. The main merit in this case is that it allows for an in-depth analysis of the case study and provide data, insights and

conclusions for a topic that has received almost no scientific attention before.

The added value of this doctoral study lies in the historical analysis of furniture design process and products and the interrelated factors such as socio-economy, political and cultural. In addition, this doctoral study has produced an original database of furniture design from 1945 to 1990 as well as an original database of D-I-Y furniture designs after the first decade of post-communism. These databases could be used by academic for further studies. Also they could be used by business to bring back original furniture designs in the market, but also by the government.

Key words: DIY, DIY product design, mass production, post-communism

SUMMARY IN ALBANIAN

Dinamikat e tregut Shqiptar në vend të transformimeve shumëdimensionale të ndjekura nga rënia e regjimit komunist dhe lëvizja drejt proceseve të hyrjes në Bashkimin Evropian si dhe demografikat e shoqërisë shqiptare si një e tërë kanë ndikuar ndjeshëm në mënyrat se si janë projektuar, zhvilluar dhe prodhuar produktet e mobiljeve. Ky studim është përqëndrar në shqyrtimin e zhvillimit të projektimit të produkteve mobilje shtëpie në Shqipëri dhe transformimin e tij nga koha e periudhës komuniste drejt asaj post-komuniste dhe ekonomisë së tregut të lirë. Më tej, studimi shqyrton projektimin e produkteve DIY (Bëje vetë) si një model emergjent të zhvillimit të mobiljeve shtëpiake në Shqipëri që u përgjigjet njëkohësisht nevojave të konsumatorëve dhe prirjeve globale.

Kjo temë është një hulumtim akademik nën programin e arsimit shqiptar. Së pari, nuk është kryer më parë asnjë studim i imtësishëm dhe sistematik i procesit të projektimit dhe zhvillimit të mobiljeve gjatë periudhës komuniste. Së dyti, mungon një kuadër krahasues i projektimit të mobiljeve gjatë dy periudhave të ndryshme; pra gjatë periudhës komuniste dhe asaj të ekonomisë së lirë. Së treti, studimet mbi treguin DIY (Bëje vetë) janë krejt sporadike. Tregu DIY (Bëje vetë) është zhvilluar gjatë dhjetë vjeçarit të fundit dhe aktualisht po përpiqet fort për të arritur përparimet rajonale dhe ndërkombëtare dhe për t'iu përgjigjur kështu kërkesave, interesave dhe nevojave të konsumatorëve shqiptarë.

Qëllimi kryesor i studimit është të shqyrtojë se në çfarë mënyre dhe deri në çfarë mase janë transformuar proceset e projektimit dhe zhvillimit të mobiljeve shtëpiake që nga koha komuniste deri në atë post-komuniste dhe ekonomisë së tregtisë së lirë duke analizuar dinamikat e kontekstit politik dhe social-ekonomik. Vija ndarëse për periudhat e analizuar është fillimi i viteve '90, periudhë e cila përfaqëson ndryshimet më të mëdha shoqërore, politike dhe ekonomike në Shqipëri në drejtim të demokratizimit. Analiza kronologjike ndahet në tre segmente kryesore: vitet 1950 – 1990, vitet 1990 – 2010 dhe pas vitit 2010.

Ky studim doktore nxjerr në pah hipotezat që ndikimi i zhvendosjes nga prodhimi masiv i një ekonomie të centralizuar drejt një përshtatjeje të lirë masive në ekonominë e tregut nuk ka çuar në transformim të elementeve themelore të mobiljeve shtëpiake por ka prekur aspektet e projektimit, zhvillimit, shpërndarjes dhe materialeve të këtyre produkteve.

Kjo është arritur nëpërmjet metodës së kërkimit cilësor, që është fleksibël, induktiv dhe shpjegues. Metodatat kyçe për marrjen e të dhënave janë studimi i rasteve, kërkimet

arkivore, intervistat dhe vëzhgimet sistematike. Merita kryesore e këtyre metodave është mundësia për të analizuar në thellësi rastin studimor dhe të dhënat, njohuritë dhe përfundimet e siguruara rreth një teme që nuk ka marrë pothuajse aspak vëmendje shkencore më parë.

Vlera e shtuar e kësaj teme doktorature qëndron në analizimin historik të produkteve dhe të proceve të projektimit të mobiljeve dhe faktorët e ndërlidhur social-ekonomik, politik dhe kulturor. Gjithashtu, ky studim doktorature ka prodhuar një bazë origjinale të dhënash për projektimin e mobiljeve nga viti 1945 deri në vitin 1990 si dhe një bazë origjinale të dhënash për projektimet e mobiljeve DIY (Bëje vetë) të periudhës pas dekadës së parë të periudhës post-komuniste. Këto baza të dhënash mund të përdoren nga akademikët për studime të mëtejshme. Gjithashtu, mund të përdoren edhe nga bizneset me optikën e kthimit të projekteve origjinale të mobiljeve në treg por edhe nga vetë qeveria.

Fjalë Kyç : DIY (Bëje vetë), projektim i produkteve DIY (Bëje vetë), prodhim masiv, post-komunizëm.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DIY	Do It Yourself
DIFM	Do It For Me
SPD	Sustainable Product Development
AL	Albania
AM	Albanian Market
PC	Post-communist
AQTN	Arkivi Qëndror Teknik i Ndërtimit/ Centre Technical Construction

Archive

AE	Albanian Enciclopedy /Enciklopedia Shqiptare
MC	Mass-customization
MP	Mass- production
CIAM	International Congresses of Modern Architecture
MDF	Medium Density Fibreboard

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CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

Chapter I is the introductory part of the study and it presents an overview of the entire study by setting the research background, explaining its rationale, theoretical and methodological approach as well as by specifying the research aims, questions and hypothesis. In addition, this chapter highlights the relevance of this study and the contribution in terms of scientific knowledge, but also practical recommendations for the business sector in industrial design centered in the ‘D-I-Y’ market. Finally, the chapter provides a roadmap of the entire study and how this thesis is organized.

1.1 Research background and rationale

The first motivation for this study is the relatively limited prior systematic research on this topic. The study aims to bring together Albanian furniture design during the communism era through a systematic review of archiving and document analysis, in-depth interviews and observations. Both the furniture design process and products and the interrelated dimensions such as house layout, socioeconomic and political contexts are drawn on to understand what led to certain types of product design during this period.

A second motivation are to gain insight into the DIY market and motivations towards DIY for home furniture and decorations (DIY Week, 2014). This leads to changes in the design of DIY products and services and thus a transformation of the product development process. There have been few studies that delve specifically into DIY product development, particularly in emerging¹ markets and from an academic social science perspective, DIY has received little attention (Watson, Shove, 2010). This is so despite the vast increase in homeware, renovations, and gardening and other DIY home-assembled products. In addition, the majority of studies undertaken have also been concerned with the intrinsic motivations of consumers and not necessarily with product development or the extrinsic effect that retailers advertently and inadvertently communicate to consumers of DIY products (Williams, 2004; Minter, 2005²).

¹ An emerging Market (EM) nation is a developing country whose income levels, GDP per capital, human development indices, market institutions, technological sophistication and production efficiencies have not reached developed country standards of our DIY analysis for

² Theories of ‘ordinary’ consumption, the significance of DIY analysis.

Third, an important step in the early stages of a design process is to reach a deeper understanding of both the intended users as individuals and the context in which the DIY products are intended to be used. The process of product design, development and production is intertwined with the human factors such as emotional and cognitive as well as with contextual factors such as social, cultural and economic in any given market.³This is also the starting point of the research presented in this thesis. Therefore, analysis of the design, practice, and usage of ‘DI-Y’ products for home furniture allows us to engage with significant, but relatively unexplored themes that are nonetheless important for theorizing consumption as well as theorizing product design and development.

Fourth, there is a personal and professional motivation related to the topic of this study and thesis. Before beginning the PhD, the researcher was employed as product development manager for the first DIY company in Albania (Megatek SA) since its establishment in 2009. The main responsibility of the researcher was working with the product development and purchasing from local and international suppliers of home furniture, decorations, home accessories and related products. This experience provided a first-hand insight into the challenges faced when designing for DIY, particularly in an emerging market as in the case of Albania and highlighted how little is known about the approach to design and how little research, if any at all, there is about the DIY market in Albania. This professional experience highlighted the lack of knowledge in particular in DIY product design for users and customers in Albania and how easy it was to find inappropriate solutions. This sparked a desire to undertake a research project to investigate this topic further.

1.2 Problem Statement and Research Objectives

The process of product design, development and production is intertwined with the human factors including emotional and cognitive faculties as well as with contextual factors such as social, cultural and economic in a given market. In this sense, the dynamics of the Albanian market following the collapse of the communist regime has been

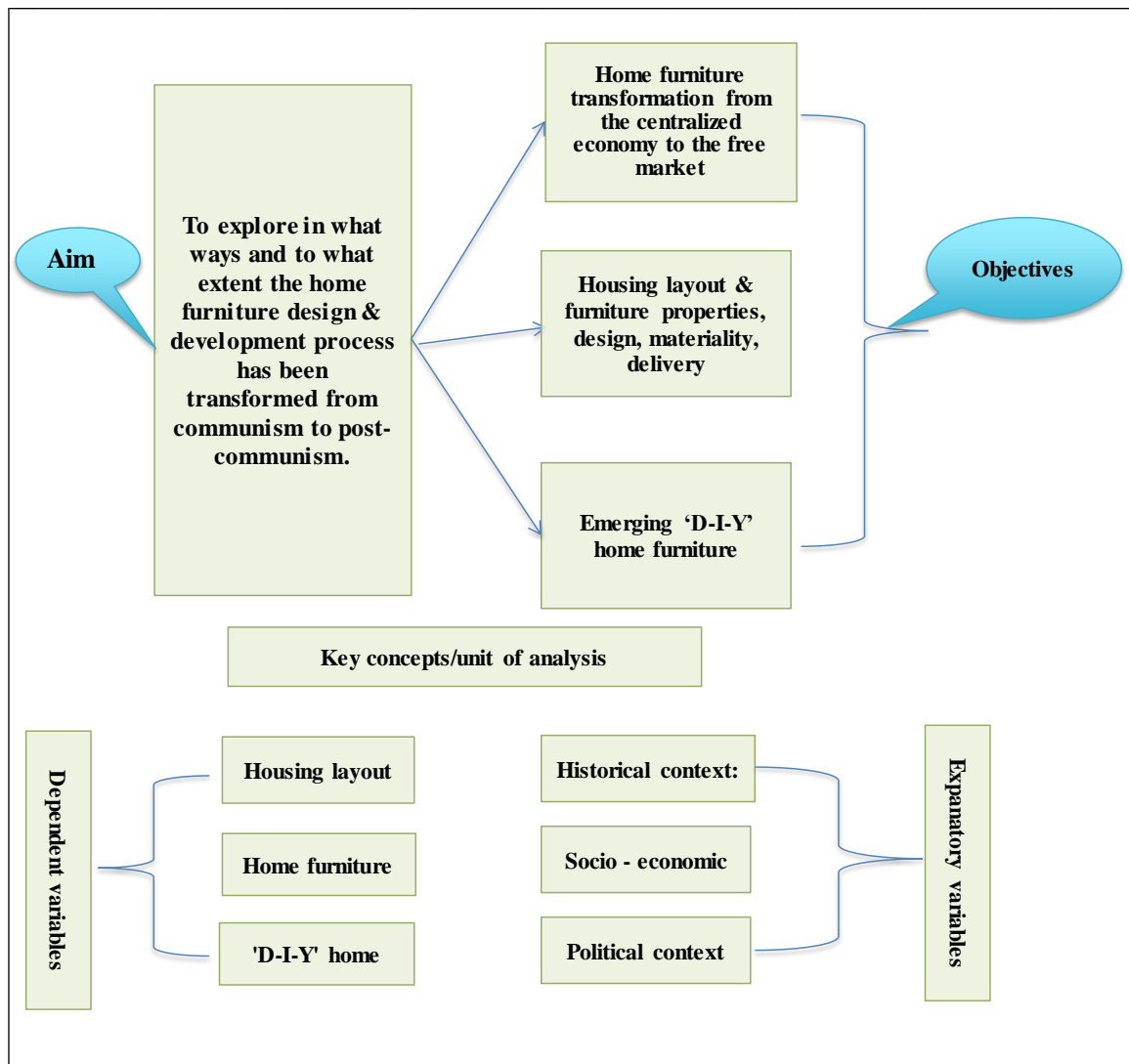
³ Human factors is the study of how humans behave physically and psychologically in relation to particular environments, products, or services. Two significance examples illustrate Human factors; the discipline whose goal is "designing for human use and optimizing working and living conditions" (Sanders & McCormick, 1987) and "the discipline that tries to optimize the relationship between technology and the human" (Kantowitz & Sorkin, 1983).

undergoing multifaceted transformations as it moves through the accession process into the European Union. Equally important to consider is the demographics of the Albanian society as a whole which deeply impact the ways in which products are designed, developed and produced. This study is interested in exploring the development of home furniture product design in Albania and its transformation from communism to a post-communist free market economy. Furthermore, the study considers 'Do-it-yourself' (DIY) product design as an emerging pattern in home furniture in Albania responding to both the consumers' needs as well as global trends.

This constitutes an under-researched area in Albanian scholarship. First, a thorough and systematic study on the furniture design process and development in communism has not been conducted earlier. Second, a comparative framework of furniture design between two different main time periods, i.e. communism and free market economy, has been missing in Albania. Third, studies on the DIY market in Albania has also been scarce. The DIY market has been established recently and is currently attempting to catch up with the regional and international advancements and respond to the Albanian customers' needs, interests and demands.

The central aim of the study is to explore in what ways and to what extent the home furniture design and development process has transformed from communism to a post-communist free market economy by exploring the dynamics of the political and socio-economic context. The concrete objectives of the study are: first, to analyze how the design of home furniture product design and development has changed from the centralized economy during the communist regime to the free market economy. The point of change for before and after communism in this analysis is the early 1990s when major social, political, cultural and economic changes hurtled Albania towards democratization. The chronological analysis is divided into three main segments: from the 1950s to the 1990s; from the 1990s to the 2010s and after the 2010s. The second objective is to trace the transformation of housing layout and home furniture products in terms of fundamental product properties such as functionality and expressiveness as well as design, development, materiality, and delivery for each of the above-mentioned time segments. The third specific objective is that of conducting a thorough analysis of the emergence of the DIY home furniture products in the Albanian market by zooming into the case study of Megatek SA. This is shown in Fig. 1.

Figure 1: Research Aims, objectives & key concepts



*Source: Author

As shown above, the explanatory concepts or variables relate to individual differences and context and more concretely to the historical development, socio-economic factors as well as political context. On the other hand, the units that are being explained or explored through this study are the housing or home layout; home furniture including product properties, functionality, design, development, materiality and delivery.

1.3 Research questions and hypothesis

To address the aim and objectives, the research project poses the following principal research question:

RQ1 - How has the furniture design process and development been transformed from communism to the post-communist era in Albania?

Consequently, sub-research questions are:

RQ1.1– In what ways and to what extent did the political and socio-economic context in communism impact furniture design and development?

RQ1.2– In what ways and to what extent does the political and socio-economic context in the post-communist era impact furniture design and development?

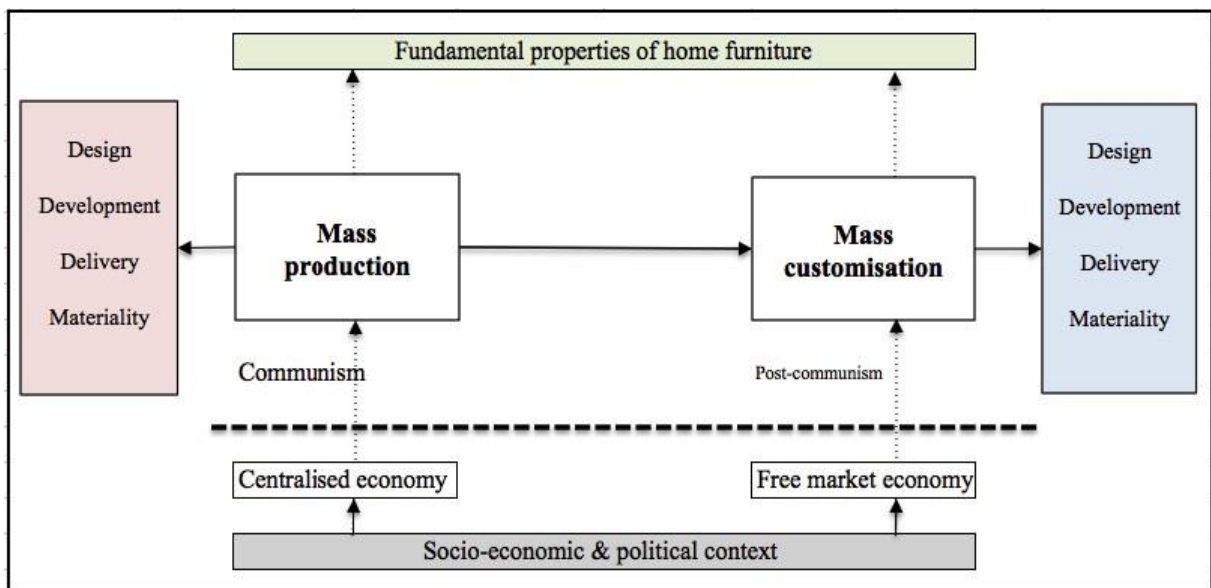
RQ1.3– Which are the key emerging characteristics of DIY furniture design and development in Albania?

This doctoral study poses the following central hypothesis:

H1 – “The impact of moving from mass production in a centralized economy to free mass customization in a market economy has not radically transformed the fundamental properties of home furniture but has affected the design, development, delivery and materiality of products.”

The main model of this thesis is presented in the figure below. Given that this is a qualitative research study, it is challenging to develop the hypothesis as a clear-cut correlation between two or more variables drawing from theory. This study adopts the inductive approach and thus it starts from the information and data and then constructs main findings, arguments or hypothesis as illustrated in the figure nr 2.

Figure 2 : Research hypothesis scheme



*Source: Author

1.4 Overview of conceptual framework

L. Moholy-Nagy⁴ (1947: p. 42), proclaim that design is a complex and intricate task. It is the integration of technological, social and economic requirements, biological necessities and the psychophysical effects of the materials, shape, colour, volume and space in relation to one-another. He points out that the word Design has different connotations. Later on, Heskett⁵ brought up that the word its self, Design, is complicated because it has many levels of meaning that bring a lot of confusion. Further confusion is caused by the wide spectrum of design practice and terminology (Heskett, 2005). Under the rubric of design, is often found a wide range of practices like: craft design, industrial art, commercial art, engineering design, graphic design, fashion design, interactive design and product design.

In general, when you ask people what a product design is, they picture in their mind products for the market, produced by a manufacturer and directed to a consumer. Since the Industrial Revolution, the dominant design paradigm has been one of design for the market (Papanek⁶, 1972). Bruno Munari⁷ (1966) outlined in his book “Design as Art” the role of designer in a mass-production market environment; the artists of today are busily looking for something that will once again attract the interest of people today, in a sense clamouring for their attention. But if the aim is to mass-produce objects for sale to a wide public at a low price than it becomes a problem of method and design (Munari, 1966: p. 13), transforming the traditional artist into the designer. The discussion of difference and the overlapping of these two terms could be made into an entire novel. This discussion is illustrated when we look at how historically Design /Art has been known as ‘applied art’ and ‘commercial art’ at different points in its history. In the published book in Switzerland,

⁴ László Moholy-Nagy a Hungarian painter and photographer and a professor in the Bauhaus school. He was highly influenced by constructivism and a strong advocate of the integration of technology and industry into the arts.

⁵ John Heskett ,a British Chair Professor of Design at the School of Design, Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Is the author of Industrial Design, (1980), widely used as a basic textbook on design courses in many countries and subsequently translated into several languages. His most recent books are Toothpicks and Logos: Design in Everyday Life, published by Oxford University Press in 2002, Design: A Very Short Introduction (2002); and Designed in Hong Kong (2004). A large part of his research is focused on business applications for design, with a particular interest in how design creates (and not just adds) economic value, with particular emphasis on industry in the Pearl River Delta of China, and the role of this in design policy in governments and corporations. <http://johnheskett.com/>

⁶ Victor J. Papanek (1923–1998), designer, teacher and author, was born in Vienna, Austria in 1923, Educated at Cooper Union and MIT, a student of Frank Lloyd Wright early in his career and he became a follower and ally of Buckminster Fuller who wrote the preface to the first English language edition of Papanek’s seminal publication Design for the Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change (1971). <http://papanek.org/> ⁷ Bruno Munari (1907-1998) was an Italian artist, designer, and inventor who contributed fundamentals to many fields of visual arts (painting, sculpture, film, industrial design, graphic design) in modernism, futurism, and concrete art, and in non-visual arts (literature, poetry) with his research on games, didactic method, movement, tactile learning, kinaesthetic learning, and creative.

Chick⁷ and Micklethwaite (2011) differentiated these two words. Art puts a primary emphasis on self-expression; it is a creative activity whose origin and motivation is personal to the individual. Design is inherently constrained by the demands of a client, a brief or a market. Design, therefore, represents a different type of creative activity to art.

It is possible to study design as a phenomenon from a variety of perspectives, using several different starting points and with regard to many different aspects. Many designers hold that it is imperative to consider people's needs during product development and those human-product relationships constitute one of the most important points of departure in all design work. Today, this view has become the starting point of all successful industrial design (Valtonen, 2007). In a more globalized world, the importance of being able to adapt products to specific user demands is likely to increase (Nord and Widmark, 2010). This will increase the influence of user-centered design. Although design is a dynamic, constantly transforming and debated concept, the stance adopted in this thesis follows that of Buchanan (2001): "Design is the human power of conceiving, planning, and making products that serve human beings in the accomplishment of their individual and collective purposes" (Buchanan, 2001: 9). In other words, design is understood as a powerful method able to influence and communicate rethinking and care for humans. Products are developed and manufactured by humans in order to be used by humans. Design processes (to do design) and their results (design solutions) may thus have an instructive role in society and contribute to experimental, cultural, ethical, social and environmental values which affect us all.

In order to better understand human-furniture relationships, i.e. how old people act on, are influenced by, and reflect on furniture, the concept of product experiences constituted a starting point. Verbeek (2005) states that the relationship between people and their world can be described in terms of experiences because they are the place in which these mutually constructed relationships exist (Verbeek, 2005:130). In this study, the term product experience is used to refer to all possible subjective experiences resulting from people's interaction with DIY products. Desmet and Hekkert (2007) divides human-product interaction into: (i) instrumental interaction, i.e. operational use of the product; (ii) non-instrumental interaction, i.e. perceiving sensory experiences that do not directly serve a function in operating the product; and (iii) non-physical interaction, i.e. fantasizing, remembering, or anticipating usage of the product. The purpose of utilizing the concept of

⁷ Anne Chick is director of the Sustainable Design Research Centre at Kingston University, UK. A director of the Sustainability in Practice Network within WestFocus (a consortium of seven universities).

product experiences is to place focus on how furniture can be significant at different levels and the role furniture plays in people's lives. Experiences are subjective and are constructed in interaction between many different personal, product-related and environment-related factors. A consequence of this is that situation, space and time affect the experience. The central process in experiencing is sense-making, which may take place both consciously and subconsciously.

In addition to design and product experience, the second major theoretical dimension relates to DIY product development. DIY includes various activities and has been principally associated with self-assembly products where a consumer assembles a product designed by a company (Khalid, 2000: p. 766). However, the concept has evolved to include more creative activities than self-assembly. A more practical and evidence-based definition of DIY comes from Mintel, the market research company, '*repairs or additions to the home or garden, including installing a new bathroom or kitchen, central heating, putting up shelves, fixing a fence, building a barbecue etc.*' (Mintel, 2010). Scholars (Atkinson, 2006; Green, 2000) argue that given the various types of activities included in DIY (handicrafts, home maintenance, interior decorating and design, garden, vehicle maintenance, home decorations, self-build homes etc.), it is difficult to set clear boundaries on what constitutes DIY and when it actually began. DIY comprises different types of creative design input and motivations including personal satisfaction, financial and style. For instance, in some cases DIY activities overlap or are embedded in contradictory elements such as needs vs. desire and creativity vs. assemblage (Atkinson, 2006: p. 3). DIY can simultaneously appear as leisure and work, as consumption of materials and tools and as production such as home decoration, gardening and furniture (Watson & Shove, 2005).

In today's competitive and largely saturated markets, customers demand high quality products, which also need to be extremely price sensitive. This growing demand for customized products is pushing firms to focus on producing products, which meet customer requirements and the firms' constraints. As such product design and development is paramount (Mintel, 2010). Understanding and fulfilling each individual customer's requirements has been recognized as a pressing challenge for companies across industries. Apart from offering market-focused products, which correspond to an average satisfaction of customer requirements, companies are pursuing a strategy of offering customer-focused products with a large degree of individuality. The stages of product development are summarized below.

Table 1 Stages of product development

Stage	Description
Concept Design	The concept stage is associated with ideas creation and developing an understanding of the problem. This involves quick rapid sketches to explore ideas which meet the criteria.
Concept Development	The second stage follows up on the ideas created in concept design and develops them through a series of activities that include modelling and development sketches to develop designs which meet the criteria.
Embodiment Design	The third stage aims to produce a concrete form of the developed idea. This may be a technical drawing or general arrangement drawing.
Detailed Design	The fourth stage is the production of highly detailed technical description of each component including materials, surfaces and finishes.

**Source: Donaldson, 2004*

Product design is crucial to DIY for these main reasons: first, contemporary DIY reflects aspects of the self-expression of customers and users; secondly, contemporary DIY represents a change from alienated finished products into artefacts which are created by the customer and which embed a personal association; third, contemporary DIY relates to leisure activities and the desire to be creative and cost-effective; fourth, design is important to help the user to assemble the product (Campbell, 2005). If contemporary DIY is to move towards accessibility and sustainability, then particular attention should be paid to the ways in which DIY products are designed. This requires a consideration of the social, cultural and economic contexts as well as cross-cultural flows in lieu of the international trade exchanges and globalization processes. The designs start with customer requirements, establishing engineering specifications, generating concepts, evaluating them, and selecting the best concept for the detailed design. Once product designs are completed for production, the environmental attributes of the products are largely determined.

One major section of the DIY market is that of home furniture, which has become very popular since the 1950s in the UK and the USA and with the mass media and digital technologies has also expanded worldwide, although in a variety of forms depending on the context (Williams, 2004). DIY for home furniture implies the accomplishment of home maintenance and improvement by householders without professional help. It is an

analytically complex phenomenon. It can simultaneously figure as leisure and work, and as consumption (of materials and tools) and production (of changes to the home). Mintel defined DIY as “repairs or additions to the home or garden, including installing a new bathroom or kitchen, central heating, putting up shelves, fixing a fence, building a barbecue etc.”, which was treated together with the separate category of ‘decorating’ - “internal and external painting, staining or wallpapering” (Mintel 2005).

While it is evident that the DIY market is growing worldwide and reaching saturation, in Albania it is still an emerging market, which was introduced for the first time with the company Megatek⁸ in 2009. On the other hand, crafting, handmade artwork, repairing furniture, and maintaining the family home has always been a part of DIY-ing in Albania. According to Campbell, craft consumption explicitly entails production of a product ‘made and designed by the same person’, involving the application of ‘skill, knowledge, judgement and passion’ (Campbell⁹ 2005: 23). Some things can give us value through their use as they have a purpose and fulfil our necessities. Other things provide us with opportunities to express ourselves and exercise our creative capacities and thus they offer satisfaction, but also develop our abilities. Through ‘Do-It-Yourself’ (‘DIY’) products and services, we have an opportunity to combine both values: functionality and usage as well as satisfaction and creativity.

1.5 Overview of methodology

This study uses a qualitative research approach, which is flexible and inductive and it uses a single case study with archival research, interviews and systematic observations. Given the relatively unexplored nature of the research topic of DIY product development in Albania, this study adopted an exploratory qualitative research strategy. In order to reach a deeper and more nuanced understanding, a combination of various data gathering methods have been applied: archival research; observations in exhibitions, fairs and factories; online and face to face interviews with product managers, sales and experts managers, owners and CEOs as well as document analysis and secondary resources for the case study of Megatek. In 2015 and 2016, 28 exhibitions and fairs were visited in 5

⁸ Megatek SA, home improvement and gardening retailer operating in Albania, providing self-service, sales assisted services. Its business centred on six main sectors: DIY, building, gardening, sanitary equipment, electrical and interior decoration.

⁹ Campbell, C. (2005). "The craft consumer: Culture, craft and consumption in a postmodern society." *Journal of Consumer Culture* 5(1): 23-42.

different countries and 9 different cities, or 14 exhibitions per year, a total of 87 companies were contacted and 11 interviews were conducted with additional notes from meetings - 58 in total. Furthermore, systematic and thorough archival research has been conducted for 6 months in Albania: state archives, museums, film repository and individual official records. Both printed and audio-visual materials have been studied. In addition, for the case study of Megatek, professional personal archive of the researcher has been used and 11 additional interviews in Albania with suppliers, clients and individuals have been conducted. The research is aware of ethical considerations and informed consent was asked and received from all participants in the study. The table below illustrates the relation between chapters, purpose, research questions and methods used.

Table 2: Overview of chapters, research questions and method

Chapter	Title	Research Question / Chapter purpose	Research phase / Method
I	Introduction	Introducing the entire thesis	
II	Theories and practices of product design	Conceptual and theoretical framework for the research question	Phase I - Desk Research and Literature Review; Consultations with supervisors, professors & peers
III	Methodology	Outline of methodology approach & methods	
IV	Reinventing furniture design in Albania	RQ1 - How has the furniture design process and development been transformed from communism to post-communist era in Albania?	Phase II–Archival research, Observation, Interviews
4.1	Furniture design in communism: Mass production political dogma	RQ1.1– In what ways and to what extent, did the political and socioeconomic context in communism impact furniture design and development?	Archival research, observations and in-depth face to face interviews
4.2	Furniture design in post-communist era: Mass-customization	RQ1.2– In what ways and to what extent, does the political and socioeconomic context in the post-communist era impact furniture design and development?	Archival research, observation at international exhibitions, online semi-structured interviews, in-depth interviews
4.3	From mass production to mass customization	Comparative framework of the data analysis for RQ1 and sub-questions 1.2 & 1.3	Comparative data analysis
V	Case study: Megatek SA	RQ1.3– Which are the key emerging characteristics of the DIY furniture design and development in Albania?	Online and face to face semi-structured interviews, personal experience records
VI	Conclusions	Conclusion of entire analysis, merits and limits, future research	Phase III–Comprehensive analysis

*Source: Author

This research is a qualitative research study which focused on a particular case

study in an attempt to analyze in depth the transformation of home furniture from communism to the post-communist era. This represents an underexplored research area and therefore the first difficulty was that of obtaining reliable and systematic data regarding home furniture prior to and after the 1990s. Field work was financially very expensive not only for international fairs, but also obtaining documents from Archives in Albania, where fees had to be paid for inspection of certain documents. Furthermore, the archival field visits were time-consuming due to bureaucratic procedures and waiting time to be able to get access. In other cases, personal connections had to be used to be able to obtain access to information. The second was the availability of previous studies and academic resources on the topic, which was scarce. Based on these two main constraints, the researcher decided to adopt a qualitative research approach that was flexible, inductive and exploratory. The main merit in this case is that it allows for an in-depth analysis of the case study and provide data, insights and conclusions for a topic that has received almost no scientific attention before.

1.6 Research significance and contributions

The first original contribution of this doctoral study is the thorough analysis of the furniture design process and products during the communist period in Albania. The findings are entirely based on collection of primary data through systemic review of archival and document analysis, in-depth interviews and observations. This doctoral study thus presents a comprehensive picture not only of furniture design process and products but also of interrelated dimensions such as house layout, socio-economic and political contexts that led to certain types of product design during this period.

The second original contribution of this doctoral study refers to the thorough analysis of the furniture design process and products during the post-communist era in Albania, i.e. free market economy and democratization period and a comprehensive review of the emerging patterns of DIY home furniture designs. As such, the findings of this study contribute to enriching the existing body of knowledge in Albania with systematic research on DIY product design.

The third original contribution of this doctoral study refers to the in-depth analysis of furniture design after the 2000's in Albania with a focus on the DIY market and design process. This is highly significant for the design industry at large in Albania which will incorporate the DIY product design at an academic and a practical level. This study builds

on a definition of DIY product design and development that considers not only the product form and properties, but extends the investigation of product design to the context of use. In addition, existing products are used and an in-depth real-life case study is analyzed. Responses in the context of use and choice are recorded and compared between the Albanian DIY market and the global trends.

The added value of this doctoral study lies in the historical analysis of the furniture design process and products and the interrelated socio-economic, political and cultural factors. In addition, this doctoral study has produced an original database of furniture design from 1945 to 1990 as well as an original database of DIY furniture designs after the first decade of the post-communist era. These databases could be used by academic for further studies. Also they could be used by business to bring back original furniture designs in the market, but also by the government.

Finally, considering that mass-production appears is beginning to be challenged by digital technologies, this study suggests the future researcher should focus on the role of digital technologies and economies on DIY product development. In addition, this doctoral study has produced an original database of furniture design from 1945 to 1990 as well as an original database of DIY furniture designs after the first decade of the post-communist era. These databases could be used by academics for further studies. They could also be used by businesses and even the government to bring back original furniture designs into the market.

The findings of the research could be suggestive for other emerging countries like Albania, especially those with a post-communist background.

1.7 Organization and structure of the thesis

In addition to this introductory chapter, this study is organized as follows: Chapter II defines the theories and practices of product design. Giving a synthetic view on the design journey, covering the homologue periods of Chapter III referring to Albanian development of design. Drawing the DIY design dimensions concluding this chapter. Focused on the theoretical background, this chapter serves to develop the conceptual framework of the study. It analyses relevant theories and concepts used in this thesis. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a general background to the research topic. Particular focus has been placed on product experience in addition to that of product development.

The chapter begins by establishing my perspective on the concept of design and then proceeds to product experiences, sense-making and the significance of furniture in homes. What is more, it also looks into the ways in which the DIY market and companies have developed in the world which sets the frame for the later analysis of the case of Albania.

Chapter III outlines the research methodology and provides justification for the methods, research strategy and design chosen. It also provides a rationale and explanation for data analysis and how conclusions are drawn. According to Robson (2011) and Saunders (2007) there are six main areas which need to be taken into account during the design of research, i.e. Paradigm, Strategy, Purpose, Type or Method, Data collection and Data analysis. This Chapter will investigate these areas and review current research methods available to conduct the study. It will conclude by outlining the most appropriate and trustworthy methods chosen for the study, providing an overview of the strategy adopted as well as an analysis of the merits and limitations of the research methodology and design. The specific objectives of the chapter are to: (i) identify a research paradigm; (ii) propose a research strategy, (iii) design the research methodology, and (iv) understand and assess methods of data analysis.

Chapter IV and V represent the findings and analysis chapters of the thesis. It starts by analyzing the typology of housing in Albania from a chronology perspective point of view. In addition to set this typology in historic context this study will also, explore variables for the particular type of housing in particulate time periods such as economic, social and cultural. A particular focus here are the concrete furniture designs and product development. The typology of the furniture designs according to each housing typology, identified above and relevant time frame are outlined. The purpose is to analyze the underlying factors behind this type of furniture design development and how this relates to life style. The final part of the chapter provides a comparative analysis between DIY market trends in Albania and worldwide in order to understand the future of the sector. Chapter V looks at the case study of Megatek and its DIY home furniture portfolio of products, how they have been developed, and influenced by globalizing trends and local contexts.

Chapter VI represents conclusions and recommendations that derive from the study followed by suggestions for future research and an analysis of the merits and limits of this study. A full list of resources and additional materials are presented in the Bibliography and Annexes.

CHAPTER II – THEORIES AND PRACTICES OF PRODUCT DESIGN

The main attention in this chapter is focused on the theoretical background which serves to develop the conceptual framework of the study. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a general background to the research topic. Firstly, it starts by analysing a politico-economic environment in which product design are developed from mass production to mass customization. Secondly, it analyses the design and the furniture design process from art crafting to nowadays. Thirdly, DIY, DIYers and DIY's design as a state of democratizing is explored. What is more, it also looks into the ways in which the DIY market and companies have developed in the world, which lays the framework for later analysis into the case of Albania.

2.1 A political economy of product design

According to the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences in Canada “Political Economy most commonly refers to interdisciplinary studies drawing upon economics, political science, law, history, sociology and other disciplines in explaining the crucial role of political factors in determining economic outcomes.” By a political economy of product design, this study implies the exploration of the role of socio-economic and political factors in home furniture product design. Namely, the dynamics of a centralized economy as opposed to the free market economy and their implications for the house layout and home furniture in communism and the post-communist era in Albania. In order to be able to explore these dynamics in the case of Albania, the study looks first into the theories on socio-economic and political impact on product design.

2.1.1 Centralised economy vs. free market

Centralised and free market economies occupy two extremes in the organization of economic activity. The primary differences lie in the division of labour or factors of production and the mechanisms that determine prices. The activity in a market economy is unplanned; it is not organized by any central authority but is determined by the supply and demand of goods and services. The United States, England, and Japan are all examples of

market economies, as are most developed, democratic nations. Alternatively, a centralised economy is organized by government officials who also own and direct the factors of production. China, North Korea, and the former Soviet Union are all examples of centralised economies. Albania belonged to the centralised economy group during the communist regime. The table below details the differences between the two systems.

Table 3: Centralised vs free market economy

Centralised economy – communist regimes	Free market economy – liberal democratic regimes
Governments own all of the factors of production such as land, capital, and resources	Private ownership of the means of production
Government determines when, where and how much is produced at any one time/how it is exchanged	Voluntary exchanges / contracts Supply and demand forces determine when, where and how much is produced at any one time
Government set prices	Market sets prices
Government totally controls the economic activity	Government ensures regulatory and legislative framework are in place and respected

**Source: Author based on literature review*

Three main sets of decisions need to be made by any economic system: what to produce, how to produce, and how to share out the product of the economy. These three basic questions related directly the product design and development process and in our case to home furniture products. As such in a centralised or planned economy it is the government or its central planning agencies that decide what to produce when it comes even to home furniture, how to produce it and the ways of sharing the products. By contrast, in a free market economy these decisions on product design and development are determined by buyers and sellers interacting with each other without government interference. In the findings chapter, the implications of such differences in home furniture product design will be analysed.

2.1.2 Mass production

Mass production refers to the application of the principles of specialization,

division of labour, and standardization of parts to the manufacture of goods. Such manufacturing processes attain high rates of output at low unit cost, with lower costs expected as volume rises. Mass production methods are based on two general principles: (i) the division and specialization of human labour and (ii) the use of tools, machinery, and other equipment, usually automated, in the production of standard, interchangeable parts and products. The use of modern methods of mass production has brought improvements in the cost, quality, quantity, and variety of goods available and an increase in general standard of living, albeit this is not universal.

Before the introduction of mass production techniques, goods were produced by highly skilled craftsmen who often prepared their basic raw materials, carried the product through each of the stages of manufacture, and ended with the finished product. Typically, the craftsman spent several years producing one piece. Mass production is a way of manufacturing things en masse (and for the masses) that takes the initiative for choosing products out of the hands of the consumer and puts it into the hands of the manufacturer. Be carried out, and the assemblage of large numbers of employees in great manufacturing plants have greatly diluted the identification of employees with their productive functions and with their employers.

Thus, mass production is a way of manufacturing things en masse and for the masses that takes the initiative for choosing products out of the hands of the consumer and puts it into the hands of the manufacturer. In communist system with a centralised economy as outlined above, mass production and its related decision-making process was placed in the hands of the government and its central planning agencies. This will be particularly analysed in the case of Albania using archival data from State Archives. In addition to *standardization* - the development and application of standards that permit large production runs of component parts that can be readily fitted to other parts without adjustment - as an embedded process of mass production, in centralised economy, *rationalisation* is another element.¹⁰

Other studies on furniture production in communism such as the case of Bulgaria¹² from 1949 to 1989 demonstrate that the development of furniture manufacturing followed the course of the general economic development in communism and featured all the characteristics typical of social industrialisation and centralised economy. The three main stages identified are: first, an administrative consolidation of manufacturers; second,

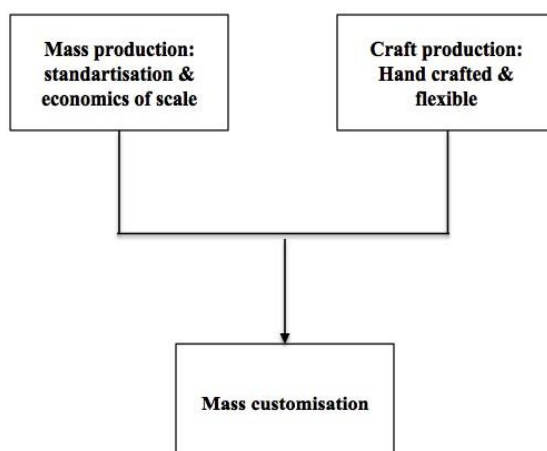
¹⁰ Smith, A. (2014) *The Oxford Handbook of History of Communism*. UK: Oxford University Press. ¹² NIBA Report on A Survey of the Furniture Manufacturing Industry in Bulgaria, 1997, available at http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/xdabp838b.pdf

expansion and technical restructuring of existing companies and creation of new companies under the umbrella of the state and with detailed planned product design and development, finally, decline of production. Despite the investments made and relative progress, some of the consequences of controlled mass production of furniture products in centralised economies in communism were: first, the accelerated uniform construction of administrative and apartment building that was imposed by fact urbanisation determined furniture manufacturing product structure. The furniture was characterized by uniformity and absence of modern designs. Second, there was limited trade balance between companies due to the centralised and planned economy. Third, furniture companies did not have proper management, but were limited to the fulfilment of government policy through central management institutions.

2.1.3 Mass customisation paradigm

After the collapse of communist regime and moving towards the accession process in the European Union, the dynamics of the Albanian market in lieu of the multifaceted transformations following the drastically changes on the demography of the Albanian society as a whole, shifted the mass production towards mass-customisation. ‘Mass-Customisation’ could be deliberate as a perfect harmonization between the costumers needs and wants and the manufactured product. Mass customisation came about as a result of market demand and competition as well as technological advancements. The figure below demonstrates the links between craft production, mass production and mass customisation.

Figure 3: Craft, mass production & customisation



**Source: Author based on literature review*

Products can be easily mass customized is debatable; where products consist of combinations of goods and services, organizations may find that one component or dimension of the product is more easily customized. The main issue discussed is supply chain change due to mass customisation of products. Therefore, mass customisation is a production process that combines elements of mass production with those of bespoke tailoring. Products are adapted to meet a customer's individual needs, so no two items are the same. The risks is that some companies might fail to shift their production satisfactorily from a system based on a series of tightly integrated processes, as demanded by mass production, to a system of loosely linked autonomous units that can be configured as and when the consumer wishes.¹¹

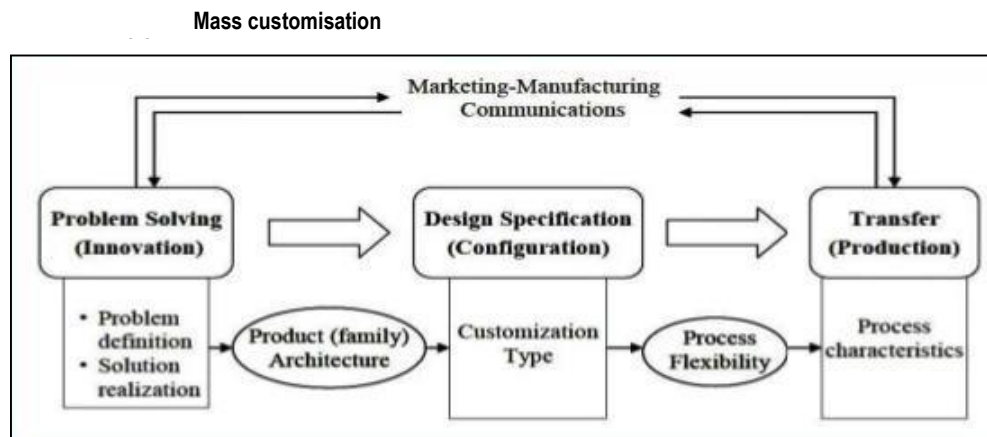
Mass customization is the process of delivering goods and services market-wide that are modified to satisfy a specific customer need.¹² Mass customization is a marketing and manufacturing technique that combines the flexibility and personalization of custom-made products with the low unit costs associated with mass production. Mass customization products may also be referred to as made to order or built to order. Mass customization allows a customer to customize certain features of a product while keeping costs closer to that of mass-produced products. In some cases, the components of the product are modular. This allows customers to combine different options to create a semi-custom final product. Many applications of mass customization include software-based product configurations that allow end users to add or change certain functions of a core product. Certain furniture companies offer mass customization by offering multiple options for various components or features. This can include different fabrics, furniture legs or sectional pieces that can be combined into a large number of configurations. Modular home builders also use mass-customization models by allowing customers to make changes to base home packages.

Pine (1992) outlined four types of mass customisation: first, collaborative customization refers to companies that work in partnership with individual customers to develop precise product offerings to suit each customer's needs. Second, adaptive customization includes companies producing standardized products that the end user can customize. Third, transparent customization refers to companies who provide unique products to individual customers without overtly stating the products are customized.

¹¹ "Mass customisation", The Economist, available at <http://www.economist.com/node/14299807>

¹² Pine, B. J. (1992) *Mass Customization: The New Frontier in Business Competition*. Cambridge: Harvard Business Review Press.

Fourth, cosmetic customization includes companies that produce standardized products but market the products in different ways to various customers. A general model of product customisation is illustrated below:



*Source: Springer 2002

Pine (1997)¹³ focused on the concept of creating a small number of interchangeable pieces that can be brought together in a large number of ways. This aims to produce a cost-efficient production model while allowing customers to pick and choose how the pieces went together. This allows customers to achieve a higher level of satisfaction from the product while simultaneously keeping costs lower for both the production company and the customer purchasing the final product. This speaks to the ways products are designed and developed for DIY. The differences between mass production and mass customisation which are relevant to the analysis conducted in this study are presented below:

¹³ Pine, B.J. II and Gilmore, J.H., "The Four Faces of Mass Customization", *Harvard Business Review*, January–February 1997. Available at <https://hbr.org/1997/01/the-four-faces-of-mass-customization>

Table 4: Mass production vs. Mass customisation

	Mass Production	Mass Customisation
Goal	Delivering goods and services at low prices; generally all can afford these goods	Delivering affordable goods and services with enough variety and customisation that nearly everyone finds exactly what they want
Economics	Economics of scale	Economics of scopes and customer integration
Focus	Efficiency through stability and control	Variety and customisation through flexibility and responsiveness
Product	Standardized products built to inventory	Standardized modules assembled based on consumer needs and preferences
Key features	stable demand; large homogeneous markets; low-cost; consistent quality, standardised good; long product development process; long product life cycles	fragmented demand; heterogeneous niches; low-cost, high - quality, customised goods; short product development cycles; short product life cycles
Organisation	Mechanistic and hierarchical, controlled and well planned	Organic, open ,flexible
Customer	Customers are passively involved in the value chain	Customers are actively integrated into the value chain

*Source: Author based on Pine, 1992; 1997, Springer 2002

In conclusion, mass customisation can be viewed as a collaborative effort between customers and manufacturers, who have different sets of priorities and a need to jointly search for solutions that best match customers' individual specific needs within the realms of a manufacturers' customisation capabilities. In today's landscape of many commercial sectors whether it be retail, service, technology, or manufacturing have started taking the likes and dislikes of the consumers very seriously, thus enriching mass customisation.¹⁴ In this light, the impact of technology advances and the Internet is highly relevant and future research should be dedicated to this in the case of Albania.

However, firms seeking to mass customize will face two challenges. First, the ability to design a system capable of collecting and processing highly varied and uncertain product information and, second, the ability to transform and assemble materials to produce a corresponding range of product variety.¹⁵ So firms need to consolidate their processes where by the customer creates the product design and defines the resulting bill of materials, which is the case with mass customization. Therefore, in the analysis of the Albanian case, the study looks into: the product volume/variety ratio, the complexity and

¹⁴ McCarthy, P. (2004) Special issue editorial: the what, why and how of mass customization, *Production Planning & Control*, 15:4, pp. 347-351.

¹⁵ Duray, R. (2002) Mass customization origins: mass or custom manufacturing?. *International Journal of Operations and Production Management*, 22 (3), pp. 314–329.

value of the product complexity, the point of customer involvement, the degree of customer involvement, the type of product modularity offered, the nature of the customised offering and the perceived value.

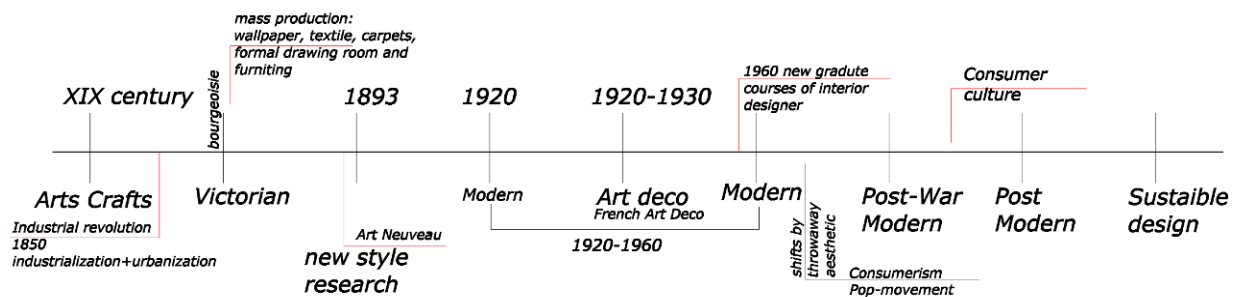
2.2 Product design journey

2.2.1 A history: From art crafting to modernisation

Mid eighteenth century, the emphasis on human values during the start of industrial revolution has been paramount. Two main moments, American Revolution and French Revolution, encourage the enthusiasm on human rights Declarations. This is the moment of changes, technological shift; from shop-manufactured and handicraft goods of feudalist society to modern machine production. It is the moment when individualistic nature of the crafts was superseded more by the social character of machine production in factories (M. Naggy 1946, pg. 14). Surfing from Art Crafting Era to Sustainable design, is a dynamic vast process of designing; interior designing, furniture designing, industrial designing, evolution of the professions; designers (interior, industrial), decorators.

As the timeline table 1.1 modestly steps into beginning of nineteenth century, Art Crafts is still shaking from the impact of the industrial development of mid eighteenth century the attempt towards mass production. The colonial, Word Wars, technology impact the way the design is adapt, reflected, distribute evolve.

Figure 3 Timeline of Interior Design through the century



Source* Author from the literature review

Arts and Crafts in XIX century: HONEST furniture DESIGN pays attention to the interiors of a building with the same care as the exterior. The influence of this movement persisted to the XX century design. In her book, “Interior design since 1900”, Massey draws the attention on how the industrial revolution dictated a new lifestyle for the

population as a whole. The industrialization force fronted the urbanization force generated a new economic and social structure; born a thriving middle class, rise of new bourgeoisie.

The key of Arts and Crafts Movements of 1880 was that a chair, should be manifestly hand-made with the joints visible. The more clearly expressed the construction the more honest the piece and the greater the contrast with the machine carving, highly polished veneers of mainstream taste. Interior designer had yet to emerge as a profession, the influence of British Arts and Crafts led both architects and planner in the Continents to decorate the interior with the same respect as traditionally they have served for the exterior.

The Beaux-Arts interior style called on behalf of the Ecole des Beaux Arts teaching. This Style, inspired by French classical Architecture before Arts and Crafts movement, was marked by lavish use of carving, gilding, rich marble and extravagant lighting offering an atmosphere of grandeur of multifunction interiors wide wiping stairs polychrome marbles, richly carving ornaments, excessive style, glittering effect emphasized through sheer quantity of candelabra.

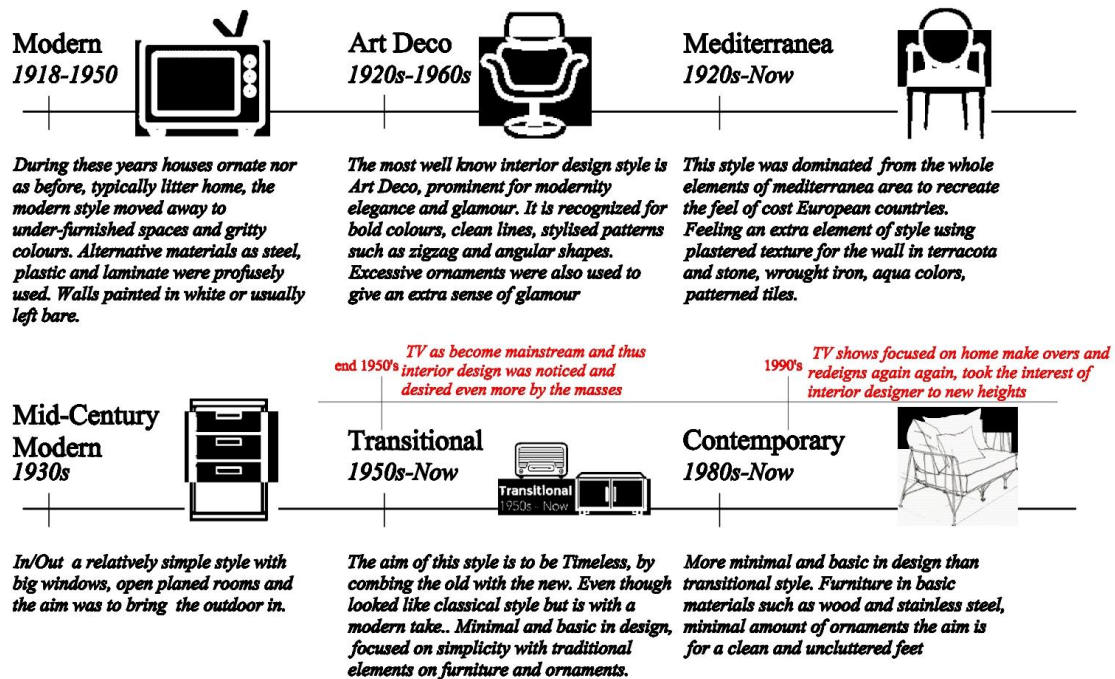
Modern Movement 1920-1960: architect and designers faced in the second decades of XX century the issue of mass-production. Seeking to find new methods, paths of designing functional interiors they created a new design ideology led by aesthetic purist and embellishment. These new aesthetic ways attempted to offer better living and conditions, successfully persisting to influence internationally. During these years' houses, the modern style moved away to under-furnished spaces and gritty colours, decorated not as before, shift to a little space home. Alternative materials as steel, plastic and laminate were profusely used. Walls painted in white or usually left bare.

French Art Deco (*haut-décor*), popular during the 1920's, was combined with the American Modern style to deeply influence interior design. From the working space to living spaces, the designer moved from anonymity to a profession at first dominated by woman called Interior Decoration (Massey, 2008).

Streamlining of American Modern style occurred during the 1930s to make furniture more suitable for transport and to complement changes in kitchen appliances and office equipment. The new style was dominated by the use of new materials such as plastic laminate, metallic finishes and K-Rock panelling. It emphasized the horizontal with elements such as metal bands running around the room contrasted with curves in other architectural elements such as the window frame. The furniture as well were curved, giving the interior the feeling of smoothness with shiny, metal frames. Clean surfaces were

emphasized with reflective materials, often mirrors or polished metal.

Figure 4 Timeline of interior design from Modern to contemporary



Source* Author from the literature review

Immigration also affected interior design as the Modern Movement spread easily after 1932 when a handful of immigrants from Europe moved to America. Mass production systems in America had already been successful in pioneering but had not had too much of an effect on interior design. Design in Europe, in contrast, was very inspired by American industrial development. In time, the European Modern Movement began to make its signature in America interior design.

Colonisation deeply impacted the socio-economic position as well as the inspiration of the French designers during the 1920s. They were not influenced solely by past French styles but globally by the luxurious Egyptian motifs of the Pharaoh's tomb to the futuristic art movements of Cubism, Fauvism, and Bauhaus. Design elements emphasised geometric forms from two-dimensional surfaces to three-dimensions inspired from the Renaissance.

Exhibitions are another key factor in the development and spread of Interior Design: it was the 1925 Exposition where the French Pavilions were the biggest and dominated French women's fashion. Germany claimed a late invitation, so didn't submit its pavilions, American pavilions declined to contribute, and British pavilions were too weak. Details like highly colourful background of fruits, birds, and flowers painted on

walls, ceilings. These figures were vast spread in metal furniture and fittings¹⁶. Because the magazines, stores in America were disseminated by French Style, The Museum of Art organized a huge gallery in New York inviting designers to display all the furniture bought at the Paris Exhibition. The Art Deco “phenomenon” expanded in other museums throughout America in three next years. America as a relatively young country, embraces the Novelty.

America has led the world in methods of mass production and marketing manufactured goods (Massey 2008, pg105). On the other hand, Art Deco was rich with geometric motifs and abstract patterns convenient for the machine production.

In the building industry, the Art Deco style arrived in America when sky scrapers had their booming, built at a great rate in the major cities of America. The demand on designing the foyer of these buildings raised, esteemed introduction of their exteriors was needed. The designers called, Art Deco sky scrapers entrance-lobbies

Lighting became important in itself during the developments of the inter-war¹⁷ Interior (Massey 2008, pg 115). Light sources were hidden, concealed through different architectural elements like, glass screen, colours, geometrical shapes. Soon, using the electricity in the interior design for domestic consumer goods, for the mass market became more popular because Electricity was cheap.

In the beginning of the XXth century, design of Modernism Style made in Europe spread faster. Pop Movement 1960, as well as consumerism with their doctrine throwaway aesthetic in Germany were the most well-known among activists, the Bauhaus¹⁸ with its three widely known and acknowledged as the world modernist architecture; W.Gropius, H. Meyer and L.M van der Rohe. Corresponding the same time in Italy, generally called as rationalists, the architects-designers of “Gruppo 7”¹⁹, adopted the modernist ideals such as simplicity of form, as well as the use of new materials and technology, and hoped that rationalism would become the official aesthetic of fascism (Woodham, 1997).

By the mid-1930s modernist buildings were being erected not only in Europe and

16 The luxurious Art Décor interior is described widely in the chapter four at A. Massey book “Interior design since 1900”. Exoticness, avant-garde, cubism and sumptuous materials comprised the Art Décor.

17 Interwar the time between two Wars 1918-1939

18 Walter Gropius was a German architect. After the war he opened a school of arts in Weimar called the Bauhaus. At this school, Gropius and his followers attempted to devise an entirely new architecture for the modern age. The liberation of architecture from a welter of ornament, the emphasis on its structural functions, and the concentration on concise and economical solutions, represent the purely material side of that formalizing process on which the practical value of the New Architecture depends. <http://www.wright.edu/~christopher.oldstone-moore/eliotgropius.pdf>

19 Key moments of Rationalism in Italy – the Gruppo 7 . During the 1920s, the concept of Italian Rationalism identified the assimilation of the Modern Movement (primarily from northern Europe) by different groups of Rationalist architects, and in particular the central figure of Giuseppe Terragni and his partner Pietro Lingeri, Gruppo 7.

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the US, but also in Japan, South America, and the Middle East (Wilk, 2006). Modernism was becoming truly a —International Style and its practitioners were making decisions and implementing them not just in their countries, but also on a global scale. In 1933, during the fourth congress of CIAM (International Congresses of Modern Architecture) assigned areas separated by —green belts, with large multi-unit apartment buildings, were to be the universal solution to the global housing problems (Wilk, 2006). The concept of modern urbanism CIAM and Athens Charter conclusion is the separation of functions in the name of human divided from the collective space machine, created by the elevation of the dwellings in height, with the system retaining columns and beam. The principles of architecture and modern urbanism guided the architecture European experience until the 1960s where in Albania was the beginning of the impact on the furniture manufacturing industry until the 1990s.

2.2.2 States of minimalism design

The change to minimalism was a tendency not exclusive to communist architecture and interiors but worldwide architecture as well and interior were becoming more basic and functional, due to what is now known as modernism—form follows function—the famous slogan of modernism. In this light, modernism can be defined as socially-minded in ideology and as minimalist and functionalist in form. The book *Modernism: Designing a New World* by Wilk (2016), describes the modernist theorists and practitioners aiming to make social change by creating universal, available and comprehensible products from products made from new materials and through the use of new technologies provided by the Industrial Revolution.

The more cultivated a people becomes, the more decoration disappears (Le Corbusier, 1987). Le Corbusier wrote for the *L'Esprit Nouveau*, advising the readers to “buy nothing but practical furniture” and “never decorative furniture.” (Cambridge: The MIT, 1987). Le Corbusier claimed in his book “*The Decorative Art of Today*” (1925) that along with architecture, interior design and furniture should follow the principles of rationalization, standardization and mass production.

The Communist Party declared to consider the main goal of the planning council, engineers, architects, the development of standardized projects and standardized designs as well as the implementation of those in their construction practices. The same resolution made it clear that an attractive appearance of buildings and structures should be achieved

not through the use of artificial and costly decorative embellishments but through the organic bonding of architectural forms for the purpose of buildings and structures.

In Italy, the architects-designers of Group 7, known as rationalists, adopted the modernist ideals, such as simplicity of form, as well as the use of new materials and technology, and hoped that rationalism would become the official aesthetic of fascism (Woodham, 1997). Similar construction practices were being implemented in France at the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s. The industrialization of construction was achieved with the use of prefabricated parts which promptly were seen in Russia

The change to minimalism was also evident in interiors around the world in the 1920s through the 1960s. The following words from the *Guide to Easier Living* (Wright & Wright, 1951) sound very familiar to those of communist architects and interior designers of the 1950s and 1960s:

“The home itself is smaller; rooms must serve more than one purpose.” Another example is post-WW II Italy where young designers began to offer furniture that could be mass-produced at a low cost and was compact and multi-functional to help solve the space deficit problem (Sparke, 1990).

The designer works in a vast sector of human activity: there is visual design, industrial design, graphic design and research design (Munari, B., 1966). Everything surrounding us and furnishing our daily life from house to the city in itself, is produced by industry, leading by consistency, coherence, and sustainability (green city, eco green different terminology last two decades). “The form of the an object turn out to be beautiful, because it is just right”, states Munari, B. (1966, pg35) “thanks to the logic of its construction and to the precision of the solutions found for its various components.” In this sense, the designer could be called a planner and an artist, enforcing the relation between art and public through the ways he found out to respond to the society in which he lives. Many disciplines have studied the impact of design as central feature of how we live, work, and play. One of the most eventual report of ASID (“American Society of Interior Design” Interior Design 2016/2017 Outlook and State of the Industry) summarizes: the factors that affect interior design evoke “big-bucket” words like “Economy,” “Environment,” “Time,” and “Generational Differences.”. In this report they state that; humanity’s understanding of our biology and psychology, and how those things interact with the physical world, is growing exponentially. New technologies, new software on designing, information flows speedily via the reach media and social media affects how the designers design or should design.

Interior decoration never enjoyed the status of architecture or even interior design, being regarded as a branch of fashion (Massey 2008.pg124). Until the Art Deco movement, Interior design esteemed and became its focus placing the architecture in the second position.

In *The Decorative Art of Today* Le Corbusier makes a crucial point about modern architecture that is often overlooked in more recent works: architecture's "objective, "he says "is to create relationship." It sets in motion the complementary play of art and the ordinary equipment that makes life's tasks easier; in so doing it acts as a field for meaningful human interaction with the world. The distinction that Le Corbusier makes here between art and equipment is an important one. Equipment, though it can appear beautiful because of its evident refinement, does not demand appreciation the way art does.²⁵ In a sense it attempts to accomplish a task precisely opposed to art: it insinuates itself unobtrusively into human activity. According to Le Corbusier, tools and other equipment act as extensions of our limbs and efface themselves, disappearing from view as they

To be understand mass production in Europe one needs to go back in time in in the Industrial movement corresponding Arts and Crafts movement in Interior design.

Interior design during the Arts and Crafts Movement had equally the treatment with the exterior in Europe and America. It was motivated by the purity of design, one of the well-presented inspiration was Japanese design: The simplicity and exoticism of blue and white porcelain, silks and lacquerwork appealed to British designers craving an alternative to mass produced revivalism and opulence²⁰ (Massey,2008 pg25).

Interior design services expanded the industrial economies of the West. As the middle-class in America and Europe grew in size and prosperity, they began to desire the domestic trappings of wealth to cement their new status. Large furniture firms began to branch out into general interior design and management, offering full house furnishings in a variety of styles. This business model flourished from the mid-century to 1914, when this role was increasingly usurped by independent, often amateur, designers. This paved the way for the emergence of the professional interior design in the mid-20th century. In the 1850s and 1860s, upholsterers began to expand their business transactions. They framed their business more broadly and in artistic terms and began to advertise their furnishings to the public. To meet the growing demand for contract interior work on projects such as

²⁰ Japanese designs had been seen by the British public at the 1862 International exhibition in London. Massey in interior design since 1900. The Arts and Crafts the honest design after 60 of nineteen century, lacked the moral from the Aesthetic Movement, which inspired principally from the Japanese design.

offices, hotels, and public buildings, these enterprises (furniture stores, dealers) became large and complex. In order to service the growing clients, they began to employ builders, joiners, plasterers, textile designers, artists, and furniture designers, as well as engineers and technicians to fulfil the job requirements. Firms began to publish and circulate catalogues with prints for different lavish styles to attract the attention of expanding middle classes in Europe and America.

Interior design during the Modern Movement led by aesthetic of functionalism to the interior.

America led in the history of interior design during and after the Second World War expressed on the adaption of the Modernism in every aspect of design. The feeling of hope and faith connoted by technological expertise and dynamism. Many Modern architect during this time has moved to America inspired from the post –war interiors interaction with nature through the feeling of openness built with the transparent structure made by plate glass and metal screening and steel framework. Post-War design is characterized by technical innovation which needed to be exploited, translated into the interior design; suspended ceilings became easily for the maintenance, the interior working space was opened, no walls, row of desks divided from screening improvising offices and corridor. The multi-storey building, with stainless steel extrusions, and glass curtain-walls was very expensive. Interiors were illuminated, screen ceilings suspended, air conditioning installed, and in the beginning wall to wall carpet to cut down the noise. The mass public needed to be educated with the new Modern style. The Crusade started with the opening of the Museum of Modern Art and after that many books and exhibitions followed.

When most people think of product design, they picture in their mind products for the market, produced by a manufacturer and directed to a consumer. Since the Industrial Revolution, the dominant design paradigm has been one of design for the market, and alternatives have received little attention. In 1972, Victor Papanek²¹, an industrial designer, published his book *Design for the Real World*, which was harshly criticized due to the famous declaration that “[t]here are professions more harmful than industrial design, but only a very few of them.”²²

The book, initially published in Swedish two years earlier, quickly gained

²¹ at the time, Dean of Design at the California Institute of the Arts,

²² Victor Papanek, *Design for the RealWorld; Human Ecology and SocialChange*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Academy Chicago, 1985), ix. We have used Papanek’s 1985 revised edition rather than the original one of 1972 because he made a number of changes from one edition to another, and we wanted to draw on his most current thinking. For a discussion of Papanek’s concept of socially responsible design, see Nigel Whiteley, *Design for Society* (London: Reaktion Books, 1993), 103–115

worldwide popularity with its call for a new social agenda for designers. Since *Design for the Real World* appeared, others have responded to Papanek's call and sought to develop programs of design for social need ranging from the needs of developing countries to the special needs of the aged, the poor, and the disabled. In this light is very important to emphasize one principal of interior design that it must be sensitive to the psychology of human needs and emotions.

Behrens, a German architect of the Modern Movement generation engaged the problems of mass production and forged new links between art and industry (Massey, 2008 pg64). He was member of the German organization Werkbund, meeting artist and manufacturers together. Its main aim was to increase the standard of the design for the industry. The designer involved with the Werkbund attempted to apply the new aesthetic of functionalism to the interior

(Massey, 2008 pg65). Industrial designers, in the first beginning of this profession, have come from different level of design skills as architecture, stage design, as well painting, professions that need imagination, fantasy, education on new aesthetics based upon mass-production potentialities, facilitated by the tradition of the handicrafts.

In the book "*Vision in Motion*" M.Naggy 1964 reads:

Is an old saying that "form follows function". This mean that the shape of an object is defined by the work it has to do... Nevertheless, the ingenuity of man has brought forth excellent results in every period of his history when he understood the scientific, technological aesthetic and other requirements. This mean that the statement, "form follow function", has to be supplemented; that is, form also follows-or at least is should follow-existing scientific technical and artistic development, including sociology and economy.

The state of minimalist design provides supplementary evidence that ideology affected design. The current study focuses on explaining that some of the reasons for transition to minimalism were practical (especially lack of space), economics and ideological motives, this thesis provides a valuable insight into an important aspect of different periods in Albania through history. It represents a different perspective to look at the Albanian government and its political agenda with regard to design, and provides a new vision of how government actions touched the Albanian people at the level of everyday life

2.2.3 Furniture and interior design

Analysis of the design, practice and usage of DIY products for home furniture allows us to engage with significant, but relatively unexplored themes that are nonetheless important for

Interior Design is a multi-faceted profession in which creative and technical solutions are applied within a structure to achieve a built interior environment.²³ These solutions are functional, enhance the quality of life and culture of the occupants, and are aesthetically attractive. There are two main factors needed to be fulfilled to create Design: first, to coordinate with the building shell, and second to admit the social context and physical location of the project. Important during this process is to encourage the principles of environmental sustainability and to strictly respect the requirements.

Design, if generally defined as a word, is a way of making sense of things people see, interact with, or perceive in their environment. Through design, professionals try to make environments better, safer, healthier, more effective, and understandable.²⁴ But if we involve the design inside the interior (an enclosed space or volume bordered by floor, ceiling, walls and openings for the door and window) become an interior design, an interior space, the volume of which needs to be designed by a professional design practitioner, qualified by means of education, experience, and examination, to protect and enhance the life, health, safety and welfare of the public (School of Applied Human Science, check footnote 19)

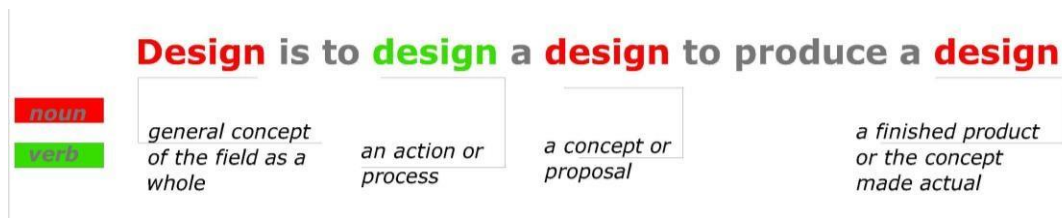
In his book “Vision in Motion”, L. Moholy-Nagy (1947,pg42), proclaims that design is a complex and intricate task. It is the integration of technological, social and economic requirements, biological necessities and the psychophysical effects of the materials, shape, colour, volume and space; thinking in relation. L. Moholy-Nagy (1947,pg42). He continued on to say that the word Design has different connotations, and later, Heskett brought up that the word its self, Design, is complicated because has many level of meaning that bring a lot of confusion.(“Design is to design a design to produce design “) There are words in English whose meaning shifts according to whom it is applied, who is using it, and in what context. The word “design”, as in the example below,

²³ School of Applied Human Science, *What is Interior Design?* University of NorthernLowa.

²⁴ The Goodheart-Willcox Co., Inc. *Introduction to Interior Design*, Unit 1pg6. It is a book publishing company, founded in 1921, based in United States.

is both a verb and a noun, and even as a noun the meaning depends on context that can change the meaning drastically.

John Heskett stated:



According to L. Moholy-Nagy, Design is the organization of materials and processes in the most productive, economic way, in a harmonious balance of all elements necessary for a certain function. Further confusion is caused by the wide spectrum of design practice and terminology. Consider, for example, the range of practice included under the rubric of design – to name just a few: craft design, industrial art, commercial art, engineering design, product design, graphic design, fashion design, and interactive design.

Goodheart-Willcox, a book publishing company, published a chapter on Interior design and Interior designers, defining that “Interior design involves a mixture of art, business, and psychology— sometimes with a different twist.” On one hand, Art expresses the personal emotions where interior design serves to capture and express someone else’s taste, needs and style. They add “Art claims its value in beauty and aesthetics alone, [while] interior design is an applied, practical, and functional art that addresses serious human problems.” Indeed different articles are concerned with the difficulties in measuring the impact and beauty of the artistic part of Interior design due to its nature as a creative idea which is an abstract product, instead of other professions that sell an obvious service.

The concern of Bruno Munari in his book *Design as Art*(1966) was :

The Culture today is becoming a mass affair, and the arts must step down from his pedestal and be prepared to make a sign for a butcher’s shop. The artist must cast of the last rags of romanticism and become active as a man among the men, well up in present day techniques, materials and working methods

He continued to explain the key responsibility of the interior design profession that friendly impact the public:

...The designer of today re-established the long-lost contact between the art and the public, between living people and art as living thing.... ...Anyone who uses a properly designed object feels the presence of an artist who has worked with him bettering the living

condition and encouraging him to develop his taste and sense of beauty.

In this light, Interior design definition according to Goodheart-Willcox is: “Interior design is the creation of interior environments that support the function, aesthetic, and cultures of those who inhabit, live, and thrive in interior spaces. It enhances the importance of a fundamental requirement to protect the health, safety, and well-being of people who work, live, study, or play in these interiors. The Bauhaus at Weimar, founded by Walter Gropius, the first school of design, made Design come into being. One prospectus of Bauhaus school reads:

“Our job is therefore to invent a new system of education that may lead-by way of a new kind of specialized teaching of science and technology- to a complete knowledge of human needs and universal awareness of them.”

Furniture design, development and production is intertwined with the human factors such as emotional and cognitive as well as with contextual factors such as social, cultural and economic in a particular market. In this light, the post-communist regime in Albania has impacted furniture design, development and production. In the book “Interior design since 1900” , Massey, A. 25-professor of Design and Culture and the world expert on the interdisciplinary history and contemporary significance of the Independent Group- has written about when, why and how many changes in tastes have come about. In her book she points out that the history of interior design is made of design (architecture, fine arts, design, decoration) and contextual factors (social and economic history). From the art crafting movement to post-industrial globalization, they all drew on changes in politics, the economy and social structure which dictated new lifestyles for the population as a whole (Massey,A. 2006). She follow that the Free Market Era after 1990 generated totally a new economic and social structure, the twin forces of Industrialization and urbanization dictated a new way of life , mirroring the same happening in Albania, as well. After the collapse of the communist regime and moving towards the accession process in the European Union, the dynamics of the Albanian market transformed furniture design widely into a confusion dominated by rapid cycles of fashion ability and redundancy (Heskett,J. 2002. Pg 1). The question raised for the modern world in his book John Heskett²⁶, is the manner in which

²⁵ Anne Massey is Professor of Design and Culture, Associate Dean of Research and Head of the Graduate School at LCC. studied the history of modern art and design at the University of Northumbria (then Newcastle Polytechnic) where she also completed her PhD on *The Independent Group: Towards a Redefinition*. She is the world expert on the interdisciplinary history and contemporary significance of the Independent Group. She has written eight single author books. (<http://www.arts.ac.uk>)

²⁶ Heskett, John 2002 *.Design a very short introduction*. Oxford University Press Inc.,New York A British writer and lecturer on the economic, political, cultural and human value of industrial design. Heskett was a professor at the Institute of Design, Illinois Institute of Technology (1989–2004) and school of design at

the design has changed its nature into something inconsequential and of no real substance in the basic questions of existence.

The changes in the history of art and design taking place in the 1970s had a number of catalysts. A more general sense of the growing importance of image (and design) in popular culture, the development of cheap colour printing (a few years before colour television became generally available), and the switch to photographically-based advertising, all forced a new attention on the visual realm and on design in particular. At the same time, understandings of visual culture acquired a new political charge. The catalytic event which propelled these concerns into public consciousness was John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* of 1972, first as a TV series, and second as a small book. Scholarship too began to reflect this interest.

It was different in America of the late 1930s, when the designers manifested more confidence in forging their own, independent style, focusing more professional attention on the overall look of the room. Most common style, mass introduced in Britain was the Art Deco and Modern three-piece collection, consisting of a two- or three-seater couch and 2 armchairs with thicker upholstery, giving the feeling of comfort and covered in leather. The floor was covered with moquette or velveteen rich with modern geometric shapes, and a cabinet was used for tea pots and other things.

2.2.4 Raising the profession of interior design

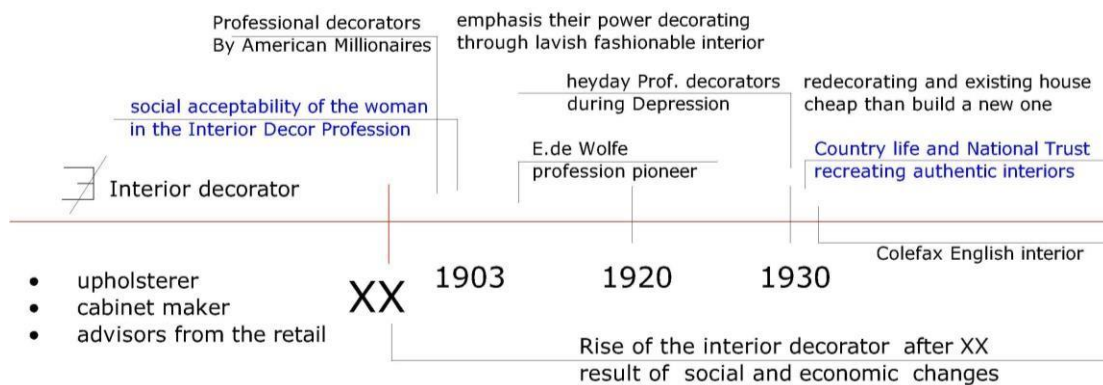
Le Corbusier repeats “[the] Place of architecture becomes much more complicated. ... The rejection of decoration in favour of the cultivated eye is explicitly understood as a ... whitewash disappears.”

The profession of interior decoration as stated in the book of Massey A.(2008), didn't exist before the twentieth century. Its statement starts from the tradition advisors of the interior; the upholsterer, retail advisors or cabinet makers, until to Interior Design as an acting dean of the latter (2011–12). Sparke, Penny. "John Heskett obituary". The guardian. Retrieved 29 February 2016.

³⁰ Dilnot, Clive (2014). "John Heskett (1937–2014)". *History Workshop Journal*. 78 (1): 309–313.

Multi-faceted profession in which creative and technical solutions are applied within a structure to achieve a built interior environment²⁷. Since the 1900s the decorators as a profession Massey A. defines as a responsible for selecting suitable textiles, floor and wall covering, furniture, lighting and an overall colour scheme for the rooms which may already contain some of these elements. As well she is very careful to clarify the position and the competences of the decorators VS architect, proclaiming that interior decorator is rarely responsible for the structural alteration which are the preserve of the architect (2008, pg 124). Suzan Globus²⁸ defined interior design as the “...creation of environments that sustain and support human beings to live to the highest of their capabilities.” She is describing a part of the design process: creativity, ability to design spaces well, and helping people to shift from their existing spaces to a better life.

Figure 5 Timeline of early years of Interior decoration



*Source Author from the literature review

The main reasons of encouraging decorator as a profession in America at its earlier days are: a) American Millionaires who wanted to emphasize their power through lavish, sumptuous interior and especially, the status expressed by using a professional adviser for the interior, b) during Depression years 1930s, due to the hard economic situation, reducing the cost through redecorating an existing house was cheaper than buying a new

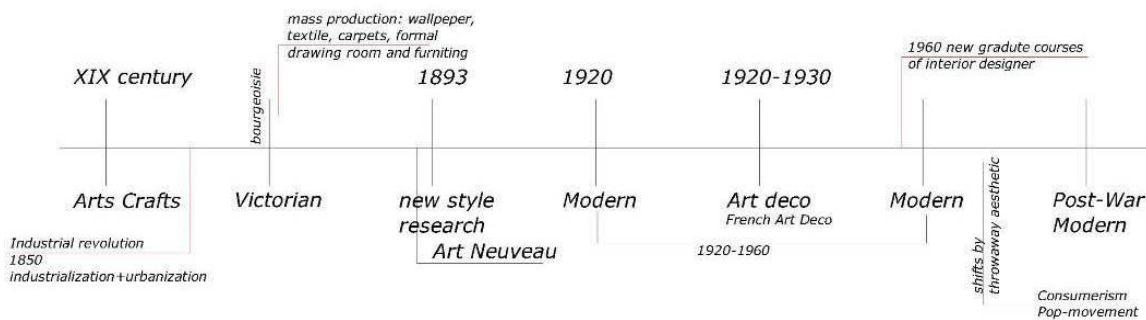
27 In this chapter the Interior Designer and the Interior Decorator are used both to enrich the definition of the profession of the Interior design which is the focus of it. As well in the academic this is a common field of studding as an Interior design and decoration”. Further understanding comes from the definitions from different dictionary they both are the profession of planning furnishing. Merriam-Webster (www.merriamwebster.com) defined Interior decorator: one that decorates; especially : one that designs or executes interiors and their furnishing, and interior designer one that design . the Learners dictionary make it more simple,(www.learnersdictionary.com) interior designer, a person whose job is to plan how the rooms of a building should be furnished and decorated interior designer : one who specializes in interior design , interior decorator, a person who decorates something especially as a job their example : She became an interior decorator. [=interior designer]. Referring to NCIDQ () interior designer multi-faceted profession in which creative and technical solutions are applied within a structure to achieve a built interior environment. But interior decorator the embellishment of interiors through the use of finishes and the selection and arrangement of fabrics and furnishings

28 Suzan Globus is the past president of the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID)

one, c) after the World War, as it became socially acceptable to for women to have a profession, they have been the main actresses in the profession of interior decoration, maybe due to the nature of the work itself. d) Late 1930s years, in Britain the National Trust triumphed, by an increase of value of British heritage during this periods consequently many interior decorators tried to maintain or recreated authentic interiors.

From the Arts and Crafts movement, the advisors of the interior style were architects, upholsterers or plasterers, but in the Industrial Revolution with the rise of new social class they were seeking to communicate their prosperity in appropriate visual culture. The bourgeoisie class conducted themselves within precise etiquette and codes of behaviour. During 1860-1870 were published advice and manuals for interior decoration and social intercourse²⁹, but it was still early to be characterise decorator as a profession.

Figure 6 Timeline of movement from Art Crafts to Post-War Movement



**Source Author from the literature review*

The role of designers in the earlier Modern Movement described by Massey, A. in her book “Interior designers since 1900” as the changer of the society for the better with more democratic and healthier type of design for all. Samples of designers in this period are Loos³⁰ (the Austrian architect) characterized from his style modest furniture comfortable instead of ostentatious interior and his timeless Loos Chair. The German Architect, Behrens was concerned of mass production, he forged new links between designers and industry, art and industry full used of new developed materials.

In America interior designers were not so strong until the immigrants from Europe arrived during the 1930s. European designers for many years, has been inspired by the American system of mass production, so arriving in America and combining with their

²⁹ Mr Beeton “Book of household Management” in 1861 and 10 years later Mrs Duffey “What a woman should know”

³⁰ Is mention in this movement because Loos’s writing and interior design inspired the generation of architects that went on to create the Modern Movement (Massey, 2008.pg63)

skills has increased the effect of designers in the interiors. Due to population movement, building of skyscrapers, has become very popular since the last years of nineteenth century. Le Corbusier showed in the Exposition of 1925 that Modern Movement architect design interiors in the same language, whether private or public, opposed Art Deco designers who regard individuality and lavish decorative of interior design.

Designers strong tool has been; media, magazines, books, exhibitions, TV shows and later exchanging lectures. International exhibitions make the strong impact of the design and the role of designer. At the 1925 Exposition, French woman's fashion became popular, the same event were the Art Deco style emerged even though sometimes they incorporate modern materials and furniture into their designs. From the Victorian middle class of the late nineteenth century, a manual has been written by two ladies³¹, giving advice for interior decoration, and Ruskin who influences taste in interior through his writing on art in *The Times* and through his books (Massey 2008, pg10). Evidences of the increasing impact that tools like books, lecture tours, and periodical magazines flying from Britain to America during the late 1890s import the design overseas. The strength of the media has been famous for the impact in the society in itself. For instance, the *Outlook* magazine in the mid-1809s published an article entitled "Interior decoration as a Profession for Women" which marked the beginning of social acceptability for women in such professions.

Le Corbusier published in *L'Esprit Nouveau*, his aesthetic theories and the 1927 Exhibition met international designers who shared the same aesthetic of Modern Movement design. Designer's skills were displayed in a number of rooms from different pavilions. The vast path of French style towards America included magazines, museums, stores and tour exhibitions. American designers led mixing the methods of marketing manufacturing and mass produced goods with motifs and patterns of Art Deco. As a result, American manufactures found themselves compelled to stimulate new markets for their products. Design grew in importance as it was recognized as a marketing tool (Massey 2008, pg109). In this moment individual designers have been the key actor of the manufactures, raised their status especially when the goods sold well. American Modern style or Streamlining, found widely spread the application as interiors of the media Hall. The Hollywood films and the Modern style as a whole inspired a generation of British architect-designers to dispense with period detailing like picture-rails, cornices and dados (Massey 2008, pg 115).

³¹ Beeton and Duffery advising books in interior design and etiquette of managing and organizing the house.

Although the influence of European Art Deco and Modern designers pervaded the American designers, still they were searching for distinctive, American designs. In his book *New dimension*, Paul T. Frank proclaimed that American architects had invented and developed independently of Europe so American designers can believe in “Sky scrapers Furniture” design.

According to L. Moholy-Nagy in his book *Vision in Motion* (1947): designing is a complex and intricate task, and is not a profession but an attitude³² and a profession paid for by the clients. But going deeper I needed to search in the Oxford Dictionary a full definition of the word ‘attitude’ which turns out to be the way you think and feel about someone or something and is an accumulation of values and credence gathered on a subject, that causes an individual to think and feel and react in a certain way. In this light, the designers as attitude, can choose what kind of designers they wish to be. But as the story showed, this concept raised many polemics throughout the 20th century between design thinkers, debates that are still open and have not been concluded.

Moholy-Nagy, L. in his book expresses that the design and the profession of the designer has to be transformed from the notion of specialist function into a generally valid attitude of resourcefulness and inventiveness which allows projects to be seen not in isolation but in the relationship with the need of the individual and the community (1947, pg 42).

In America, Candace Wheeler was one of the first woman interior designers and helped encourage a new style of American design. She was instrumental in the development of art courses for women in a number of major American cities and was considered a national authority on home design. An important influence on the new profession was “The Decoration of Houses”, a manual of interior design written by Edith Wharton with architect Ogden Codman in 1897 in America. In the book, the authors denounced Victorian-style interior design especially those rooms that were decorated with heavy window curtains, Victorian bric-a-brac and overstuffed furniture. They argued that such rooms emphasized upholstery at the expense of proper space planning and architectural design and were, therefore, uncomfortable and rarely used. The book is considered a seminal work and its success led to the emergence of professional decorators working in the manner advocated by its authors, most notably Elsie de Wolfe.

If the role of interior decorator moved from the advisor to a profession through the last century, women, due to the nature of the work, have excelled. The rise of interior

³² Moholy-Nagy, L. (1947), *Vision in Motion*, Chicago, USA

decorator during the twentieth century was the result of changed social and economic circumstances (Massey 2008 pg 123). Two historic moments encouraged the role of women in this profession's early days: firstly, the first World War as the interior decoration emerged and secondly, the inspiring movement in America for women economic independence from the husband or father. In this light a new profession for woman was acceptable. Since years 1900s this role has change little according to Massey (2008,pg 124). It was a tough road for the woman in this profession, but as well for the profession of interior decoration in itself felt the lack of seriousness in the early beginning, it could be explained by the woman's dominance in the early days of the profession. This could be the same reason why the woman's role in the profession started in America especially after the Suffragette movement changed the tradition for woman who were formerly expected to stay home and manage the house and the servants to a place where the profession of interior designer accepted women.

A pioneer of the interior decoration's profession is Elsie De Wolfe. She was one of the first female interior designers. She contributed to the trend during the early 1910s, helped by her book "The House in Good taste". Her designs impressed the high society, artistic visitors by the transformation of the interior from Victoria's features, called a mediocre interior, to an interior with light and fresh colours, pale grey woodwork, and delicate Chinoiserie furnishings, as opposed to the Victorian preference for heavy, red drapes and upholstery, dark wood and intensely patterned wallpapers. She established the standard for the other interior decorators being commissioned and crystalizing her decoration style of the interior as the "Old French" standard, where the rooms should all have the same refined look, with the walls painted in pale tones, a tiled floor, and slender and light furniture.

2.3 DIY: Democratisation of design

2.3.1 An historical perspective on DIY

Do-it-yourself (DIY) includes various activities and has been principally associated with self-assembly products where a consumer assembles a product designed by a company (Khalid, 2000: p. 766). However, the concept has evolved to include more

creative activities than self-assembly. A more practical and evidence-based definition of DIY comes from Mintel, the market research company, who include in DIY ‘repairs or additions to the home or garden, including installing a new bathroom or kitchen, central heating, putting up shelves, fixing a fence, building a barbecue etc.’ (Mintel, 2010). Scholars (Atkinson, 2006; Green, 2000) argue that given the various types of activities included in DIY (handicrafts, home maintenance, interior decorating and design, garden, vehicle maintenance, home decorations, self-build homes etc.), it is difficult to set clear boundaries on what constitutes DIY and even on when it in fact began. DIY comprises different types of creative design input and motivations including personal satisfaction, financial considerations and style. For instance, in some cases DIY activities overlap or are embedded with contradictory elements such as needs vs. desire and creativity vs. assemblage (Atkinson, 2006: p.3). DIY can simultaneously appear as leisure and work, as consumption of materials and tools and as production such as home decoration, gardening and furniture (Watson & Shove, 2005).

Building innovative alternative processes of adult learning, knowledge construction, and knowledge sharing are the activities of the members of “Do-It-Yourself” (DIY) networks, according to Hemphill D. ,Leskowicz Sh. ,(2012) They live DIY lives, spending much of their time recycling, repairing, gardening, sewing, building, making music, and preserving their own food as they simplify their lifestyles to create alternatives to mainstream consumerism. In the practice of learning, according to Lave (1996), Crafting identities in practice becomes the fundamental project subjects engage in. Crafting identities is a social process, and becoming more knowledgeably skilled is an aspect of participation in social practice. The DIY-ers are committed to producing goods and services themselves even though this means spending more time on food production, clothes manufacturing, and home maintenance.

2.3.2 The Importance of DIY and DIYers

The global spread of industrialization is mainly done through the establishment of multinational corporations in developing countries. Decreasing distance between countries due to this globalization has contributed to changes in the industrial sector and in the global division of labor. This has led to a global shift, where it is easier and more economical to have manufacturing, management and sales in different countries.

Multinational corporations constantly expand their activities in countries further away, employ more and more people and have a constant increase in turnover. Countries with low cost of labor and natural resources often become the subject of the expansion. There is generally much at stake during any expansion of a network alliance. Companies face difficult decisions that will affect future outcomes, where mistakes can be devastating for potential profits. Global collaboration between companies broadens the opportunities for development, but also includes additional factors to consider.

The DIY stores and the suppliers interact between different countries and in local markets where they exchange their experience, thus strengthening the global standard, talking the same language and walking together towards globalization.

IKEA is sourcing other countries close to it. To be of interest to IKEA, the country must have valuable resources to provide a high quality of raw materials, a low cost of labor, educated workers, be open-minded toward new technologies, and hold a strategic position geographically. On the other hand, the countries or industrial markets that IKEA is sourcing will receive in return contributions in knowledge, new investors, technology and funding that enable the economy of that country to grow.

Product design is crucial to DIY for these main reasons: first, contemporary DIY reflects aspects of the self-expression of customers and users; secondly, contemporary DIY represents a movement away from alienated finished products towards artefacts which are created by the customer and which embed a personal association; third, contemporary DIY relates to leisure activities and the desire to be creative and cost-effective; fourth, design is important on a practical level in helping the user to assemble the product (Campbell, 2005). If contemporary DIY is to move towards accessibility and sustainability, then particular attention should be paid to the ways in which DIY products are designed. This requires a consideration of the social, cultural and economic contexts as well as cross-cultural flows in addition of the international trade exchanges and globalisation processes.

The design starts with the customer requirements, establishing engineering specifications, generating concepts, evaluating them and selecting the best concept for the detailed design. Once product designs are completed for production, the environmental impact of the products are largely determined. The functional requirement is derived from the customers' needs, reflecting the product's functional purpose and the environmental requirement reflects society's need for protecting natural resources. The environment and the economic requirement ensures the company's basic business goals.

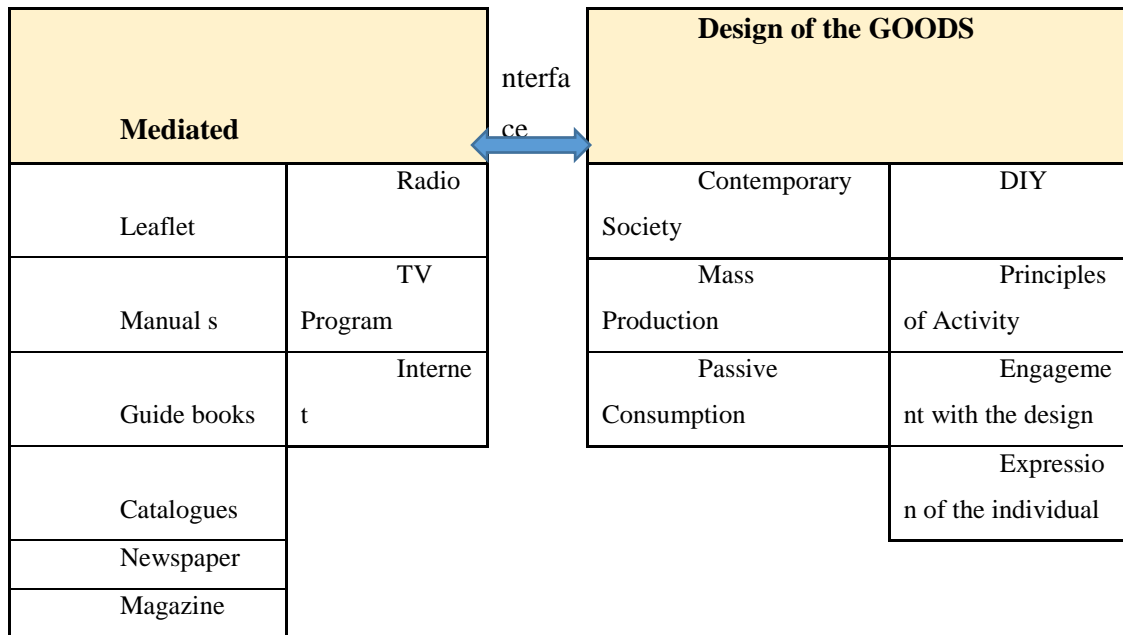
DIY is a complex business phenomenon and product design is of paramount importance to it. DIY can simultaneously appear as leisure and as work, as consumption of materials and tools and as production such as home decoration and furniture (Watson & Shove, 2005). Whereas there are some highly relevant studies regarding the technology and practice of DIY in developed markets (Gebler, 1997; Watson & Shove, 2005), DIY product design is a relatively unexplored research theme, but which constitutes a crucial dimension of the theory and practice of DIY. DIY products are those in which customers, i.e. users, can be directly involved in designing, producing, maintaining and recycling in a safe manner and with lower costs, effecting improvements in the quality of life of the user (Campbell, 2005: 26). DIY has been referred to as ‘craft consumption’ or ‘craft consumer’ which entails production of a product designed and created by the customer/user (Campbell, 2005: 23). The term ‘craft consumption’ for DIY implies the requirement for the application of competencies and passion in order to creatively transform raw materials and components into a finished product (Campbell, 2005; Watson and Shove, 2005). Watson and Shove (2005) argue that DIY has moved from a largely unwanted responsibility to a desirable pastime for men and women, enabling a release from paid work through participating in a part-time craft activity.

The design of goods is part of an important cycle consisting of three main steps including product design, production and consumption. On the contrary, ‘Do It Yourself’ (DIY) implies what Atkinson (2006: p. 1) refers to as ‘a more democratic design process of self-driven, self-directed amateur design and production activity’, performed by the end user or the consumer of goods. In contemporary society, the design of DIY goods uses principles of creativity, engagement with the design process and expression of individuality. The interface between design and DIY has been mediated by media such as website, leaflets, manuals, guide books, catalogues, newspaper and magazines, radio and TV programmes, which have led to the vast proliferation of ‘DIY’.

The Internet is a successful tool that helps information (trends, design, news etc) to be spread easily. Anyone can use it and everything is transparent. You can read about what interests you and get all the tools to do it online. The Internet was supposed to be this big gateway of information where you can learn anything, but it’s inaccessible to a lot of people (Gordon,). The advent of the new mobile technologies and the internet, which are making product and price information ever more accessible, drive the retails towards a rapid transformation. In parallel, middle classes rapidly expanding evolving in .

Before the Internet, there was word-of-mouth.

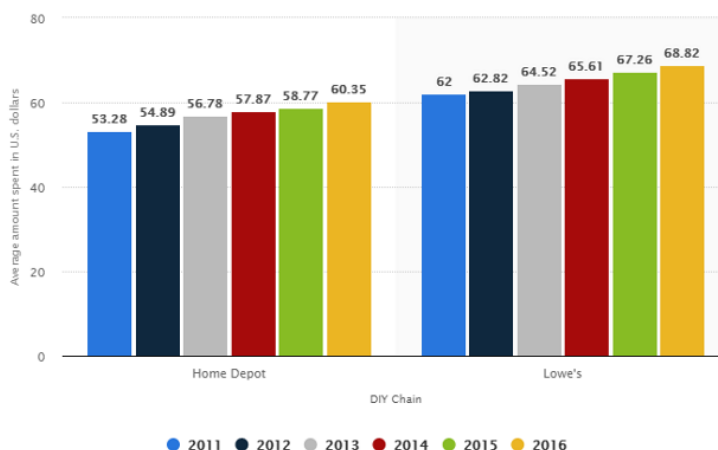
Figure 7: Design of the goods are interfaced with media



*Source Author from the literature review

According to the *Statistic Portal*, Statista³³, in recent years, due to the economic crisis, the DIY market has seen growth as consumers under pressure try to carry out home improvements themselves rather than paying for professional home improvement help. The data reviewed from this portal are showing that the average amount spent by consumers through the years has been increased; two main retail players in US, Home Depot and Lowe, the first one was about 53.28 U.S. dollars reached 60.35 in 2016 and better data is Lowe's from 2011 was 62 U. dollars to 68.82 US dollar.

Table 2 the average amount spent by consumers at the Home Depot and Lowe's from 2011 to 2016

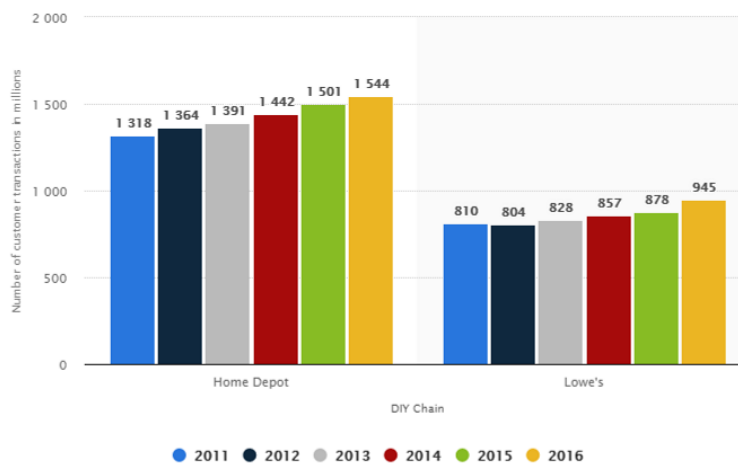


*Source *Statistic Portal 2017*

³³ Statista is one of the leading statistics companies on the internet. With a team of over 450 statisticians, database experts, analysts, and editors, Statista provides users with an innovative and intuitive tool for researching quantitative data, statistics and related information. The product is aimed at business clients and academics of any size. Statistics and Studies from more than 18,000 Source.

But still Home Depot, is facing more customer transactions one of the reasons is because it has just, in U.S. 1,977 stores compared to Lowe's 1,805 stores. Second, because Home depot is typically more well-known. From the statistic depict from the same portal, the number of customer transactions at the Home Depot are more than Lowe's worldwide from 2011 to 2016. From 2011 Home Depot costumer transactions are 1,318 billion U.S dollar to 1,544 billion U.S dollar. Indeed for the Lowe is still increasing but lower comparing with home depot, from 810 million in 2011 to 945 million in 2016.

Table 3 Number of customer transactions 2011 2016 Home Depot,Lowe



**Source Statistic Portal 2017*

Home depot portfolio reaches forty thousand different products, it is a major customer of certain big firms. The retailer's purchases have a significant bearing on the financial performance of these suppliers. It is sourced nearly 130 suppliers, produce goods include both proprietary brands and some that have been externally sourced. The impact of its purchasing, on the suppliers turnover is significant bearing on their financial performance.

IKEA's worldwide business relationship links the company to other external units since they are physically present in different regions. These relationships are important since they function as bridges to overcome obstacles of space, culture and competence. The obstacles are not to be eliminated completely since they also provide variation in terms of different influences. Cross border business relationships also have disadvantages because they can create conflicts in resource connections. For example, IKEA does not utilize two suppliers for the same product in the same geographic region since they do not want them to be competitors. Competition between suppliers can limit their ability to scale

their production since they reach for the same local market (Baraldi, 2006).

In the other hand, competitiveness is embraced from retailers, instead of running away, by giving the customer more control, engagement, and convenience in their shopping experience. They are doing this by developing new innovations in the customer decision-making journey, because DIY products demands a level of understanding, how it is used and whether the customer has the skills to properly handle it.

2.3.3 DIY designs

The DIY product design does not fall within the usual path of product design; rather it is very much linked to the individual in whom are vested simultaneously the three functions of design, production and consumption. This also entails transformations in the relation between technology and user competence as the former has become more accessible and adaptive to the amateur user. In this light, DIY depends on the effective interrelation between materials, tools and the skills of the user.

For instance, some decades ago, painting or plumbing were conducted by professionals, but nowadays DIYers can perform these tasks with the facilitation of tools and materials easy to use by unskilled amateurs. As Watson and Shove (2008: p. 12) point out: ‘this can be seen not simply as de-skilling, but as a redistribution of competence enabling a wider range of people to paint a door’. For the realization of such DIY practical tasks, intermediaries are also needed such as manuals and instructions sheets. In this way, DIYers are able to build their confidence and competence in order to take on new tasks. However, this is also much linked with the social, cultural and economic context as argued above. For instance, IKEA found it necessary to adapt the concept of DIY assembly to the features of the Chinese market. Due to the cheap labor in China, the DIY notion has not taken hold and thus IKEA reports that Chinese customers use its assembly services more than customers in other countries (Chu, et.al., 2013: p. 9). This seems to show a tendency to move more towards a ‘Do-It-For-Me’ rather than a ‘Do-It-Yourself’ notion, which needs to be further explored.

Research on the relationship between society and technology have shown how products or artefacts configure their users to a point where it is possible to consider objects and users as hybrid with no clear boundaries (Watson & Shove, 2008). While products per

se may lead to the discovery of unpredicted modes of uses, the users themselves are made by the things they use. This has given rise to notions such as ‘designing the user experience’ (Ingram, 1981 as quoted in Watson & Shove, 2008:73) as well as ‘material culture’ (Morelli, 2002: p. 5). In this light, the details of product design incorporate the future users and values and how these products will be domesticated. These processes are set in contexts of production, supply, acquisition and use and consumption. With the advances in information and communication technologies, web-based DIY has increased significantly whereby the consumer designs while the company assembles (Khalid, 2000: p. 768). Consumers as designers need to comprehend thoroughly their motivation for design and doing DIY. The web-designed DIY gives consumers much more opportunity to express their individuality, personality, desires and needs, thus strengthening their satisfaction.

Watson and Shove (2005: p.9) argue that DIY practitioners and retailers point to a circle of interdependent relations between tools and materials, competence of consumers and the practical tasks or projects which then lead to new demand trends in DIY product design. For instance, IKEA had to customize its products based on the lifestyle of the Chinese consumers. One example is of living rooms, which are considered to be a point of household pride and entertainment and therefore Chinese consumers tend to spend more on living room furniture rather than the bedroom, which is more private and less visible (Smedberg, as quoted in Miller, 2004: 4). What is more, the average floor area per person in China has been increasing, which implies that Chinese consumers need more furnishings, storage and facilities, particularly given that they are buying more gadgets (Miller, 2004: p. 4). Therefore, adapting the DIY product design to meet the local needs and demands requires IKEA to ‘keep its home-life study up-to-date because change happens so fast’ (Smedberg, quoted in Miller, 2004:p.6).

Location affects the cost of the final product. How far the raw material is from the factory and the factory from the customer affects the cost of the components of the product. Often a country with a low cost of labor is far from key markets, thus increasing the transportation cost. Indeed it is surprising that a global industry like IKEA has never entered a market like Albania. The distance is not too far, there are well-educated workers with the necessary skill set, and the transport costs minimal as their production facilities are in Germany or Italy. The factors discussed below have led to development projects in complex technical issues and collaborations between IKEA and suppliers with competence and power and with an interest in engagement.

Figure 8 Sample of how IKEA evaluate the factors before production

IKEA factors/supplier	China	Poland	Sweden
Labour cost	inexpensive	lower than average	higher
Raw material	good/price	Above average	higher
Competence	not good enough	good	high
Technology	middle	advanced	exceptional
Location	far	close	very close
Experience	not too short	not too short	long term

Source* Author from literature review

The suppliers are selected based on various criteria. Sometimes suppliers cannot meet all of the best factors but after an evaluation of the total process, an optimal point of production is decided on. For instance, IKEA suppliers in China are far from Sweden but they have inexpensive labor and good raw material, the Polish units have the advantages of relatively advanced technology, good competence, lower-than- average cost of labor and are situated near IKEA’s key markets in Europe. The Swedish units have exceptional technology, high competence, long-term experience, and geographical advantages but they also have a high cost of labor.

On the other hand, the manufactures of the DIY retailers face huge pressure to find the best price for raw material that are of a suitable quality, having to continually keep up with industry, and train employees to meet the customers’ needs for quality, cost and service.

ADORE is a leading manufacturer of DIY Home and Office Furniture located in Ankara, Turkey. Before the ‘90s they were a modest company producing customized furniture until their big break in 1990 when they met Carrefour and fulfilled a large order of 3 of their designs. It was a challenge but they achieved it and the collaboration grew stronger. Now Adore offers contemporary and modern design furniture with the best quality/price combination in the ready-to-assemble furniture segment in Turkey.

Adore is one of the most reliable business partners in its region and is in cooperation with more than 12 countries including Greece, Kosovo, Albania, Romania, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq, and the North Cyprus Turkish Republic. It has become a brand name in its region, aiming at the highest quality while implementing high technology and giving priority to customer requirements

Adore has studied how to successfully build and keep the pillars of the DIY business including quality, price, delivery, assembly, comfort, giving attention to

instruction and packing information

Just this kind of enterprise with high skill, well-trained staff and a constantly updated technology of machinery and capacity can afford to supply large chains such as Bauhaus, Carrefour, Metro Group, Praktiker, Leroy Merlin, Elektro World, Tesco, Baumax, Tekzen, BIM, Rewe and many other local and regional Hyper Chain markets. One client of mention in the Albanian market is Megateksa, the most experienced mail-order furniture supplier serving more than 30 online selling online platform.

Adore's market is enormous, varying widely along its reach from western Europe to East Asia. This company is an example of globalization in that its product mix has broad appeal over its diverse markets. Even with similar products popular in different markets, sales patterns reflect the great regional variability in these markets where colors, sizes, and functionality in items differ.

The tech industry affects lifestyle and thus the demand for DIY products. For instance, six years ago Adore was producing a "child bedroom" composed of a single bed, a night stand, a wardrobe, a computer table, a bookcase and a chair. The main changes in this "young room" had to do with the computer table and bookcase. As the computers in our lives shrink and tablets of all kinds become ubiquitous, the former "computer table" has been renamed the "working table", and the demand for bookcases has fallen as people need less shelf space with the trend towards reading more books on tablets.

In another case of technological change affecting product offering, the depth of TV units has had to be adjusted smaller and smaller as the TV screens were becoming thinner and thinner. All of these changes are due to rapid technological change. On the other hand, people haven't changed much physically and so the sizes of chairs have remained the same for many years. Fashion is another factor changing the DIY product design, sometimes taking it in the same direction as technology and sometimes not. Unexpectedly perhaps, trends in furniture depend on the biggest company able to provide raw materials and on the machinery. For example, furniture having retro legs or colorful doors all have come into fashion after they were first introduced by the raw material suppliers.

One case in point is the supplier for melamine which has largely dictated the trend in furniture. Four years ago at the machinery fair, Sonoma Color was introduced in the melamine and since then this finishing has become the most successful and still is one of main finishing applied to DIY furniture.

This finishing was first introduced in a German fair where all the wood processing machinery producers gather. One of the biggest wood processing machinery companies in

this exhibition displayed different cuts of the melamine or different sample parts that their new machinery was doing. All of the samples produced by them for the fair were made in melamine finished with Sonoma Color. This machinery could, of course, do other colors as well, but the decision was made to impress the new faces there. After that year Sonoma color with white or grey has become in fashion not only in the economic sector but also in the brand-name furniture companies.

LIGNA Hannover is the world's premier trade fair for the wood working industry and normally exhibits in May. Six months after the Hannover furniture fair, the IMM Cologne fair is filled with furniture using Sonoma and another color (Sonoma dark, Sonoma light and various other colors of Sonoma.) Thus, a fashion trend was set as customers were introduced to the color and began to like it. Adore is the first company in Turkey who started production in the wake of this trend.

One of the strong points of DIY manufacturing is their transportation network. Adore today can produce 8000 pieces of furniture per day and distribute to 25 countries. Through the development of e-commerce, Adore has yet another successful selling platform. The manufacturer has learned to listen to customers and this in turn has improved their technology, their service and has given them flexibility in designs as they have learned over time to adjust quickly to changes.

A factory cannot produce everything, but it must keep promises on the delivery, quality, and price. It is also paramount to that products have a modern design, keeping in step with technology and being sensitive to and promoting itself well on media and social media. In so far as Adore is following all of this, it will continue to be the most competitive producer for self-assembled furniture. To reach a higher capacity, Adore has invented a machine that instead of only doing two-sided boarding and drilling to four-sided boarding and drilling. This investment was only possible because of the large and sustained demands for products by the customers.

Some changes have come about through environmental challenges customers faced. In one instance, when an earthquake two years ago in Ankara knocked down most of Adore's bookcases and shoe cases, wall-mounted safety belts were introduced in the production facility. In another example, showcases formerly had no ventilation, but after hearing customer complaints of bad smells, ventilation holes were introduced into the production process in the backboard of these cases. All of these changes costed the company because of the additional machinery needed and the additional process in the production. These examples show how the customer demands due to the lifestyle and

functionality change the production.

A new angle screw came on the market 6 years ago which helped products to be better-looking because there were no unsightly screw holes on the surfaces and the drawers didn't need to have a double sheet inside the drawer, freeing up space inside and reducing the overall cost because of one less sheet being used. The development of furniture accessories (hardware) is helping to improve the product design and functionality, sometimes even reducing the cost.

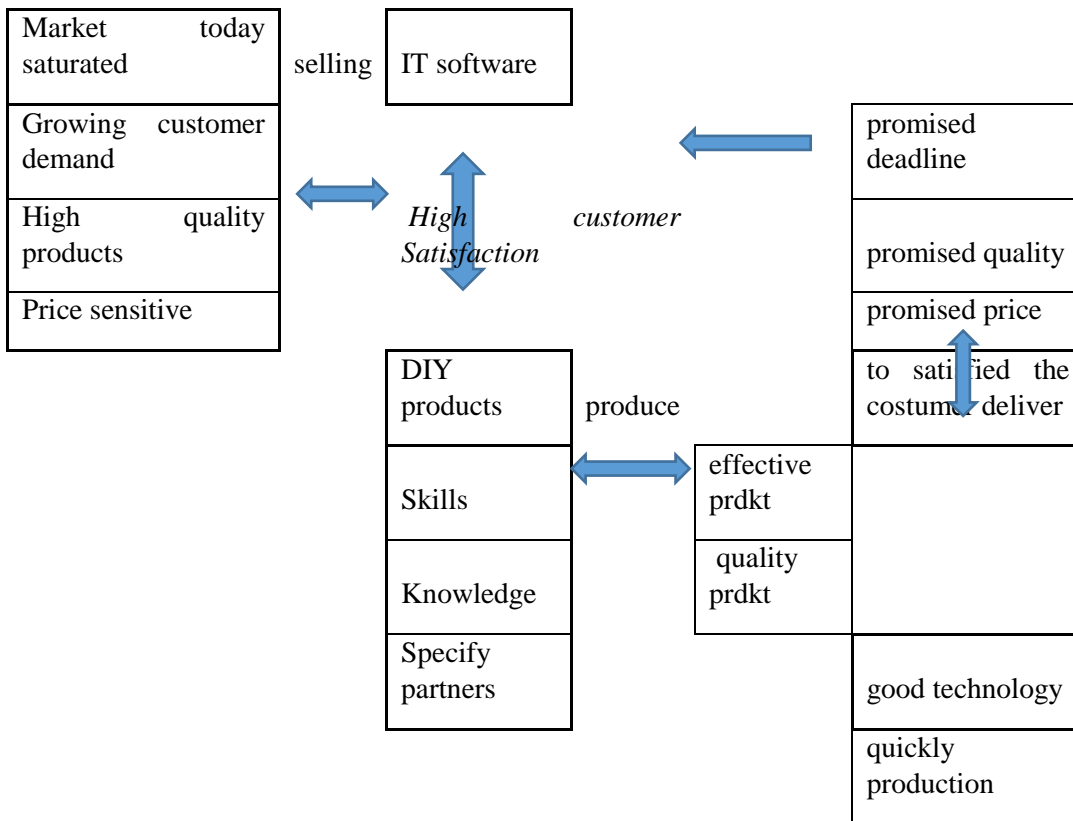
One has to look to the trade fair in order to predict the future of product design for both luxury and economical furniture. Although furniture without handles is not a new thing, during the IMM Cologne trade fair the trend of no handles was relaunched. This design was applied first to the inexpensive products, and then to the more expensive furniture. Consequently, this design element showed up in Adore products even though it was just 4 months after it's re-emergence on the market. A product fair is the best place to understand where the design of the product and DIY product design will have its next step.

Throughout history and across cultures people have maintained and reinvented their own homes and living spaces but the possibility of outlining a field of activity as a referent for the term DIY is historically and culturally specific. Mintel determined the essential meaning of DIY as “repairs or additions to the home or garden, including installing a new bathroom or kitchen, central heating, putting up shelves, fixing a fence, building a barbecue etc.”, which was treated together with the separate category of ‘decorating’ - “internal and external painting, staining or wallpapering” (Mintel 2005). In today's competitive and largely saturated markets, customers demand high quality products which also need to be extremely price sensitive.

This growing demand for customized products is pushing firms to focus on producing products which meet customer requirements and the firms' constraints (Shamsuzzoha, Kyllonen and Helo, 2009). Several IT-based software tools can be applied successfully to make it possible for firms to shorten product development time and the sales-to-delivery process. This sales-to-delivery process means all the necessary steps that are required to design, order, manufacture, sell, and finally deliver a product to a potential customer (Tiihonen and Soininen, 1997)

If contemporary DIY is to move towards accessibility and sustainability, then particular attention should be paid to the ways in which DIY products are designed. This requires consideration of the social, cultural and economic contexts as well as cross-cultural flows rather than solely international trade exchanges and globalization processes.

Figure 9 Product design process



Source* : Author from literature Review

The design starts with the customer requirements, continues to the establishing of engineering specifications, generating concepts, evaluating them, and selecting the best concept for the detailed design. Once product designs are completed for production, the environmental impact of the products is largely determined. Today fulfilling the design criteria, such as product functionality, quality, features, costs, and time to market leads to reaching Sustainable Product development (SPD), a requirement that all the product design must achieve a minimum or zero environmental impact.

The functional requirement is derived from the customers' needs, reflecting the product's functional purpose, while the environmental requirement reflects society's need for protecting its natural resources, the Environment. Finally, the economic requirement ensures the company's basic business goals.

First DIY is an industry that not only produces and sells, but it also gets to anticipate the customer behaviour. Secondly, DIY is a business idea generated by the combination of mass production, fast production, budget restraints and time spent. Third, design represents the simplicity and / or complexity of the product itself and serves as the first point of "attraction" for the customer.

DIY developed into dedicated stores and the retail market in the 1970's and the

idea was promoted by the companies that produced tools and materials to amateur users, technical and technological advances and the media and family (Watson & Shove, 2008: p. 74). The development of DIY happened in particular socio-economic, cultural and historical settings. The emergence of DIY was initially closely linked to a rise in home ownership in Western Europe and the United States and a shortage of labor and increasing suburbanization after the Second World War (Lichtman, 2006: 43). However, Atkinson (2006) points out that the origins of ‘DIY’ as a hobby date back to the eighteenth century as a productive way to utilize spare time.

The historical perspective on the DIY retail market reveals that socio-economic conditions such as a shortage of labor, lack of money, home ownership and technological advancements lead to certain patterns of social behavior that embrace the concept of DIY. On the other hand, the practice of DIY either enhances or hinders the confidence of individuals in carrying out more DIY projects and at the same time leads to new demands for the design of DIY products. For instance, during the Cold War in the US DIY provided ‘both men and women with traditionally gender-appropriate tasks that strengthened domestic identity and offered a sense of contained purpose and control in increasingly uncertain times’ (Lichtman, 2006: p. 43). This was related to the construction of fallout shelters in the post-nuclear war and ‘DIY’ helped to promote the idea of security.






The recession and the downturn in some countries seems to have accelerated the trend of DIY, showing how economic conditions impact consumers’ attitudes towards the notion and usage of DIY. In this sense, consumers have taken a more active role and higher stance in the production process. Williams (2008) in a study about the motivations of DIY distinguishes between ‘willing’ DIYers and ‘reluctant’ DIYers. The first are the ones who choose to do DIY either to ‘improve the value of their home, for pleasure or to seek self-identity from the end-product’ and the latter are the ones who ‘are forced into DIY for economic reasons or due to problems with finding and using professionals’ (Williams, 2008: p. 313). The type of DIY-er a person is largely depends on their socio-economic context. For instance, the study on DIY in rural England conducted by Williams (2011: p. 21) shows that in rich neighborhoods and amongst higher-income households, people are more likely to be willing DIY-ers, while the likelihood of somebody being a reluctant DIY-er increases in lower-income households and deprived neighborhoods. This demonstrates how socio-economic contexts impact not only the likelihood of consumer to engage in DIY activities, but also what particular behavior consumer will have toward DIY. The product design in DIY is not set in a vacuum, but is closely related to the socio-

economic and cultural contexts of the market and consumers. DIY product design is influenced by mass production and increasing profits, but there will always be flexibility within the basic frame to respond to demand.

2.3.4 DIY furniture design

Below is the analysis of three types of furniture: a chair, a table and a wardrobe. This specific chair is continues to sell very successfully into its 12th year on the market. Its basic frame of wooden legs and one piece seat, made in wood has been very popular especially when the raw material started to be replaced with a more economical, yet still strong material. Tab.__6.

Table 4 Sample of the chair developed through years

	PHOTO	SOURCE	SIZE	SPECIFICATION	COMMENTS
1		photo Adore		PP seater and back frame. Solid beech wood leg	original shape of the chare below are the different version
2		photo Adore		PP seater and back frame. metal leg cover with pvc look like beach wood	
3		photo Megatek SA	59x48xH82	pu cover solid beech wood leg metal leg supports	assembled
4		photo Megatek SA	59x48xH82	Pu cover , metal legs	assembled
5		photo Megatek SA	54x45xH87	fabric cover metal leg cover with pvc look like beach wood	assembled

Source*: Author from literature review

The last version is the cheapest one, the polypropylene structure is covered with fabric, and with artificial leather is more expensive but looks more luxurious. The legs are

replaced from the solid beech wood to metal legs covered with pvc that looks like beech wood. Cheaper still could be if a paper layer was used instead of a pvc layer. Or, even more expensive than the pvc layer would be if the legs were powder coated.

From design to design the pp (polypropylene) structure hasn't been changed, but only covered with pu or foam and pu (polyurethane) to make the impression of more luxury or to create greater comfort. The design of the legs has transformed from from 4 legs and tirades as in the 3 first designs to metal legs as in the 4th design and the fifth design is simply 4 metal legs.

Another good example is how the computer table changed due to technology. The first table is for studying and the sizes are all the same in height of 73cm but vary in length depending on the age of the user, from 60cm until 120cm. The drawer or shelves beside the table was added after more storage was demanded.

Figure 10 developing table designs due to technology development



**Source Author from the field working*

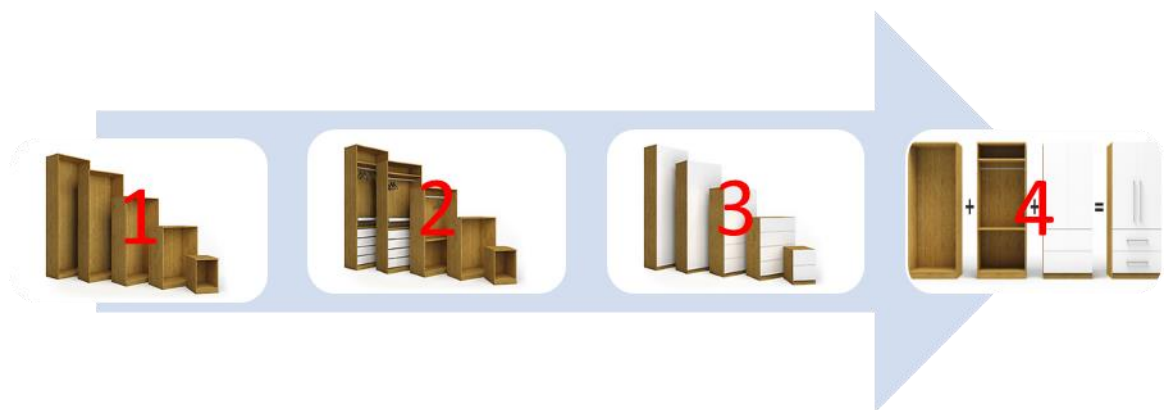
The second design, in Fig 10 is no longer a study table but a computer table, due to the function it was designed for. First the depth isn't 73cm anymore, but 55cm, and sometimes even 40 cm. The height remains the same as the study table. Additional elements are a keyboard drawer with a sliding rail and a printer shelf on the bottom. As technology developed and PCs were replaced by the laptops the keyboard drawer turned into storage shelves as in design number 2. The depth remained the same 55cm or sometimes 40 cm. When the iPad sold successfully in the market and Laptops became lighter and smaller, the DIY stores required to the manufactures other table alternative to suit the new computers. Designs 3 and 4 are two simple samples, first is melamine whose height is suitable for users who lay on their bed or when customers are seated on the sofa. The 4th design has the same specifications but with an adjustable leg and materials are ABS with metal.

Normally, products must first meet the customer's need, second they must be well-designed and easy to assemble. In addition, most preferable are designs that multiply the

proportions of each part and use almost the same accessories such as handles, hinges, rails, cornices, and plinths. This is so the suppliers will be able to purchase the raw material in less variety and higher quantity for a few different accessories, thus lowering the cost and increasing the profit margin. The same applies for the raw material melamine, where the computer system must have fewer calculation of the items to be cut, and therefore an easier process. Assembly must be uncomplicated and with the same main elements combined to be able to offer a lot of diversity to customers.

A concrete example of this is B&Q's simple wardrobe system. The wardrobe is available in five different sizes and three different colour options for a minimum of 15 different combinations. When combined with different handles or internal and external drawers, then there are enormous combinations to fulfil each customer's demands. Tab._10_.

Figure 11 Simple steps of building the wardrobe by yourself



After choosing the wardrobe frame, the customer chooses internal drawers, shelves and a hanging rail. Step 3 is to select the external drawers and what kind of doors the customer likes. The last step is choosing the external accessories such as handles, plinth, trim and the cornice.

Retailers that engage the customer's needs, demands, fashion, trends, through the right timelines will perform better financially, dictate the market to a large extent and brand-wise.

2.3.5 Global DIY Retailers

The international literature on DIY retailer's capability guide better understanding the dynamic of adaptation in the host market. The international retailer shapes the local market while also being constrained by it (Wringley et al.,2005). Before entering into a

new market either regional or a distant, International retailers need global market research information over a period of time at of least a few years.

Even after entry, constant monitoring of the customers is very important to understand local consumer behavior and makes it easy to customize offerings on prices, services, and products. To offer local products, the international retailers have to work with a large number of local suppliers (Coe,2004). Bigger companies once they enter into the international market have the challenge of being competitive with their imitators in the form of smaller, local companies. Due to this, some big companies, in order to monitor their competitors use a team of market research.

To gather the data of the customers, DIY companies organize trainings and seminars to listen their suppliers and customers, as well as utilizing a member loyalty card to gather data and to know the preferences of the customers. DIY retailers then develop new products and services and transport them from the producer to the final customer. On the international market, these retailers need to redesign to adapt better to the local context.

Companies acquire knowledge, intentionally or unintentionally, through direct experience or learning-by-doing (Palmer&Quinn,2005). Big companies often take their first experimental step onto the international market with a store in the capital of the city and then expand to other bigger cities or some others open a store in neighbor markets with the same characteristic to test their business model. For instance, many food or nonfood international companies in China have been opened after they had some successful trial stores in Hong Kong or Taiwan.

In the Chinese market, modern foreign retailers found a big gap in the retail market. The market landscape in China in the late 90's was mostly filled with traditional retailers who were not able to keep up with the swift rise in the economy and subsequent rising living standards. Chinese customers were not used to buying in a self-service store with open shelves, but rather on the street or wet markets. The lack of knowledge in purchasing required a great deal of training to inform and educate the Chinese market.

DIY retail stores have a product standard including a sustainable quality of the product, size and weight, standards in packaging quality and information about the raw materials. In the beginning, a DIY store entering in the new market with these standards often finds difficulties in finding local production, but after some years these standards are embraced by many other suppliers and retailers and many suppliers have reorganized their production line and quality controls to adapt. In places like Albania, even the legal code has had to be modified to keep up with the changes.

Customers very often look abroad for their inspiration and there is often a tendency for the entire market to be oriented to a particular country. The Albanian market is oriented towards the Italian market in clothes, furniture, and cooking. In China the market is oriented towards continental European furniture.

Moving a business model from the United States and using it exactly the same way in a foreign country has shown cases of failure in China. One example that stands out is Home Depot, who operated with a Do-It-Yourself (DIY) business model in a Big-Box retailing format there. Home Depot never found a proper business model for the Chinese market. A segment in the target market for Home Depot—“urban international retailer who fails to create a business model compatible with local cultures usually results in a complete shutdown or sale of its operation to a local chain or to an international retailer already established in the local market (Gao,H.M. 2013) China is quickly urbanizing and the economy makes a hit. Home Improvement Company such as Home Depot is very sensitive to positive economic growth, especially the growth in housing and urbanization areas. (Meyers, 2011) consequently Home Depot and home improvement company should have succeeded but interestingly Home Depot didn't.

In his Book “The Chinese Century”, Federico Rampini devotes an entire chapter to exploring the social effects of Ikea in the everyday life of Chinese people. When Ikea opened its doors in 2005 in Beijing, the first customers running to buy were the target group of 20-30 year-olds, mostly new couples. As a part of the growing middle class, they love to furnish their homes with a modern, Swedish style. The same background was happening in Albania as was happening in China as the way of living, the way of thinking and living with each other together, civilization and cultural heritage was rapidly replaced. Almost imperceptibly, Ikea abducted a part of Chinese traditional culture as it t the traditional designs of houses, furniture, and spaces all disappeared.

Ikea brought the western dream to China as people started spending the whole weekend to furnishing their home in Beijing even though the price of a simple shelf was twice the salary of a person in the closest neighbouring village to Beijing, A price for a sofa of 150 Euro at Ikea is a very good price for someone from the west, but when placed into the Chinese market, the price is astronomical. For example, Beijing's Ikea in 2005 carried a sofa priced at 2500 RMB while a teacher in one of the villages near Beijing at that time had a salary of 1500 RMB.

Ikea was marked as a status jump from one social class to the next. The new generation wanted to be different from their parent's generation. They wanted to have a

living room with a comfortable sofa, and to welcome guests at their home - something that was so rare in the traditional Chinese home. Single storey houses with bamboo furniture, some of them with a garden and bicycles parked out front along a busy road full of pedestrians was formerly the norm.

The new Status that purchasing at Ikea, Carrefour, Metro, and WalMart or eating at Pizza Hut and Drinking at Starbucks couldn't be reached by all the Chinese even though their salary was more than their parents' salary. The average salary in China in 2005 was extremely low juxtaposed with the residential houses in the best parts of Beijing with luxury cars, houses with big verandas, pools, and bodyguards paid 20-30 times more than the average salary. The Middle class tried to have similar houses but far from the city where they could be more affordable and furnished them with modern European products from Ikea.

China is an enormous country with great regional differences between south and north. Consequently, many of the DIY Retailers in China reflect these differences in the products mix they offer. For instance, hotter areas sell more tiles and marble but colder northern locations sell more wooden flooring and carpeting.

Among German cross-channel DIY retailers, Bauhaus and OBI stand out in terms of assortment depth, which is primarily driven by brand variety and available product options per brand. DIY is still a brand-driven business – private labels currently play a role only in selective categories and at selective retailers (e.g. Obi and Home Depot) (A.T Kearney.2010)

When the Swedish furniture industry boycotted IKEA at the end of the 50's, this actually pushed IKEA to start producing abroad, even though until that time Ikea was selling low price furniture, watches, pens and picture frames. The foundation of the network was established during the 60's and based on long-term relationships with selected suppliers. The complex supply network consists of 1,300 direct suppliers and about 10,000 sub-suppliers located in more than 60 countries. (Baraldi, 2008)

The first IKEA department store was opened in 1958 in Älmhult, Sweden. Flat parcels were an innovation that lowered the costs of transportation and damage to the goods. (IKEA, 2011c) The increasing globalization was a fact after a successful establishment in Norway and the first department store outside Scandinavia was opened in Switzerland. (Borneskans, 2008)

IWAY (The IKEA Way on Purchasing Home Furnishing Products) an agreement comprising work environment, emissions to air, water and forest was formed by IKEA during 2000. IWAY was founded in international conventions and declarations. IWAY also requires that IKEA's suppliers take responsibility for co-workers and employees.

(IKEA, 2011d, Dacić, 2012, Neskovic, 2012) In order to contribute to responsible forestry in countries where IKEA is active; the corporation takes part in several forestry projects with external organizations. Better treatment of the world's forests is the goal of a project started together with WWF (World Wildlife Foundation) in 2002. (IKEA, 2011e) Other non-governmental organizations like Green Peace, have captured IKEA's interest since they help strengthen IKEA's identity as a company concerned with key issues such as the global environment. (Baraldi, 2006)

IKEA is a company that actively shapes and creates the environment around them. They have architects and production and logistics experts who design and supervise all of the companies' facilities including retail stores and distribution centres. IKEA chooses its operational units in areas that appear to be most suitable for their diversified task, even if they are somewhat affected by their location. Their offices are placed in countries where raw materials, components or end products are found. (Baraldi, 2006) IKEA's trading offices are therefore not categorised by region anymore but by type of product. For example textile are sourced in Istanbul, veneer in Prague and solid wood in Belgrade. (Dacić, 2012) IKEA influences their suppliers directly and indirectly in how they should construct their factories by persuading them to introduce specific machineries or production processes. Usually the factories are formed to meet high production demands and even if the products economic margins are low; the massive production ensures a profit (Gabela, 2012). IKEA and their suppliers sometimes invest jointly in equipment which increases IKEA's influence on their suppliers in terms of factory design, production flow and work organization. If IKEA invests in or works together with a company, they want them to have a running production validating the competence and seriousness. Furthermore, IKEA affects the connections between different suppliers in terms of distribution, which link different factories to each other. They induce their suppliers to locate near IKEA units like retail stores to decrease costs for transport, for example. (Dacić, 2012, Baraldi, 2012)

Along the same line, B&Q (Block and Quayle), is a British multinational DIY and home improvement retailing company open since the 60's. When the first store opened they wanted to offer a wide product range to everyone and longer opening hours, in order not to intimidate the average DIY-er because at that time professional building supplies were mainly found at builder's merchants. The 90s were very successful for B&Q. In 1995, the first larger format B&Q Warehouse store opened and B&Q began opening for business

on Sundays. In January 1996 B&Q's first store outside the UK was opened in Taiwan, where they were preparing to eventually open in China but firstly in a similar market. In 1998 B&Q merged with France's leading DIY retailer, Castorama, to become the largest DIY retailer in Europe. International expansion continued in June 1999 with the opening of a Shanghai store through parent company Kingfisher - B&Q's first in mainland China. It is the second largest in Europe, and the fourth largest in the world (behind Home Depot, Lowe's & OBI).

ADEO (Leroy Merlin, Castorama, Bricocenter, Brocoman etc) is a group of retailers for home improvement and gardening. Its story started since 1919, during the post-WWI years when industry was totally ruined. Many tons of material has been left by the Americans, and the smart guy called A.Leroy decided to help the reconstruction of the building by opening a small shop, with goods to be used called "Au Stock Américain" where he buys and sells on goods. The war gave him the opportunities and he took them. A.Leroy and R.Merlin open a store, "Au Stock Américain" in the Pas-de-Calais region, selling American surplus goods left by the Allies after World War 1. The business expanded, offering first building materials and home fixtures and fittings, then prefabricated houses. The Stock American turns its attention to domestic customers.

The second war destroyed the company by bombing and the business halted. In 1945, hope was rekindled as the task of reconstruction began once again. Thanks to tremendous commercial potential, experience and an unparalleled level of responsiveness and now employing a 20-strong team, the business is soon flourishing again under the name "Stock Américain, Leroy-Merlin & Fils".

The group was established in France since 1923 and pursuing its international development ambition since 1983, ADEO has enjoyed a long history of success. In 2007, Leroy Merlin Group changed its name, becoming first GROUPE ADEO and then, in 2014, simply ADEO grouping the Leroy Merlin adopts this name since 1960 from AU Stock Américain selling American surplus goods left by the Allies after World War 1. Opening the first self-service DIY superstore. It is also the first company to offer free delivery services. Since 1989 Leroy Merlin begins its international expansion, opening its first store in Spain. In 1994 the future ADEON group started its partnerships and acquisitions of chains from France all the way to China and Russia etc years 2004. Acquisition of CASTORAMA Italy and other retails in the home decoration continued in the coming years.

HOME DEPOT was founded by two fired executives working in an improvement

center in California in 1978. Turning a potential disaster into an opportunity, both native workers, drew up a business plan. The two men pictured a chain of home-improvement warehouses, larger than any of their competitors' facilities, filled with a wide range of products and professional customer service. In 1979, they opened two stores in Atlanta.

Home Depot has evolved into the world's largest home-improvement center and the second-largest retailer in the United States. Until 2004 the company has been spread to every state in the nation, as well as to Canada, Chile, and Mexico. They envisioned a one-stop shopping facility, staffed by professionals that would be geared toward people working on home improvement projects.

By 2003 the Home Depot had initiated an aggressive well-planned expansion program, and has grown from three stores employing 200 people to more than 1,700 stores employing 300,000 people. Critics of the company's meteoric success contend that the Home Depot's aggressive expansion policy unfairly drives smaller, preexisting competitors out of business and creates a monopoly in some markets. Despite such criticism, the company's plans call for continued expansion.

In 2006, Home Depot was thought to be closer to its female customers, opening the Home Decorator's Collection, a home furnishings retailer based in St. Louis, Missouri. The purchase was made to expand Home Depot's online and special-order sales training seminars to the public free of charge

In the late 1970s when China opened up to foreign investment, the most powerful corporations of America have gone confidently into the People's Republic but only in the last years has the market started to be confused, difficult and competitive

Home Depot's operation in China from 2006 to 2011. It entered China in 2006 by acquiring 12 stores from a Chinese company, Home Way. However, by September 2012 all Home Depot stores in China had been closed. (Gao,H.M. 2013)

On September 15, 2012, the Wall Street Journal reported that Home Depot Inc. decided to close all seven of its remaining big-box stores in China and to pull out of China after six years of losses (Burkitt, 2012). When only one year before in 2011, American companies such as General Motors and Kentucky Fried Chicken announced that, for the first time, they made more sales in China than in the United States (Torres, 2011). The emerging Chinese market, with its distinct Chinese cultural elements, poses great challenges for international retailers (Letovsky, Murphy, & Kenny,1997).

It's not because the businesses were incompetent. Many of the biggest failures belong to the Fortune 500: Mattel, eBay, Google, Home Depot. All these companies have

thrived in markets around the world.

On the surface, it seems like things might be similar in China. The country has a growth pattern on track with what the company had expected when it bought into China in 2006. The Atlanta-based firm acquired a local firm, stocked its 12 stores with tools and materials, and waited for the money to roll in. America's suburbs are full of tinkerers and home-improvement hobbyists, and Home Depot exists to serve them. With aisles upon aisles of power tools, building materials, and hardware supplies, its big-box stores are a testimony to US homeowners' do-it-yourself ethic. On the surface, it seems like things might be similar in China. The country has a growing middle class, millions of new homeowners, and a culture of everyday ingenuity and thrift.

The China Household Finance survey Report jointly issued by South-western University of Finance and Economics and the People's Bank of China March 13, 2012, After six years of struggle, Home Depot shuttered its seven remaining stores and fired 850 workers in China. Home Depot: China's not the land of DIY

Why do some DIY stores fail? Some suffer from a lack of flexibility or a failure to localize. Some fail because they don't understand the cultural and legal environment. Thus, it is very important to work on the ground to listen to the customers. Whoever has taken the time to talk and learn, has succeeded. Others fell because of bad timing or a superior local competitor. While the causes are as varied as the industries themselves, a pattern can be discerned among the biggest failures in China: an inability to grasp just how different — and cutthroat — the Chinese market can be.

Home Depot failed first factor, timing: Home Depot came late to China, after its competitors already had a laid down their roots. By the time it arrived China's growth was slowing down. The second reason was not knowing the culture. The market for housing in china is different from the US market. Many people in China buy houses not to improve but for investment and speculation. The third reason is location and the way of operating. Chinese consumers don't like big, boxy warehouses far away from a city centre. The fourth reason and most fatal, Home Depot tried to bring American notions of DIY to a market where labour was so cheap that most people simply hired a handyman. "Home Depot, Barbie, Best Buy — they came and tried to sell the American vision, thinking people wanted to buy that," says Mahoney. "That's not what Chinese want to buy."

DIY stores in china need to adjust their working philosophy - they have to change do-it-yourself market to do-it-for-me market.

2.4 Concluding remarks

This chapter sought to set the theoretical and analytical framework for the study. The starting point is the conceptualisation of design which constitutes a complex and intricate task. For the purposes of this study, the concept of design will be understood as the integration and interplay of technological, social and economic requirements, biological necessities and the psychophysical effects of the materials, shape, colour, volume and space. This study conceives design as a creative activity, but which is different to art. This is so because design is inherently constrained by the demands of a client in brief or particular markets. In line with the conceptualisation of many designers and scholars, this study also holds that it is imperative to consider people's needs during product development and those human-product relationships constitute one of the most important points of departure in all design work.

Consequently, home furniture product design in this study are conceptualised as user-centred design and very much linked to the users' experiences with products. In this study, the term product experience is used to refer to all possible subjective experiences resulting from people's interaction with products and particularly home furniture products. In addition to design and product experience, the second major theoretical dimension of this study refers to DIY product development. DIY comprises different types of creative design input and motivations including personal satisfaction, financial reward and style. Through DIY products and services, we have an opportunity to combine both values: functionality and usage as well as satisfaction and creativity.

Once the conceptual framework for design, product development and DIY has been stipulated, the theoretical chapter provides a comparative framework between a centralised and free market economy. Briefly, in a centralised or planned economy it is the government or its central planning agencies that decide what to produce when it comes to home furniture and how to produce and share the products. By contrast, in a free market economy buyers and sellers interacting with each other without government interference determine these decisions on product design and development. Furthermore, the concepts of mass production and mass customisation were elaborated. In a centralised economy, mass production is characterised by standardisation and rationalisation. Mass production is the most prominent mode of production in all types of economies, which means a way of

manufacturing things en masse (and for the masses) that takes the initiative for choosing products out of the hands of the consumer and puts it into the hands of the manufacturer. By contrast, mass customisation came about as a result of market demands and competition as well as technological advancements. Therefore, mass customisation is a production process that combines elements of mass production with those of bespoke tailoring.

Mass production and mass customisation are then set into context by exploring the journey of product design from crafting to advanced contemporary production technologies – always focusing on home furniture and related products. The exploration of such a journey bears witness to the ways in which economic and social phenomena such as industrial revolution, colonisation, mass immigration, new technologies (ex lightening, electricity, internet) etc. impacted the lifestyles and manufacturing markets and therefore home furniture product designs and development. As a consequence interior design became a discipline and a professional in its own right with connections to other design disciplines, involving the work of architects, industrial designers, engineers, builders and craftsmen. In this study, interior design is conceived as the art and science of understanding people's behaviour to create functional spaces within a building. Whereas decoration is the furnishing or adorning of a space with fashionable or beautiful things, both interior designers and decorators are key actors when considering 'DIY' home furniture product design.

Whereas the design of goods is part of an important cycle consisting of three main steps, i.e. product design, production and consumption, DIY refers to a more democratic design process of self-driven, self-directed amateur design and production activity, performed by the end user or the consumer of goods. This chapter points out that the interface between design and DIY has been mediated by the media such as leaflets, manuals, guide books, catalogues, newspaper and magazines, radio and TV programmes, which have led to the vast proliferation of DIY. The DIY product design does not fall within the usual path of product design; rather it is very much linked to the individual in whom are vested simultaneously the three functions of design, production and consumption. This also entails transformations in the relation between technology and user competence as the former has become more accessible and adaptive to the amateur user. In this light, DIY depends on the effective interrelation between materials, tools and skills of

the user. The historical perspective of DIY retail market reveals that socio-economic conditions such as shortage of labour, lack of money, home ownership and technological advancements lead to some patterns of social behaviour that embrace DIY concepts. The recession and the downturn in some countries seem to have accelerated the trend of 'DIY', which shows how economic conditions impact upon the consumers' attitude towards the notion and usage of 'DIY'. In this sense, consumers have taken a more active role and higher stance in the production process.

The last section of the chapter looked into global 'DIY'ers such as IKEA, ADORE, Home Depot, and B&Q as a necessary step to set the global context for the analysis of the case study of Megatek in Albania. These examples speak to the need to customise home furniture designs and products to the needs and demands of specific markets, societies and ultimately customers. For instance, DIY retailers entries into the Chinese market are explored to highlight the impact of socio-economic factors on product design. This analysis sets the stage for the exploration of the findings in the case of Albania and more concretely to better comprehend the experience of Megatek as the first and largest DIY retailer in Albania.

CHAPTER III - METHODOLOGY

Chapter III outlines the research methodology and provides justification for the chosen methods, research strategy and design. It also provides a rationale and explanation for data analysis and how conclusions are drawn. According to Robson (2011) and Saunders (2007) there are six main areas, which need to be taken into account during the design of research, i.e. Paradigm, Strategy, Purpose, Type or Method, Data collection and Data analysis. This Chapter will investigate these areas and review current research methods available to conduct the study. It will conclude by outlining the most appropriate and trustworthy methods chosen for the study, providing an overview of the strategy adopted as well as an analysis of the merits and limitations of the research methodology and design. The specific objectives of the chapter are to: (i) identify a research paradigm; (ii) propose a research strategy; (iii) design the research methodology; (iv) understand and assess methods of data analysis.

3.1 Research approach and rationale

In order to determine the research approach to be chosen for the study, it is first necessary to understand and analyse three main fields: epistemology, ontology and axiology. Epistemology deals with the nature of knowledge and how knowledge can be gained. The two main positions in the field of epistemology are those of the positivist and the interpretivism (Adler & Adler, 2011). According to the positivist, the researcher is independent from what is researched. A pure positivist takes the attitude of a natural scientist and will only accept externally observable and measurable sources for the research, such as numerical data from machines, statistics or experiments. In contrast to interpretivism, the positivist ignores feelings or any other interactions between researcher and what is being researched (Saunders et al., 2007; Flick, 2008).

For interpretivism it is essential to take social interactions into account. When researching among humans, relying only on numerical and objective data is not enough. They assume that every human has a social role and plays that role. An interpretivist therefore sees the necessity to take this social role into consideration when looking at the world and knowledge cannot be gained without interpreting answers whilst keeping social

roles in mind (Saunders et al., 2007). Eventhough positivism and interpretivism seem to be opposition positions in epistemology, some researchers argue for mixed or combined methods and thus view epistemology as a continuum and therefore positions between the two extremes can also be taken.

Ontology looks at the nature of reality and there are two main positions: objectivism and subjectivism. Subjectivism means that an organisation is a social construct and is therefore permanently revised by its inhabitants. In contrast to this, objectivism assumes that participants have to follow an externally given reality (Saunders, 2007). Usually subjectivism comes with the epistemological view of interpretivism. It regards reality as a social construct. Consequently, research participants' opinions have to be interpreted considering their social environment to fully understand what they really mean and to discover real knowledge (Saunders et al., 2007).

Axiology is about values in research and their judgmental influence. A researcher can believe that his/her own values affect the research activity. Logically, the research results have to consider these own values and might have to be interpreted before the real results can be seen. This view is typical for an interpretivist. Alternatively, a researcher may think that research is free of the researcher's biases and that the research and the objects are not affected. Positivists commonly hold this view (Saunders et al., 2007; Flick, 2008). To make sure that the research is not affected by any potential bias, the researcher will chose to select several sources to look at the object and chose methods which do not allow the influence of biases (Saunders et al., 2007). For this purpose validation tools are important and in this study as validity triangulation is used. A paradigm is the overall conceptualisation of the world that a researcher has to take into account by looking at epistemology, ontology and axiology as shown in below.

Table 7: Research paradigm

Paradigm	Description
Positivist and Post-positivist	The view that social research exists externally; that the researcher and participant are independent and that 'reality' is discovered using experiments and surveys, i.e. quantitative methods.
Constructivism/Interpretivism	The view that participants help the researcher construct a view of 'reality' using methods such as case studies, interviews and observation.

Critical Approach	The view that the researcher is an expert researching powerless participants, trying to overcome the imbalance of power.
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**Sources from literature review on methodology*

This research project adapts a qualitative research methodology because it allows studying fewer individuals by delving more deeply into their settings, subcultures, experiences and perspectives. Whereas quantitative research seeks to discover correlations between two or more variables through an objective and empirical testing of the hypothesis, qualitative research aims to generating a subjective understanding of how and why individuals perceive, reflect, interpret, and interact (Adler & Adler, 20011: 32). In this light, this difference changes the ways in which research is conducted and data collected and analysed. Contrary to quantitative research, which attempts to verify the hypotheses by setting clear scope of the research, qualitative research implies working in the context of discovery and being more open-ended.

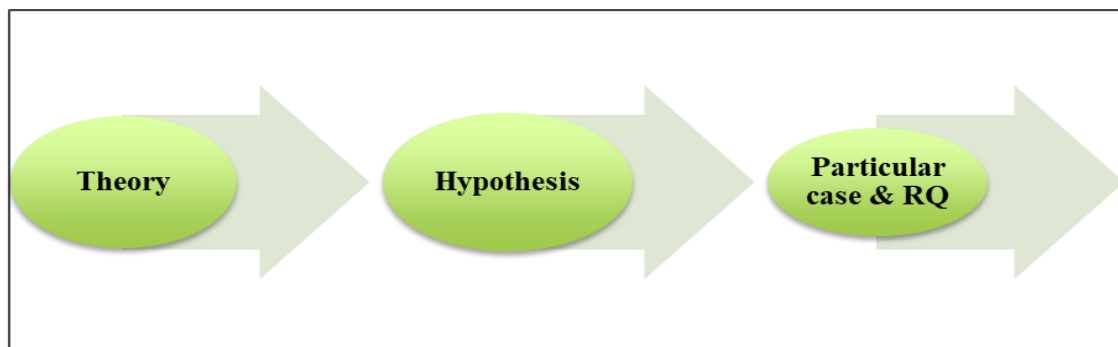
As such, in qualitative research sampling procedure and the sample is very challenging to be determined. This means that in qualitative research it is difficult to know how much data the research need to collect. In most cases, in qualitative research, researcher gathers data until empirical saturation is reached (Flick, 2008: 139). It is argued that in quantitative research, the researchers know how many cases they need to test the hypotheses in the beginning of the project, whereas in the qualitative research, determining sample size is a very complex issue. The qualitative research “forces the researcher to combine sampling, data collection, and data analysis, rather than treating them as separate stages in a linear process” (Adler & Adler, 2011: 46). The qualitative methodology is the most appropriate for this research project considering the research aims.

Research can be conducted in essentially two ways: deductively or inductively. Neither of them is ‘better’ than the other; however the deductive approach is usually associated with positivism and the inductive approach with interpretivism (Saunders et al., 2007). Deduction means testing a hypothesis. The hypothesis to be tested can be developed from literature and previous research. The researcher then has to construct measurable and quantifiable variables that allow testing of the hypothesis. Deductive research is moving from the general broad picture of the research area to the particular research question. A common method for deductive research is for example the use of questionnaires (Saunders et al., 2007; Punch, 2005).

Induction in contrast seeks to build theory. The researcher tries to understand the

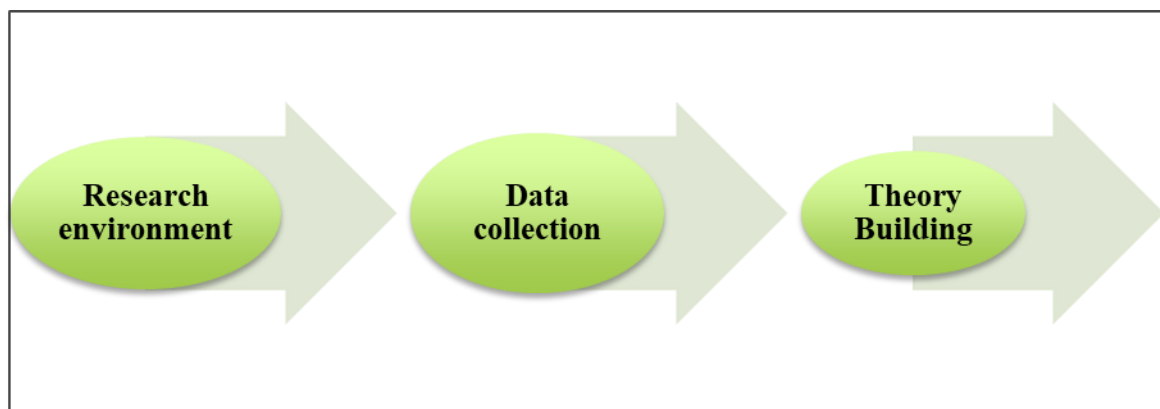
research environment and objects and to extract theories from it. An induction starts from an individual observation and moves towards stating a general theory. This results in the capturing of many biased views from research participants and it might therefore be difficult to generalize research results. However, inductive research does not necessarily want to achieve generalizable knowledge. Quite often researchers are aware that their results are only valid within a limited setting. Inductive research is mostly used when there is none or little previous knowledge about a topic and a hypothesis cannot be formed (Adler & Adler, 2011) as illustrated below.

Figure 12: Deductive research



**Sources from literature review on methodology*

Figure 13: Inductive research



**Sources from literature review on methodology*

The two approaches are not mutually exclusive, it is possible to combine the two approaches and doing so can enrich research. Research can also combine several paradigms in one project and hence deductive and inductive approaches are combined. The combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods, i.e. a mixed methods approach, can enable a richer and deeper investigation of a research problem. Therefore this study is inductive, but it does not seek to achieve generalizable and universal knowledge in the form of new theories.

In addition, Yin (2014) argues that there are different research types depending on the research rationale and motivation as demonstrated in below or otherwise referred to as

paradigm structure.

Table 5: Type of research and paradigm structure

Aim or motivation of research	Description
Exploratory	To understand what is happening in little-understood situations To seek new insights To ask questions To assess phenomena in a new light To generate ideas and hypothesis for future research
Descriptive	To portray an accurate profile of persons, events or situations Requires extensive previous knowledge of the situation to be researched May be a flexible or a fixed design
Explanatory	To seek the explanation of a problem or situation but not necessarily in the form of causal relationships To explain patterns related to the phenomena being researched Can have a flexible or fixed design To identify relationships between different aspects of a phenomena
Emancipatory	To create opportunities to engage in social action Almost exclusively of a flexible design

**Sources from literature review on methodology*

In the literature review it was highlighted that there was a limited amount of current research into DIY product development in Albania and also with few studies focused on DIY retailers and home furniture. Furthermore, the research questions aim to generate new insights, and knowledge, regarding the design process and how to create effective long-term solution for DIY products. Consequently, the nature of this research has an exploratory motivation, which aims to find out what is happening in area of design. However, because of the background and previous knowledge, of the researcher, there was an element of description in the study, this is due to the fact that the researcher has professional experience, designing products for these market. This knowledge meant that the researcher knew the appropriate areas for data collection and analysis. For this reason the research predominately undertook an exploratory approach with elements of a descriptive or analytical nature. It is mainly exploratory and contributes by bringing new knowledge to an underexplored research topic in the case of Albania. The primary approach of the study is qualitative, however reference to secondary quantitative data is also an important part of the analysis, as it will be discussed in the next section on concrete methods and data collection and analysis.

3.2 Research strategy and design

A research strategy is where the framework of the study is defined and it is decided how to proceed. Creswell (2007) describes five of the major approaches for qualitative research and these are outlined below.

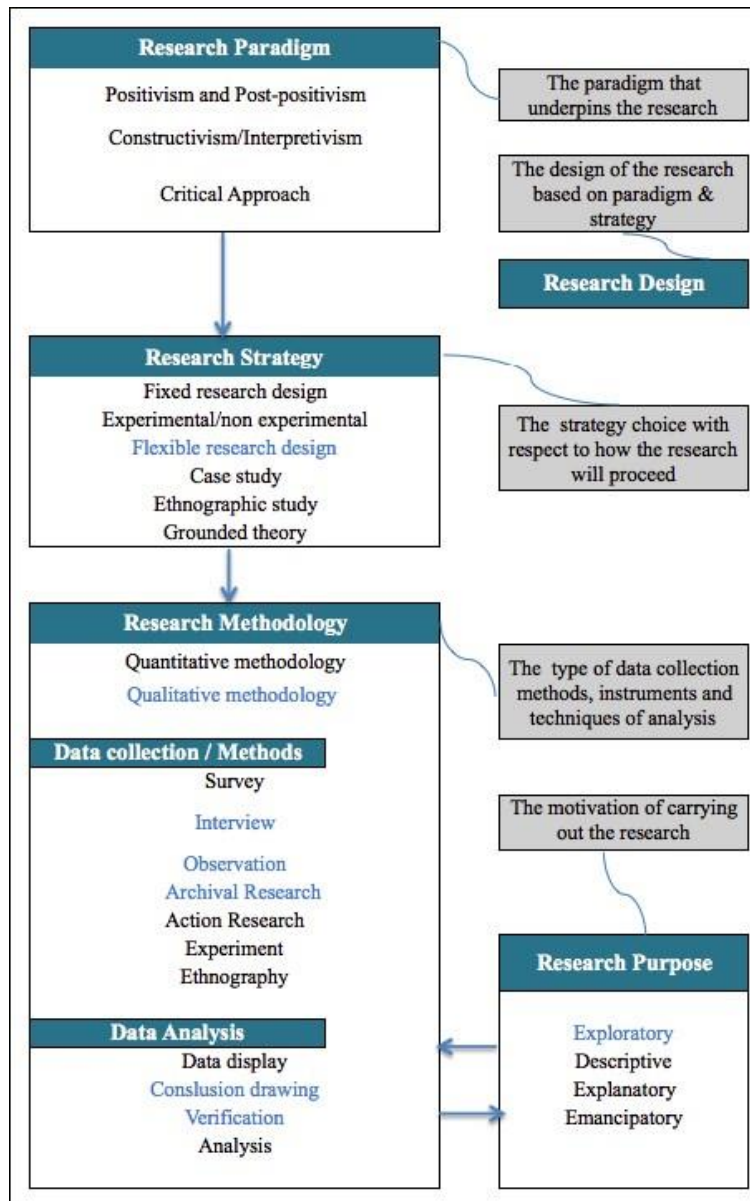
Table 9: Approaches to qualitative research

Approach	Description
Narrative Study	This explores the life of an individual and tells stories of their experience
Phenomenological Research	Understanding the essence of lived phenomenon, or an experience
Grounded Theory	Generating a theory from data collected during the study. A systematic but flexible strategy.
Ethnographic Studies	Focus on description and interpretation of a culture and social group/structure
Case Studies	The development of a case or a small number of cases normally consisting of the study of an individual, a group, an organization etc.

**Sources from literature review on methodology*

Based on the aims of this study, the research is multi-layered, complex and has been carried out using a mixture of methods such as observation, interviews and statistical data for one case study. Throughout the investigation the researcher aimed to build a rapport with the participants to understand their motivations and behaviours towards either; how they designed products, or how they used products. Consequently, it would have been difficult to find ‘one reality’ in a controlled scientific manor, as outlined by Saunders (2007) in the positive and post-positive approach. In addition, the critical approach was also not suitable, as the researcher was not seeking to overcome an imbalance of power. As a result, the researcher within the qualitative approach adopted a constructivism paradigm, which enabled a conversation between the researcher and participants to help construct a view of reality (Yin, 2014). This is outlined below.

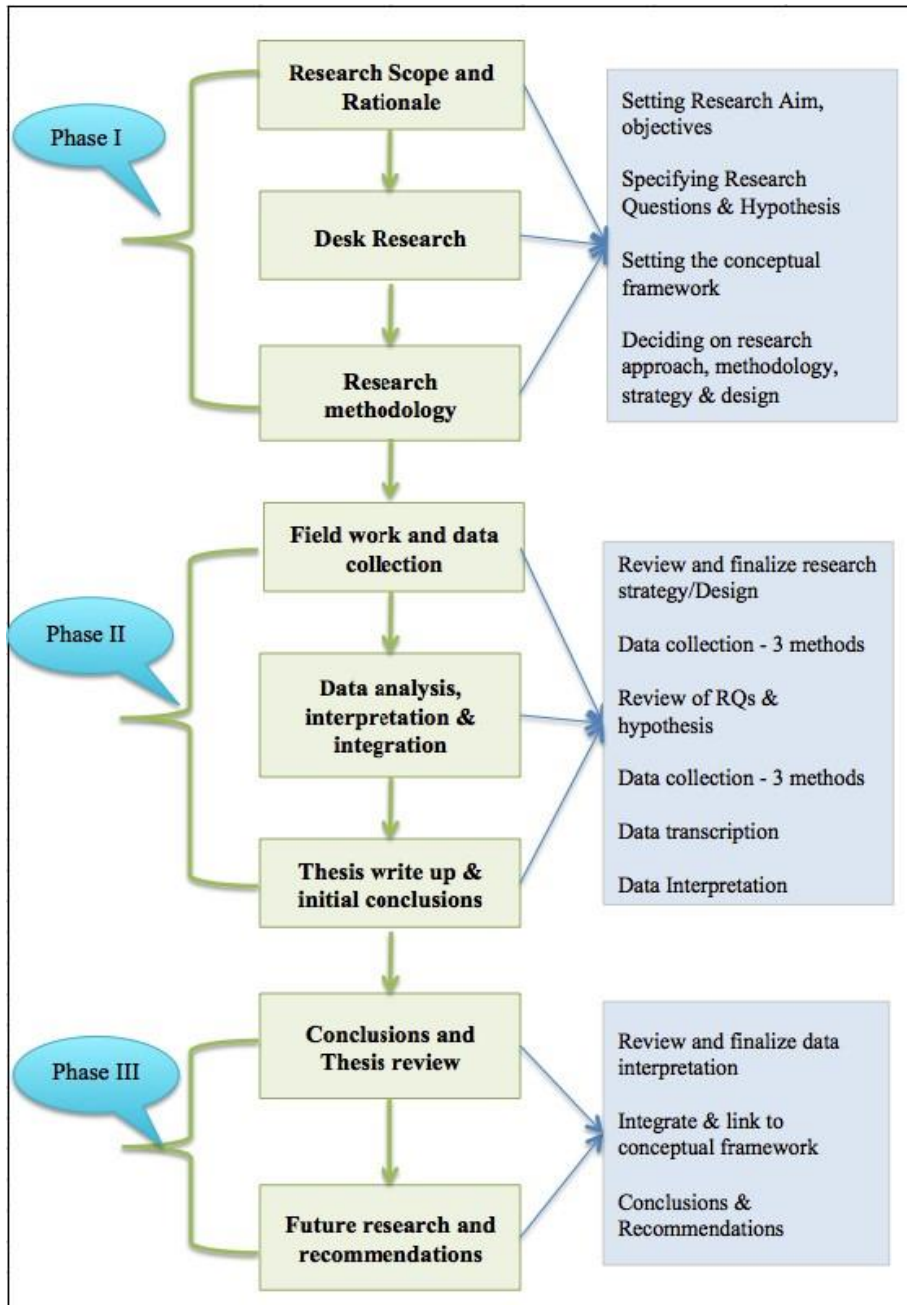
Figure 12: The research strategy of this study



*Source: Author

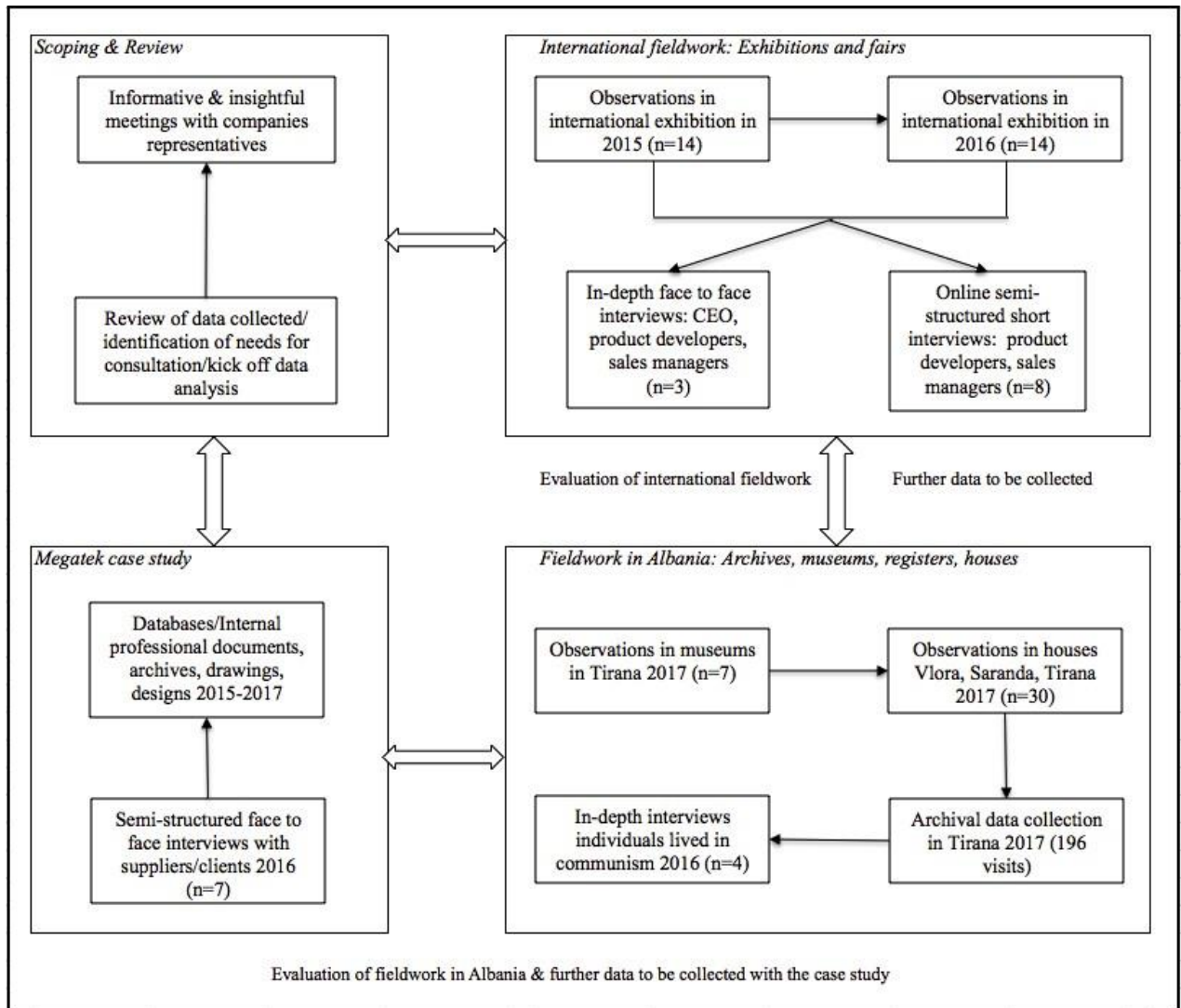
After deciding upon the research strategy, a detailed research design was planned in three main phases: first, research scoping and desk work to survey the literature and determine the conceptual and methodological framework; second, the fieldwork which refers to the data collection and review of necessary aspects of the research design; third and final phase that refer to write up of the thesis, drawing conclusions and recommendations. The entire research design and process is represented below in two figures: the first represents the main phases of research and the second the logic and practices of data collection during fieldwork.

Figure 13: Research design and process of this study



*Source: Author

Figure 14: Logic and procedures of fieldwork: Methods & Sample



3.3 Methods and sample

The concrete methods utilized are: observation, online and face-to-face interviews, archival research and document analysis and case study of Megatek. Details of methods, sample, procedures and instruments of research are outlined below. The table below presents an overview of the main time-period explored in the study and the method used to obtain data, instruments and the data obtained. For the exploration of the furniture design in communism the most important method is that of archival research, observations in museums and individuals' houses and in-depth face-to-face interviews with individuals. For the furniture design in the post-communist era and into the free market economy,

observations in international exhibitions and semi-structured interviews were used, but also complemented with archival research. For the case study of Megatek, a combination of all methods was used.

Table 6: Timeperiod, method, data

Time-period	Method	Instruments	Data
Furniture design in communism	Archival research	Fieldwork in archives: state; individuals; digital	Material & Documents: Written, published, audio-visual
	Observation	Field visits in museums, houses & apartments	Notes: Measured typical layout; furniture; arrangements of furniture; usage of furniture; decorations
	Interviews	Individuals	Notes & transcribed text: Experience with furniture, housing layout, lifestyles, usage, decorates, utility
Furniture design in post-communism	Archival research	Fieldwork in archives: state; individuals; digital	Material & Documents: Written, published, audio-visual
	Interviews	Individuals/Suppliers/Furniture producers in Albania	Notes & transcribed text: Experience with furniture, housing layout, lifestyles, usage, decorates, utility
Furniture design in free market economy	Observation	International Exhibition	Notes: measured furniture, materials, usage, utility, decoration, transport, package, set up, & construction
	Interviews	International company representatives; Product Developers	Notes & transcribed text: experience in developing furniture for particular clients/contexts; drawings; measures, materials
Furniture design in Megatek	Databases	Professional experience & records	Personal professional archive of furniture product development: Excel files, drawings, layouts, designs, orders, notes, reports
	Interviews	Suppliers and clients	Notes & transcribed text: furniture materials & design in AL and from international suppliers

**Source: Author*

3.3.1 Observation

Observation is necessary in order to investigate the design of the DIY products for home furniture and decoration vis a vis social, cultural and economic context. In order to achieve this, elements to be considered are: the ways in which the product is initially

designed for DIY processes; the characteristics of packaging; the step by step design for users; issues of security; concerns of transportation as well as explosion. Observation will be done domestically, i.e. the case of Megatek DIY products, and internationally by participating in world trade fairs and site visiting in DIY companies, IKEA and Adore. Secondly, observation is an appropriate research method to explore how the DIY product design for home furniture and decoration affects the individual lifestyles and attitudes of the selected Megatek customers. This will be achieved through on-site visits at the households of the selected Megatek customers for the purposes of this research project.

Observations are a common method used in qualitative research, which can be used in many different environments. The advantage of observing is that it allows the researcher to create a comprehensive picture of a site and sense of the setting (Yin, 2014). This provides a rich description, which is often not seen when researching remotely. The use of an observation can also provide a cross-check on data obtained through other methods, such as interviews and surveys, which can strengthen the validity of the account. The reasons for using observation for this study are summarized below:

Table 7: Rationale for observation

Rationale	Description
Sense of setting	Gaining a comprehensive picture of the site and setting that was not previously available
Rich description	Documenting observed incidents for further interpretation
Institution values	The discovery of norms and values which are part of a company/organization/network
Giving voice	Observation allows the capture of experiences and give voice to those who are less articulate
Cross-check	Provide a cross-check on previous data captured

**Author review – Yin, 2014*

According to Punch (2005) observations can be structured, or unstructured, and can be conducted in their natural setting. The researcher can also choose to either be a participant in the observation or solely an observer (Yin, 2014). However, most studies are somewhere in the middle. In this study observations have been used in a complex way and in various locations primarily exhibitions and factories as well as household visits, in

which the researcher was based in the location, giving a rich description of the scene and settings, but also cross-checking the data gathered through secondary resources, document analysis and interviews.

Table 8: Overall data obtained through observations international exhibitions & Albania

Field visits			Data Usage		Product
Location of visit	Material	Number of Visits	House layout	Furniture design process	Research output
Museum Bunk' Art 1	Measurement of typical layout; furniture; data on arrangements of furniture; usage of furniture; decorations	5	Yes	Yes	Layout/Historical Data on type of Furniture; Furniture Arrangement; Materials
Museum Bunk' Art 2	Measurement of typical layout; furniture; data on arrangements of furniture; usage of furniture; decorations	2	Yes	Yes	
International Exhibitions	Materials, furniture utility, usage and decorations, layouts, measurement	28	Yes	Yes	Contemporary apartment layout international trends, product design process
Individual random houses/apartments	Measurement of layout; type of furniture used; comparison in timeframe of furniture & materials used	30	Yes	Yes	Layout/Typical apartment plan/type of furnitures

*Source: Author

Table above illustrates the sites of observation, material observed, number of visits and the data usage and the final research output for the analysis. During the fieldwork, three main locations have been used to collect data through observations: (i) museums in Albania; (ii) international exhibitions; (iii) individual houses in towns in Albania. During these observations, data collected include measurement of typical home layout and home furniture, data on arrangements and material and functionality of furniture, decorations and functions. At the end of the data collection, drawings and designs were produced for home layout and furniture as detailed above.

3.3.2 Archival research

Archival research is research involving primary sources held in an archives, a special collections library, or other repository. Archival sources can be manuscripts, documents, records (including electronic records), objects, sound and audiovisual materials, or other materials (Punch, 2005). Considering that the aim of this study is to

examine home furniture designs and products in communism and compare to the post-communist era, it was paramount to collect data through archives in addition to observations and interviews. As such through insightful and informative consultations with professors, peers and state officials, information was gathered regarding archival research in Albania.

The first challenge related to access of information and bureaucracy. There was a lot of time consuming involved due to waiting time to obtain access and then once inside the archive, finding aids, inventories, collection listings, registers had to be consulted in detail in order to obtain the codes to localise the intended documents. In some cases financial issues were a concern as some archives would require a fee for each document retrieved. This was the case with the Technical National Archive of Construction.

Two formats of documents were consulted: written or printed and audio-visual materials. The latter represented another challenge due to the necessity to watch and listen to long hour materials, mostly movies or documentaries during communism, and identify patterns of interior design of homes, layouts, plans and furniture. As the vast majority of archival sources have not been digitized yet, and online catalogues are frequently incomplete, it was paramount visit an archive in order to find out about the documents they hold, processing and procedures to entry.

Table 9: Data collected through archival research

Fieldwork				Data Usage		Product
Type of Archives	Materials	Format	Number of Visits	House layout	Furniture design process	Research output
Technical National Archive of Construction (in AL: Archive Qendror Technic i Ndërtimit)	Prototype Projects for housing buildings (Type No. 59/1, 59/2)	Documents/Written/ printed/published official paper documents/drawings/photographs	6	Yes		Layout/Typical apartment plan
Albanian State Archive (in AL: Arkivi i Shtetit Shqiptar)	Film coil (in AL: Bobina film)		34		Yes	Layout/Historical Data on Furniture Design Process
Official State Housing Registry & Mortgages Documents	House or apartment layout of individuals		5	Yes	Yes	Layout/Typical apartment plan
Central State Archive of Film (in AL: Arkivi Qendror Shtetëror i Filmit)	Documentaries on houses, apartment buildings, fairs, lifestyles, furnitures, overall life in Albania during communism	Audio-visual material in digital format	124		Yes	Type of furnitures; Lifestyles; Historical Data
Albanian Movies	Online audio-visual records		27	Yes	Yes	Type of furniture and arrangement

*Source: Author

3.3.3 Interviews

Online semi-structured interviews are used to gather information from Product Development Divisions in DIY companies worldwide regarding the ways in which they adapt the DIY product design in accordance with social, cultural and economic contexts. The online version of the interview is adapted in this case due to the difficulty in accessing these companies that are located in different states worldwide. In addition, suppliers of Megatek for DIY products for home furniture and decorations will be interviewed through face to face interviewing in order to explore their experience in customising and contextualizing DIY product design to the demands of the Albanian market and social, cultural and economic context. Finally, secondary resources, documents, statistical data on Megatek and the home furniture and DIY market in Albania have been consulted. The research project is wary of ethical considerations. Informed consent was required from all individuals who were asked to participate in the research project. The confidentiality of the information was guaranteed when requested.

According to Yin (2014), interviews are commonly used in a multi-strategy research approach. In the simplest sense, interviews involve asking questions and receiving answers from people in the discipline. Although, interviews can be used as the primary data collection method, it is advised to combine them with other methods to ensure validity and trustworthiness (Saunders, 2007). In this study, interviews were employed along with a number of other methods to validate the outcomes such as observation, secondary resources and document analysis, case study. The approach taken in this study for the interviews is the semi-structured approach in which the interviewer has questions as a guide, and serves as a check list of topics to be covered. This approach is typically used in a flexible research framework and provides many advantages.

The main advantage of a semi-structured approach is that it allows for freedom in the sequence of questions and does not dictate the exact wording. This is most useful when the interviewer is involved in the research and gives flexibility to discuss and expand on the responses. Subsequently, this interview structure is simpler than a fully structured interview but will still include the following: Introduction (a verbatim script); List of topics (heading and key questions); Set of associated prompts; Closing comments. In this research, a semi-structured interview was considered the most appropriate approach, as it allowed for the researcher to be embedded in the study and personally conducting the

interviews. Both face to face and online semi-structured interviews were used.

Table 10: Interviews data & research output

Data Collection				Data Usage		Product
Type of interviews	Respondet	Location	Number	House layout	Furniture design process	Research output
Online semi-structured short interviews	International company representatives; Product Developers	International: Exhibition or company's location	8		Yes	Material, design and usage of furniture at international level
In-depth face to face interviews	Product Developers/Sales & Export Managers		3		Yes	
Semi-structured face to face interviews	Suppliers and clients of Megatek	Tirana, Central Albania	7	Yes	Yes	Contemporary apartment layout, product design process & materials used; clients preferences & lifestyles
In-depth face to face interviews	Individuals	Saranda, Tirana, Vlora	4	Yes	Yes	Layout/Typical apartment plan/type of furniture in communism

*Source: Author

Three main types of interviews were used as illustrated above. First, online semi structured interviews with international company representatives and product developers. This was then divided into primary and secondary companies for Megatek as illustrated in the following tables. Then face-to-face in-depth interviews were used to talk to individuals who had witnessed communism and could bear witness to home furniture and house layout at the time. Semi-structured were used with suppliers and clients of Megatek to understand DIY furniture product design. The type of main questions and matrix of analysis is presented below.

Table 11: Interviews guide and matrix of analysis

Questions	Interviewee I	Interviewee 2	Interviewee <i>n</i>
Introduction	Data	Data	Data
Consent	Data	Data	Data
<i>Production starting point/inception</i>	Data	Data	Data
When did you first start producing?	Data	Data	Data
What was your capacity?	Data	Data	Data
Which was your first design?	Data	Data	Data
Which was your first market?	Data	Data	Data
Which are your first DIY costumers?	Data	Data	Data
<i>Development of product design</i>	Data	Data	Data
What are the fist products that the company started with?	Data	Data	Data
How many designs did you start with?	Data	Data	Data
How many designs do you have now?	Data	Data	Data
Which are the first 5 best designs?	Data	Data	Data
If you improved them, how did it happen?	Data	Data	Data
Which are the worst designs?	Data	Data	Data
Why they were not successful?	Data	Data	Data
Which is the best market?	Data	Data	Data
Current development and future trends	Data	Data	Data
Where do you sell today?	Data	Data	Data
What are today best sold designs?	Data	Data	Data
Others	Data	Data	Data
<i>Conclusions</i>	Data	Data	Data

**Source: Author*

As this is a qualitative research, the sampling technique was intentional based on the rationale of each method applied and the research questions. The table below summarizes the field visits at international exhibitions, fairs, companies carried out during the fieldwork, which was completed in two years, 2015 and 2016. In addition, it also provides a summary of the interviews conducted in person with representatives of various companies, primarily product manager, sales manager, export manager or owners at the

level of global DIY retailers. In total 28 exhibitions and fairs were visited in 2015 and 2016 at an average of 4 days per exhibition.

Table 12: Summary of sample for data collection at international level

Overview of data collection 2015 & 2016		
	2015	2016
Exhibition	14	14
Countries	5	5
Cities	9	9
Companies contacted	48	39
Meetings with representatives of companies	27	31

**Source: Author*

This fieldwork was carried out in 5 different countries and in 9 different cities for 2015 and the same for 2016. During the exhibitions, observation was carried out as well as initial contacts and brief interviews with companies' representatives, which were then turned into semi-structured interviews via email. A total of 48 companies were contacted in 2015 and 39 in 2016 with data gathered through brief interviews. After that for 2015, there were a total of 27 individual insightful meetings and 31 for 2016. The detailed summary is presented below:

Table 13: Data collection Sample -Detailed

Fieldwork for observation: Data collection for 2015 and 2016								
#	Exhibition	Aim/Subject	Method	2015	2016	Country	City	Organizer
1	Heimtex	Home & contract textiles & the global benchmark for quality textiles of design/innovative functionality	Observation of product trends/interviews with representative of companies	14-17/01/2015	12 - 15/01/2016	Germany	Frankfurt	Messe Frankfurt Exhibition GmbH EBU 75, Heimtextil Team Ludwig-Erhard-Anlage 1
2	Domotex	Floor Covering, Decoration, Interior Design, Carpets, Rugs, Mats, Wood And Parquet	Observation of product trends/interviews with representative of companies	17-20/01/2015	16 - 19/01/2016		Hannover	Deutsche Messe
3	Imm	The international interiors show	Observation of product and trends	17-20/01/2015	18- 24/01/2016		Koln	Koelnmesse GmbH
4	Imob	Furniture & Furnishing, Industry of wood and accessories	Observation of product and trends	27-01/02/2015	26-31/01/2016	Turkey	Istanbul	Istanbul Trade Fairs Inc.
5	Homi	Traditional Furniture, Home Textiles etc. in the Building Construction industry	Observation of product and trends		29/01-02/02/2016	Italy	Milan	Fiera Milano /EXPO

6	Ambiente	Dining, Giving, Living	Observation of product and trends	13-17/02/2015	12-16/02/2016	Germany	Frankfurt	Messe Frankfurt - Ifo - Trade Fair Index
7	Wohn& Interier	International Fair for Dream Interiors, Design, Lifestyle, Accessories, Home Entertainment and Garden	Observation of product trends/interviews with representative of companies	7-15/03/2015	5-13/03/2016	Austria	Vienna	Reed Messe Wien GmbH
8	CIFF	Furniture & Furnishing, Design & Home Interior, Woodworking Industry & Furniture	Observation of product trends/interviews with representative of companies	18-22/03/2015	18-22/03/2016	China	Guangzhou	China Foreign Trade Guangzhou Exhibition General Corporation
9	Canton Fair	Building Material and Lighting equipment	Through contact person visit factories for observation on product development	15-19/04/2015	15-19/04/2016			China import and export
		Furniture and Home decoration		23-27/04/2015	23-27/04/2016			
		Textile Garments & Recreation		31/04/-04/05/2015	31/04/-04/05/2016			
10	Evtex	Home Furnishings & Home Textiles industry	Observation of product and trends	19-23/05/2015	17-21/05/2016	Turkey	Istanbul	Istanbul Trade Fairs Inc.
11	Idea	Worldwide event for the furniture, design and interior decoration. Innovation Design Expo Area	Observation of product and trends		12-16/04/2016	Italy	Bergamo	Ecoarea Srl

12	XYLEXPO	Biennial world exhibition dedicated to woodworking technologies and furniture supplies	Observation of product and trends		24-28/05/2016		Milan	CEPRA SPA
13	Cersaie	International Exhibition of Ceramic Tile and Bathroom Furnishings	Observation of product and trends	28/09-02/10/2016	26-30/09/2016		Bologna	Edi.Cer. spa & Bologna Fair
14	Canton Fair	Building Material and Lighting equipment	Through contact person visit factories for observation on product development	15-19/10/2015	15-19/10/2016	China	Guangzhou	China import and export
		Furniture and Home decoration		23-27/10/2015	23-27/10/2016			
		Textile Garments & Recreation		31/10-04/11/2015	31/10-04/11/2016			

3.4 Case study of Megatek

The case study of the DIY retailer in Albania, Megatek SA is selected for analysis. A case study is the examination of an instance or action, which explores a contemporary phenomenon in a real life setting (Adler & Adler, 2011). Typically, a case study is an in-depth exploration of a specific topic from multiple perspectives (Simons, 2009). The case study is chosen in this research in order to explain complex links in real-life and gather information and data that do not exist previously. The case study method can be used with either single or multiple cases. In this research a single case study is adopted.

A single case study can be carried out when the researcher has access to a situation that was previously inaccessible, and enables the experience and complexity of a situation to be studied in depth. In this study, the exploratory nature of the research meant that an intrinsic scheme was used in a single in-depth case study. The objective of conducting a single case study was not to provide a formal generalized result, but instead to present a rich portrayal, to enhance previous data collection.

First, Megatek was selected as a case study for issues of accessibility to databases of furniture product designs and DIY home furniture product designs. This access is related to my professional experience as product developer and procurement manager at Megatek for more than 8 years. Second, Megatek was selected because it represents the only successful DIY retailer in Albania so far that has been able to effectively embrace mass customisation and respond to the needs of the customers. Third, Megatek is selected because contrary to other firms that have failed and forced to close down, Megatek is expanding and its fundamental rule is the integration of the needs and preferences of customers in product design and development. So it has been able to adapt to the Albanian context.

All this makes Megatek an important case study for the aim of this study. This case study provides the data for the exploration of home furniture design and development in free market economy in Albania and how mass customisation is being performed in the Albanian context. Mass customisation cannot be understood when it comes to home furniture without the role of Megatek and the emergence of DIY home furniture designs promoted by Megatek.

In this light, the criteria of choosing Megatek have been pragmatic, i.e. accessibility to database; scarcity, i.e. it is the only major DIY retailer in Albania with local

and international product design and development and no prior study exist in this area; relevance, i.e. Megatek adaption to the Albanian context, market and customers' need could provide practical insights and a roadmap for the business sector in the future.

The first table represents the observations and interviews done with primary companies that have implemented changes in DIY products in the product design and development process. The second table represents companies that Megatek receives supported materials and accessories for home furniture.

Table 14: Sample for case study Megatek: Primary companies – interviews and observation

No.	Company Name	Location	Line production	Person interviewed /Position	Time calendar	Activities	Instruments/method technique
1	Guangxin Foreign Company Ltd	Guangzhou, China	Furniture production	General Manager; Marketing and Export Manager; Sales Representative	Fieldwork 2015 & 2016	Field visit, exhibition attendance, meeting with person in charge	Notes from observation in exhibition & factory field visit; initial briefing interviews; full responses via email in English
2	Shanghai Chouqin Furniture Ltd	Shanghai, China	Furniture production	Export Manager; Sales Manager	Fieldwork 2015 & 2016	Field visit, exhibition attendance, meeting with person in charge	Notes from observation in exhibition & factory field visit; initial briefing interviews; full responses via email in English
3	Adore Ltd	Ankara, Turkey	Furniture production	Murat Kayarlar: Export Manager Volcan Ulusoy: Engineer and Production Coordinator	Fieldwork 2015 & 2016	Field visit, exhibition attendance, meeting with person in charge	Notes from observation in exhibition & factory field visit; initial briefing interviews; full responses via email in English
4	Golden Casa Shpk	Durres, Albania	Furniture production	Ledia Sulo: Production Manager	Fieldwork 2015 & 2016	Field visit, meeting with person in charge	Notes from observation in factory field visit; in-depth interviews in person; recording and transcription
5	Ibrahim Xheka Shpk	Different locatons, Albania	Furniture production	Ibrahim Xheka: Owner Gerta Xheka: Production Manager	Fieldwork 2015 & 2016	Field visit, meeting with person in charge	Notes from observation in factory field visit; in-depth interviews in person; recording and transcription

Table 15: Sample for case study Megatek: Secondary companies – interviews and observations

No.	Company Name	Location	Line production	Person interviewed /Position	Time calendar	Activities	Instruments/method technique
1	Anji Stronger Comp., Ltd	Anji, China	Furniture production	Sales Manager & Product Manager	Fieldwork 2015 & 2016	Field visit in furniture production company; Meetings with the Sales Manager & Product Manager	Notes from observation factory field visit; initial briefing interviews; full responses via email in English
2	Hangzhou MAVAW Bathroom Technology Co.,Ltd.	Hangzhou, China	Bathroom sanitary ware	Export Manager & Deputy Product Developer	Fieldwork 2015 & 2016	Field visit in furniture production company; Meetings with the General Manager product development	Notes from observation factory field visit; initial briefing interviews; full responses via email in English
3	Huayi Lighting Company	Zhongshan, China	Lighting and Lighting equipment	Export & Marketing Manager	Fieldwork 2015 & 2016	Field visit in furniture production company; Meetings with the General Manager product development	Notes from observation factory field visit; initial briefing interviews; full responses via email in English
4	Dengshi Garden	Nanjing, China	Garden furniture and accessories	Wu Dengshi: CEO and Product Developer	Fieldwork 2015 & 2016	Field visit in furniture production company; Meetings with the General Manager product development	Notes from observation factory field visit; initial briefing interviews; full responses via email in English
5	Jingui Sanitary furniture	Hangzho, China	Bathroom Furniture	Export Manager	Fieldwork 2015 & 2016	Field visit in furniture production company; Meetings with the General Manager product development	Notes from observation factory field visit; initial briefing interviews; full responses via email in English

3.5 Data analysis approach

The nature of this study means that it is most appropriate to create codes entirely from the data, in an exploratory fashion as this provides a richer description of the overall

data and allows for more detailed analysis. This analysis was done in six main steps as outlined below.

Table 16: Tasks and steps for data analysis

No.	Task	Description	Technique	Research Question
1.	Familiarization with data I	Transcribing, reading and re-reading, noting initial ideas	Transcribed interviews in word document; printed out and made notes by hand; input notes into data sheets	RQ1 & subRQs
2.	Familiarization with data II	Visual data familiarization collected through observation; noting initial ideas	Inputting ideas and notes into a data sheet on excel; designing from scratch on AutoCAD	RQ1 & subRQs
3.	Design on AutoCAD	Detailed design of prototypes of houses and furniture according to different timeframes	In addition to detailed design on AutoCAD, notes are inputted on data sheet and initial ideas are also kept by hand writing	RQ1 & subRQs
4.	Constructing themes for analysis	Following the data transcription from interviews, they were grouped into themes as per RQs	From data sheets and handwritten notes, themes were created as per RQs	RQ1 & subRQs
5.	Analysis	Critical appraisal of the entire data set and links to theory	Using literature review, documents consulted, data sets and designs, an initial analysis was compiled	RQ1 & subRQs
6.	Integration and interpretation	Data from all methods and techniques are interpreted and integrated together	Integration and analysis within the conceptual framework; conclusions	RQ1 & subRQs

**Source: Author*

Establishing trustworthiness is an important consideration when using a flexible, qualitative research approach; as a result it is important to understand what makes a valid piece of research. Robson (2011) highlighted four elements of validation, which can be used to validate good quality research; these can be seen below.

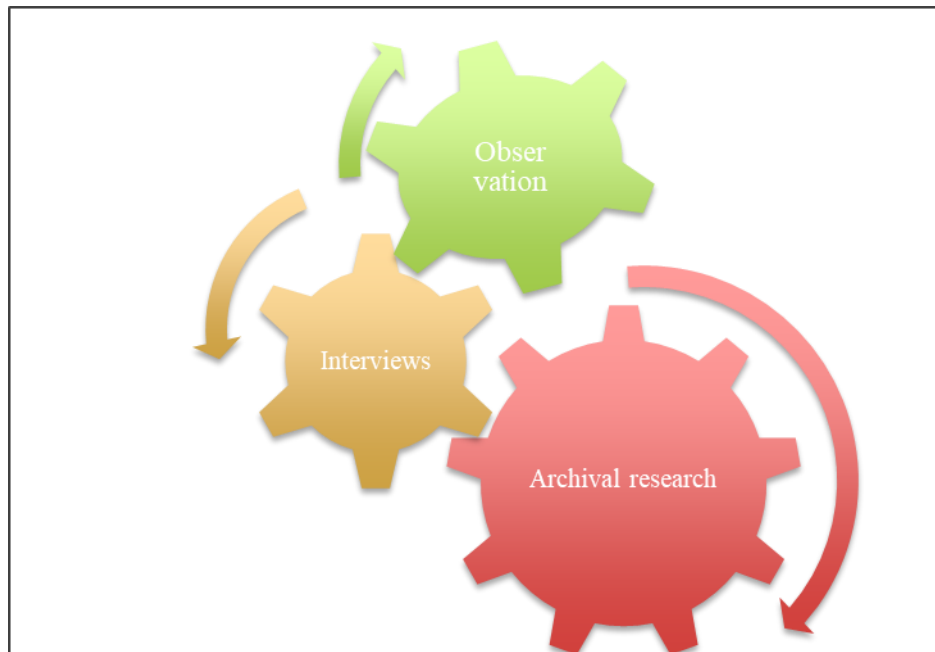
Table 17: Elements for validation of qualitative research

Element for validation	Description
Interpretation of data	Ensuring that there is a methodological framework in place before interpretation and analysis takes place;
Theory	Ensuring alternative explanations are considered in the phenomena being studied;
Involvement of respondents	A positive or negative bias based on the level of involvement and exposure of the respondents
Triangulation	Helps to ensure validation through the use of more than one method in the research

**Source: Author review based on Yin, 2014*

In this study the primary method chosen to validate the research was triangulation. Triangulation, involves using multiple sources to enhance the rigor of the research. In this study, data triangulation is used, which means the use of more than one method of data collection as shown below.

Figure 14: Data triangulation for this study



**Source: Author*

3.6 Merits and limits

The research approach was selected upon reflection on issues of epistemology, ontology and axiology. Secondly, the rationale and aim of the study were considered along with the constraints or opportunities offered by the discipline itself and the current body of knowledge on the topic. The difference between quantitative and qualitative research changes the ways in which research is conducted and data are collected and analysed. This study adopts a qualitative research approach and it focuses on a particular case study in an attempt to analyse in depth the product development of home furniture and DIY products in Albania. Contrary to quantitative research, which attempts to verify the hypotheses by setting clear scope of the research, this study – as a qualitative research – works in the context of discovery and is much more open-ended. This is also due to the lack of previous data on the selected topic. While at first glance this might be considered as the main limitation of study – qualitative approach on a topic where data is missing – it also constitutes one of the main merits of the methodology approach selected for the study. The open-ended, explanatory, discovery and analytical framework contributes to the existing knowledge on home furniture design in Albania with a rich plethora of data previously unavailable. What is more, it enriched the availability of material and data for future researchers to conduct further research on this topic.

A second limitation is that of the sample procedure and size very much linked to the nature of the qualitative research. As a qualitative research, it was challenging to determine the procedure and size of sample for the study. This meant that it was difficult to know how much data was necessary to collect. Therefore, researcher gathered data until empirical saturation was reached. This implied doing field work over a long period of time – 2014 to 2017 – while at the same time working on data analysis and interpretation. As such research was conducted in a cyclical way without a clear-cut line between data collection and data analysis. This constitutes also a merit of the study as this exploratory and analytical approach allowed for considerable data collection and new insights into the topic. Considering that this topic represents an underexplored research area with limited availability of previous studies and resources, the combination of various stages of fieldwork, both national and international, coupled with various methods - interviews,

archival research and observations – is the most adequate methodological approach.

Third, conducting fieldwork in different locations and over different timeframes proved to be extremely challenging and costly. In addition to financial cost incurred during international fieldwork – observations in fairs and exhibitions and in-depth interviews – other financial costs incurred while doing archival research in Albania. While financial costs were covered by the researcher, dealing with bureaucracy and the limited access to information was an even bigger challenge. This was particularly the case for archival research. There was a lot of time consuming involved due to waiting time to obtain access and then once inside the archive, finding aids, inventories, collection listings, registers had to be consulted in detail in order to obtain the codes to localise the intended documents. Two formats of documents were consulted: written or printed and audio-visual materials. The latter represented another challenge due to the necessity to watch and listen to long hour materials, mostly movies or documentaries during communism, and identify patterns of interior design of homes, layouts, plans and furniture. As the vast majority of archival sources have not been digitized yet, and online catalogues are frequently incomplete, it was paramount visit an archive in order to find out about the documents they hold, processing and procedures to entry.

Nonetheless the pros of adopting a qualitative approach far outweigh the cons. The main merit in this case is that it allows for an in-depth analysis of the case study and provides data, insights and conclusions for a topic that have received almost no scientific attention before. Even though it is very difficult to generalize the results, this study does not seek to build a theory. It is primarily exploratory and contributes by bringing new knowledge to an under-explored research topic in the case of Albania. Moreover, this study provides a novel framework for examining home furniture design and product development in emerging democracies such as the case of Albania. It also provides an explanatory framework on how to understand and incorporate the behaviour of consumers in such environments and the most appropriate mechanisms businesses have to respond to the consumers' needs and constraints. In addition, the thesis provides also a potentially suitable framework to examine similar countries to Albania and also rely on the development of home furniture as a proxy for studying consumer behaviour.

CHAPTER IV – REINVENTING FURNITURE DESIGN IN ALBANIA

This chapter presents the findings and conducts the analysis of the entire research. The chapter has three sub-chapters: first, it presents the findings of the developments of furniture design during communism; second, it presents the findings of the ways in which furniture design has been transformed during the post-communist era and third, it delves into the case study of Megatek. This provides the contextual background of the research into DIY as it explores the case of Albania.

4.1 Furniture design in communism: Mass production political dogma

4.1.1 Political, historical and economic context during communism in Albania

Albanian scholars, Aliaj, Dhamo, Shutina,³⁴ (2010), highlighted in the book *Between Vacuum and Energy*, how important it is to understand the development of a country's territory and how one must pay heed to historical context and especially to the hindrances posed by the past, the reasons and forms of neglect, as well as society's reaction to this neglect. Kolevica, P (2004), states in his book *Architecture and Dictatorship* that architecture is intertwined with politic dogma. In his book *Interior design since 1900* Massey, A (2008) introduces how enmeshed are the interior spaces and architectural shell with the political, historic and economic context. Following the Albanian anthropologist Lelaj, O. (2005) proclaims; we need to use a zoom lens to go deeper into daily life to understand the new historic, economic, socio-political and cultural reality paradigm of the communist era to be able to analyse, understand and criticize it.

The socialist pathway of Albanian society and processes such as industrialization, urbanization and industrial urbanism, modernization, the creation of a new social class, the working class and their life style cannot be understood outside of the centralized and unified communist government scheme through which the development and modernization

³⁴ Aliaj,B. Dhamo,S Co-PLAN's board members and Shutina,D , Executive director. Co-PLAN is a pioneering Albanian civil society organization that uses its urban planning and administration expertise in order to promote the development of good governance in society.

of society was projected. The political sphere influenced every aspect of everyday life including design because state apparatuses controlled the design process. This process impacted people's behaviour and choices whether we wanted it or not and in the long run shaped design and lifestyle. The regime demonstrated and increased their power by using urban planning and architecture, building new towns and huge industries and reconstructing cities and villages. The architecture projected power, making people feeling inadequate and intimidated. The centralizing of the design process as a whole, and with regard to furniture in particular, was heavily influenced by the ideology of the communist regime and served as a means of propaganda, signalling power of the ruler and the state that were to be feared and respected (Sudjic, 2005).

The years from the 1930's to the 1990's can be divided into three periods in which the economy and living standards improved significantly. First, the fascist occupation brought investment, urbanization, increased education, and the development of infrastructure; the second period through the 60s brought the intensification of agriculture, the draining of wetlands, the entry of mechanized farming and fertilization, and electrification. The third period is a dynamic journey towards joining the European Union.

This goal of this research isn't to go deep into the 1930's, but to highlight that there has been traces of a consistent architectural style and design before the communist regime took over. Italian architecture in Albania has a considerable impact on the development of the city, which has been noted by many Albanian scholars. Different studies have been made on urban planning and architecture addressing Albanian under fascist period but there are a few studies focusing on interior layouts and exterior ornaments, contributing valuable information for the design of tradition Albanian house ornamentation.

The time frame that lies between 45'-90' is impregnated with events very important in the international arena, which is also related with Albania's position within the bloc of Eastern countries. The decisions taken during this phase influenced all further developments. In the early 50's the Project's State enterprise (Ndermarja e Projektit) was established. Later, Albania seceded from Yugoslavia in 1948 and started a series of breaks from other Eastern bloc countries, beginning with the Soviet Union in 1961, and later on from other countries such as Czechoslovakia, Germany, Hungary, Eastern Europe, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, to end with the secession from China in 1978.

During the occupation by Italian fascists, many investments were directed at road construction, while the monetary program was liberated from the constraints of the gold

exchange standard during these years. Between 1960 and 1980, Albania experienced rapid economic growth spurred on by Soviet aid and continuing on to Chinese aid. In Moscow in 1956, at the 20th Congress of the Soviet Union Communist Party (KPS), Khrushchev proclaimed that it was time to thaw the policies of Stalin, and this marked the break line with all the Eastern Bloc countries and Albania which then found itself completely isolated. It adopted the course of building socialism with its "forces", coming to be known as the only Stalinist country in the world. At the end of Communism, Bulgaria and Romania were already industrialized countries, where over 70 per cent of the population lived in cities. In contrast, 63 percent of the Albanian population still lived in the countryside and only in the year 2011 has the urban population started to take a small advantage from the rural population (Census-AI,2011).

The main focus during the post-war phase, was on reconstruction of the country. The goal was of transforming Albania from a purely agriculture country to an agricultural-industrial country. This goal was outlined during the 3rd Congress of the SMP held in 1956 where directions were decided upon to accelerate the collectivization of agriculture and deployment of the socialist relations to the village that was supposed to lead to the conclusion of the economic base of socialism (1981, pp. 269, 291)³⁵. With the establishment of agriculture and manufacturing, Albanian agriculture reached some measurable indicators in yields and production levels through increasing the level of mechanization, chemicals and high levels of irrigation, transport and processing of agro-food products, forms of organization and management, the introduction of new lands under culture, and the introduction of light industry factories and processing.

The first communist government of Albania in the period 1945-1946, conducted several phases of a radical agrarian reform to expropriate using the slogan "The land belongs to the tiller." Landowners, state-owned land, land held by foreign capital or owned by religious institutions, were redistributed in favour of the poor villagers. Under the Constitution, all agricultural land, the organization of production, marketing and production tools were all structured and administered in agricultural cooperatives and state farms.

The year 1983 found Albania with a developed industry, especially as compared to the year 1938 (the first industrial indicators are since Italian regime in Albania). The principle developments were in well-controlled, centralized planning. Exploitation of the natural domestic resources was a multi-faced industry including the oil industry, mining industry right down to the food industry. Industry from an economic standpoint can be

³⁵ Instituti i Studimeve Marksiste-Leniniste, (1981) *Historia e PPSH*, botimi i dytë, Shtëpia Botuese "8 Nëntori", Tiranë 1981.

divided into two main groups: industry of production machinery industry that produces consumable goods.

Up until the '80s, as in many other eastern countries with a socialist economy and up until the beginning of the fall, rapid economic growth was recorded. However, in the last decade of the '80s and '90s, the Albanian economy showed signs of a total crisis, consumer goods became scarce, exports fell, while imports necessary to keep up with the needs of the country were added continuously, monetary reserves fell in its entirety, and domestic production in particular the agro-food sector dived at disturbing rates (Civici,A. 2012).

The country of the People's Republic of Albania (PRA) in 1946, and later on in 1976 renamed the People's Republic of Albania (PSRA) followed a highly centralized economic system based on the Communist Bloc Camp model, best-known for its Stalinist style of state administration³⁶. The central planning departments as explained in the subchapter above, made decisions on the distribution of national income and welfare benefits. As a form of welfare provision, public housing was made available to individual families.

The following section will analyze the typology of housing in Albania in a chronological way, and in addition, will set this typology in its historic context. The following subchapters will explore and investigate variables for the particular type of housing in particular time periods.

4.1.2 House layout

The historical development of housing policy, has accompanied both urbanisation and economic development. Important changes in urban planning policies and the promotion of housing construction were proposed by the government in the 1958 AQTN (Arkivi Qëndror Teknik i Ndërtimit). A global trend of urban and architectural design during the communist time, regardless of political ideologies, was manual-based design (Dhamo,S., Thomai,Gj., Aliaj,B. 2016). The most used manual versions of the former communist bloc camp were "Sprovoçnik" and "tehnika stavbi mjesta". The authors of the book *Tirana - Qyteti I ndaluar* proclaimed that drastic interventions in the city or projects and major reconstruction efforts after World War II, could only respond to a manual-based

³⁶ Albania had a reputation for its Stalinist style of state administration but less is to be highlight about the impact of the architectural style of Stalin's era, which was characterized by grandeur, decorativism and monumentalism (Wilk, 2006).

design that seemed to provide almost instantaneous and rapid response to any problem. According to Hall, D (1994,pg 95), during the period of post-World War II construction, the state faced the need to rebuild 62,000 homes destroyed by the war and to keep up with the rapidly-growing population. By 1970, the number of newly built apartments reached 185,000.

After the 60's, the natural demographic movement from the village to the city was interrupted, and began to be centrally controlled and directed. During the following years, the biggest population started to be concentrated in the big cities (INSTAT 2001). In the urban areas construction was carried out by the state, which provided the families with permission to use the apartment. On the other hand, in rural areas houses were allowed to be built by private citizens and family members could obtain a loan from the state. For this reason, the development of the Albanian housing was influenced by two factors, firstly, the implementation of a centralized and closed economy to the international economy gradually causing a lack of investment and secondly, the implementation of functional architecture and urban planning solutions in the conditions of centralized planning.

In the early periods, housing³⁷ studies are almost non-existent. After the Albanian Independence, there are several population censuses (1918, 1923, 1926, 1930) but very little data on dwellings were recorded or the data did not cover the whole territory of Albania. For assessing the state of dwellings in Albania, recent surveys (1979, 1989, 2001) have been used by the researcher and scholars. At the beginning of 2001, the registration of dwellings and all the characteristics related to it such as construction period, construction type, number of floors, floor area in the flat, infra-structure such as telephone and electrification was completed.

The construction started from unused land so that the housing situation would be solved with fewer problems. In addition, there was space for "private construction" which were mainly allowed on the periphery and references to some partial studies in other parts of the city. It is needed clarify the meaning of "private construction", which does not denote a housing market and real estate because that was completely controlled by the state. It refers to Do It Yourself (DIY) construction, from those families that chose to individually solve the problem of housing within the rules of the plan and of the time, in this view to face the construction of an apartment by themselves using modest means. Over

³⁷ Housing, apartment was considered in 1989 every residential unit where a special family lives. But there are other studies that households consider to be households, although there may be two or three families in a dwelling. But in 2001 the residential unit was called an area or set of areas that had an independent entrance to the yard and patio. (Survey Manual, REPOBA 2001, INSTAT, Tirana 2001.)

time, even this opportunity almost reached zero. In the transcription of an interview nr V, (Lelaj,o. 2015), stated that the price of the house was 300 000 All during the 70's. Most could not afford this, but even those that could afford it financially had other political hurdles to jump over.

During the different periods the development of the Albanian housing has reflected the economic, political and social relations of the society (Misja V., Misja A. 2004). The assessment of the dwelling and its conditions serves to measure the population level and to predict the level of demand in the future. Analyses show, from the report of the Population's Registration 2001, that until 1990 the Albania's housing stock is a relatively new stock (Annex 3) and 72% are built during years 1961-1990 with the main characteristic being low height.

Table 18 Building's number by Years of Construction

Year	Number			%			Urban VS Rural	
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
before 1945	40438	17042	23396	11%	20%	8%	42%	58%
1945-1960	68468	16510	51958	18%	19%	18%	24%	76%
1961-1980	154701	29932	124769	41%	35%	42%	19%	81%
1981-1990	115727	22074	93653	31%	26%	32%	19%	81%
Total	379334	85558	293776	100%	100%	100%	23%	77%

**Source: Author based on INSTAT 2004 tab review*

However, from the total stock of housing during the years in study, the biggest percentage has been built in rural areas. Even so, is evident that the investment in the housing construction in the cities has increased in percentage (INSTAT,1.5.1), due to increasing of population in the Urban area from, 1945 to 1980 33% of population were living in cities, up from 15.4% in 1938 (E.SH.,1985).

Table 19 Population village/city years 1938/1983

Vitet	Popullsia (mijë banorë)	Në %		Dendësia (ban.km ²)
		Qytet	Fshat	
1938	1040.4	15.4	84.6	36.2
1983	2841.3	33.8	66.2	98.8

Source Albanian Enciclopedi 1977, pg838*

After the Second World War, the most urgent provisions taken from the

government were to build dwellings following an organized plan (E.Sh.,1985). The first step was to reconstruct the old ones partially demolished from the war and rebuild completely destroyed buildings. Second, due to the high demands for shelter, collective residential houses started to be built from 1-2 floors to 4,5, and even 6 floors.

Table 20 ; Buildings for residential purposes by building characteristics and period of construction until 1990

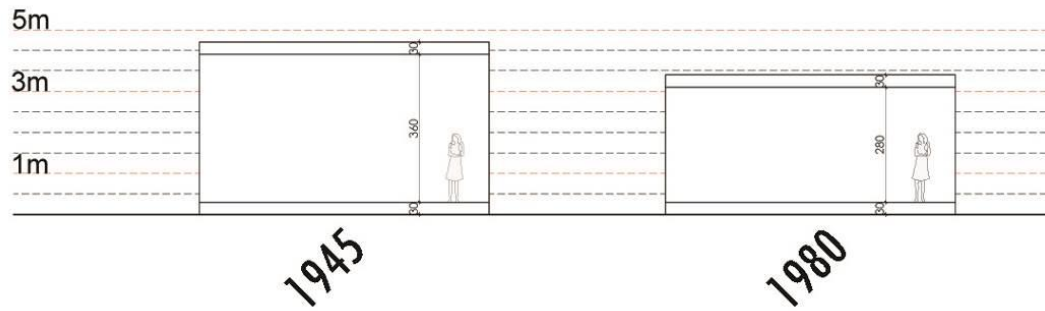
Building characteristics	Period of construction						
	Total	Before 1960		1961-1980		1981-1990	
Total	598,267	44,195		78,495	178%	64,943	165%
Number of floors							
1	510,528	37,418	85%	67,404	86%	56,826	88%
2	60,862	5,383	12%	6,393	8%	4,190	6%
3-5	20,804	1,199	3%	4,192	5%	3,304	5%
6-10	5,575	190	0%	492	1%	612	1%
11+	498	5	0%	14	0%	11	0%

**Source: Author from the review of INSTAT Tabl 1.5.1*

The residential buildings began to be built after the 1960s, when the Projects Institute sent out the first prototype residential project in the year 1959 (Check project 59/1 and 59/2). During the years 60' to 90' the individual housing and two floor buildings covered 94% of the total number of houses constructed. Constructions more than 6 floors started to be built after the 60's. During the 80's to the 90's, the number of houses increased by 78% compared with the period 45'-80' but due to 66% of the population being rural, still 70% of built houses during this period were the individual house typology (INSTAT,1.5.1). Until the 1990s in Albania, there were only 30 buildings with 11 floors.

The reasons given by urban planners and economists for this phenomenon are: firstly, a very low value of land, secondly a non-existent market for construction, and real estate entirely controlled by the state. This meant that the urbanization pressure was limited. The heights have been changed with new residential building after WWII, which had to do with the technical and economic opportunities of the time. Urban planning established a certain policy regarding floor height and density of housing, which during the communist time changed very little. Thus, the area inside cities and along main roads could be built with a maximum height of 4 floors and only a few buildings with architectural importance within the centre would be 5 floors. The rest of the city was proposed to be built with the lowest floor height of 1 or 2 floors.

Figure 15 The heights of the houses during years 45-80



*Source: Author based on literature review

The house's height has been getting shorter from 320cm to 280cm. From the economic point of view using, more costly materials for taller heights of the apartment, like concrete and iron, did not prove cost-effective for the population and density of Albanian cities (Dhamo,S., Thomai,Gj., Aliaj,B. 2016). The height of floors proposed by the 1957-1958 Plan remained almost unchanged until the early 1990s, with very few exceptions mostly after 70s in the city centre with construction types of 5 and 6 floors and in the early 80's where some special cases that reached 7-9 floors. Economizing the technical building elements (such as infrastructure, height of floors, etc.), used land more efficiently especially along the main roads, despite the lack of market, the aesthetic concern displayed was a model towards developing. In this light, 1959 the first drawing of prototype house layouts, buildings, urban assembles, and neighbourhoods started. The economy of the dwelling focused on functionality, its recurrence in the floor in line or cross shape. To minimize the cost, was the height of the floor was lowered in the kitchen area as well.

Most of the cities were built during the industrializing years of the 60's. In the meantime, the development of the building materials industry, in spite of high housing requirements, enabled the standardization of the building. This brought about the typing of dwellings by unifying the design element. During the socialist era, political influences produced almost identical construction and a somehow uniform environment. The main Instrument of urban planning and administration was a Regulatory Plan. The principles of housing design were based on building economical and functional dwellings to meet basic needs- especially post WW2 increased immediate need of building this type of dwelling. Housing, as a result, and residential building appeared almost the same, even across different neighbourhood or cities, and newly-residential environments, indoor and outdoor,

appeared monotonous (“Sometimes, I was confusing my house,” proclaimed the interview nr E4).

Photo 1 Similarity in different region Street “21 Dhjetori” , Tirane. Year's 70 second picture panelled building in Russia year 60'



**Source: Social media*

The same impact of political dogma affected the aesthetic aspects of design in other communist countries including China (Yang, L.; Wang, Y. 1992), and in Russia where the standardized panel buildings were relieved of any architectural details that weren't functional, it was defined by straight, plain lines (Varga-Harris, 2008). In Albania, “Ornamentalism” was replaced with “Minimalism” as design dramatically shifted from Italian and Austrian interior and exteriors design elements that had been prominent before, to communist era realities. Prefabricated residential buildings, often later criticized as a monotone building weren't new for the Eastern Bloc countries, where earlier in the XIX century the basic concepts of modern urbanism emerged from Garnier T. (1904), Corbusier (1922) and the CIAM Congress 1956. These, in addition to the Athenian Charter, sanctioned the principles of modern architecture and urbanism that guided European architecture up to the 60's , but in Albania started to guide from years 60' until the 1990s.

The quality of the residential building is an indicator of the quality of life, therefore the analysis on the layout of the house will go in detail to illustrate the correlation. The “Socialist” house layout is comprised of a living room, balcony, bathroom, bedroom (one, two or few three), and a kitchen which was called the “annex”.

- The Living room, often is off the balcony, and due to economized space and cost was attached to the annex.
- In bedrooms, the prefabricated system enlarged the surface of the bedroom which was almost the same surface with the living room. After the 70's, the houses with two bedrooms were constructed with wood flooring.
- The Kitchen which was called the “annex”. is normally never used for

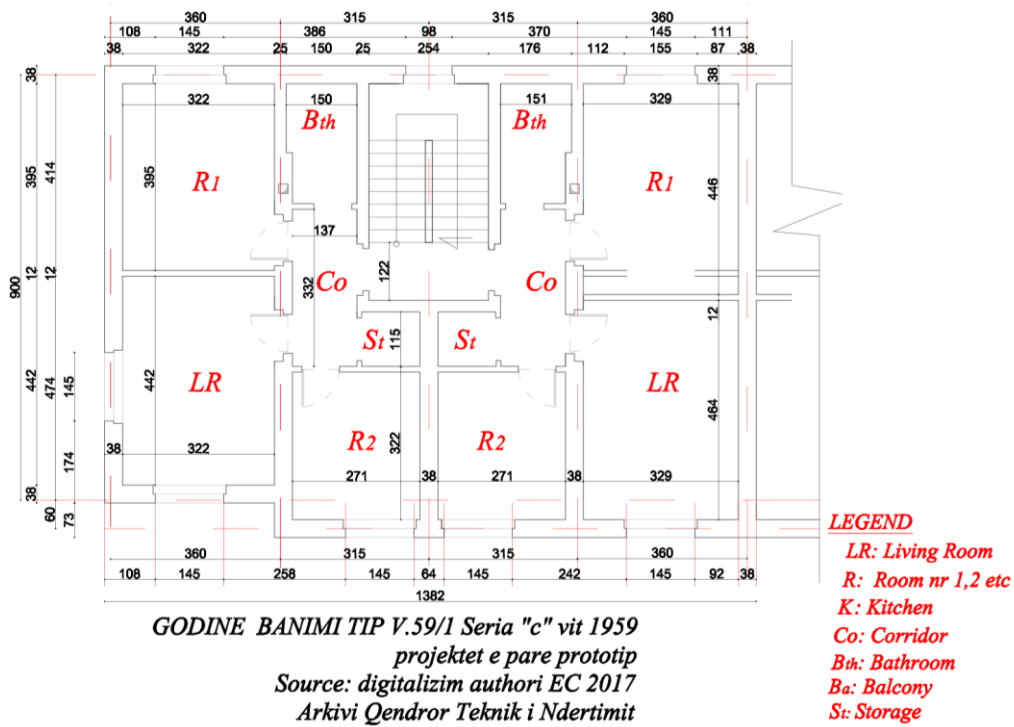
cooking because the cooking equipment was a four-legged metal frame cooker called a “furnella” fueled with horrible-smelling kerosene fuel, and had to be used in the bathroom, or less commonly on the balcony as a place to cook. The surface of this area was minimized to minimize the cost of the building.

- The balcony was used for many different reasons ranging from storage space to cooking and even as a place to relax. The balcony was a standard one depending on the building prototype but it was around 4m² until later after the 90’s when balconies could also be a veranda.
- Bathrooms in all of the apartment have a window and boast bigger m² than most of the bathrooms built after the 2000s, and sometimes had a section used for cooking, due to the bad smell of the cooking equipment.
- The corridor, or the entrance room to the apartment gave access to all the rooms and was a meeting point. The second functionality was that it helped in heating and cooling of the house.

The first Project of the prototype housing was in 1959 from the Institution of Project (Ndermarrja e Projektimit), the architect and engineer involved in the project were perpetuated in the field of construction of Eastern European university, which brought to Albania the spirit of modern architecture that brought to Albania the construction of a functional space, the development of the service, the first floor facilities for community services and also the creation of rational forms that can be standardized and repeated by reducing the cost of construction.

The Prototype residential plan Anex 2, was digitalized from the copy of an original project of a residential house. This prototypical 4-floor building, was a, b, c variable, and different balcony shape or if the building would be constructed in the main road the ground floor would be designated for retail. Drawing multi-storey housing typology that allowed commercial activities along the main roads also had a significant impact on modernizing the city and life in general. This prototype plan of the building is multiplied 3 or 4 times next to each other making a whole block of apartments of two dwellings per floor. An apartment has a living room, two bedrooms, a bathroom, storage, and a corridor. It is missing the kitchen area and all the rooms are with a window and so have natural lighting.

Figure 16 Fig First Prototype V.59/1 series "c" plane of the residential house year 1959



*Source: Author digitalized plans from AQTN (Centre Technical Construction Archive of Albania)

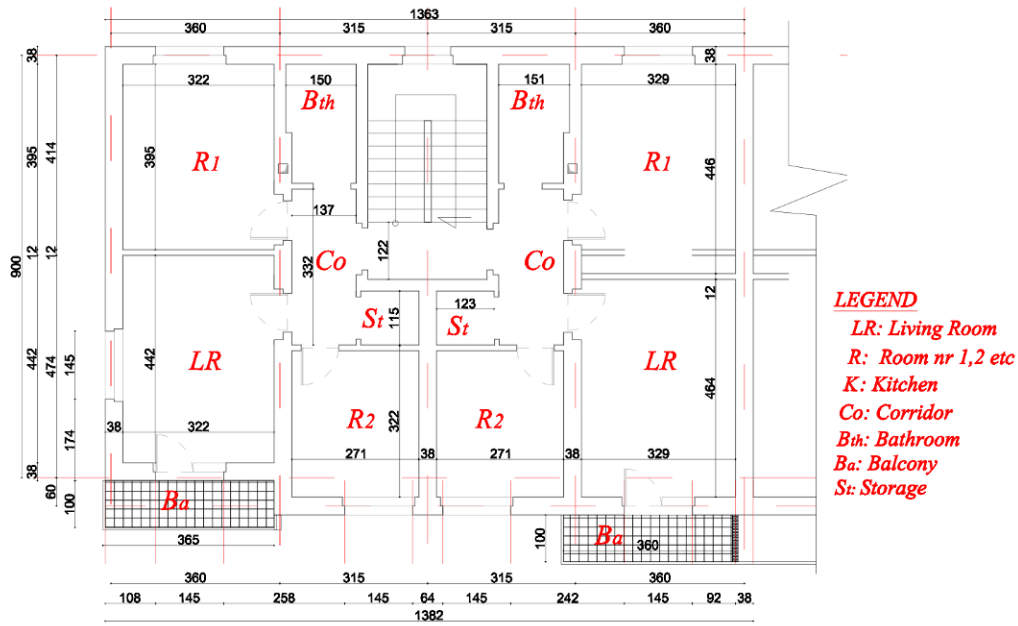
The construction retains a wall system.

Prototype variant C comes from main prototype 59/1 but with these changes:

1. No lodges
2. The room's walls are shifted
3. The outer walls of the balcony are treated on façade

These projects where shops and flats were already united within the framework of the multi-storey housing typology was planned on the basis of other principles.

Figure 17 ; First Prototype V.59/1 serial "c" plane of the residential house year 1959

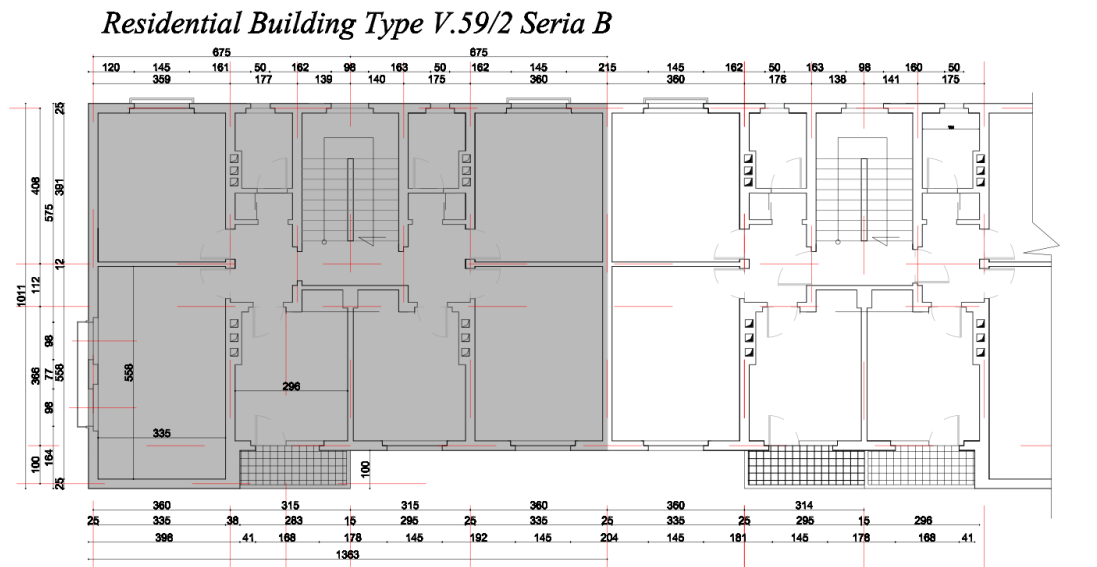


GODINE BANIMI TIP V.59/1 Seria "c" vit 1959
 projektet e pare prototip
 Source: digitalizim autori EC 2017
 Arkivi Qendror Teknik i Ndertimit

Prototype variants C comes from main prototype 39₁ but with this changes:
 1. No lodges
 2. The room's walls are shifted
 3. The outer walls of the balcony are treated on facades

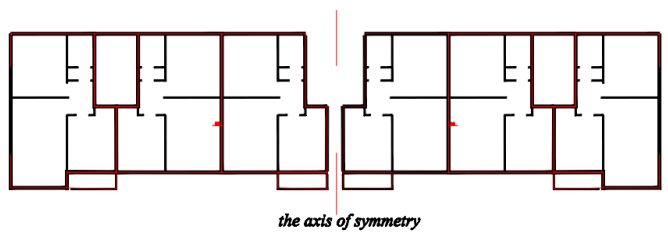
*Source: Author digitalized plans from AQTN (Centre Technical Construction Archive of Albania)

Figure 18 Fig First Prototype V.59/2 serial "b" plane of the residential building year 1959.



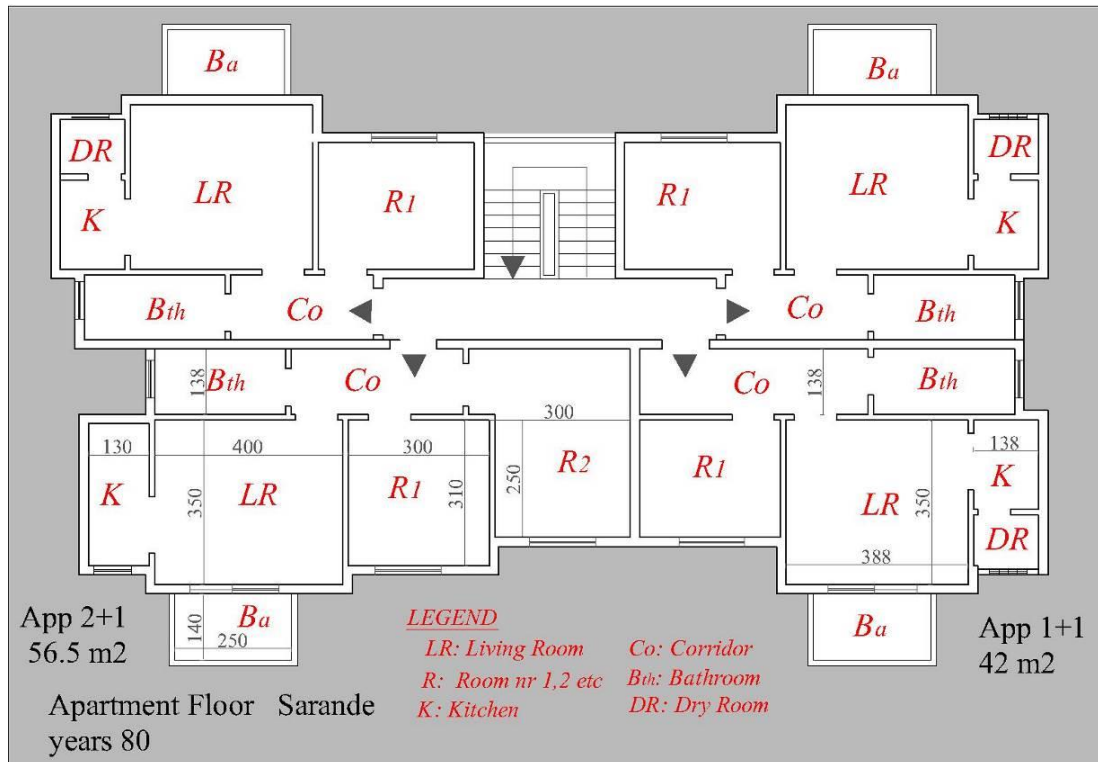
GODINE BANIMI TIP V.59/2 Seria "B" vit 1959 projektii pare prototip
 Source: digitalizim autori EC 2017
 Arkivi qendror Teknik i ndertimit

Residential Building Type V.59/2 Seria B
 Building 3B 3 Floors and 2B 3 floors



*Source: Author digitalized plans from AQTN (Centre Technical Construction Archive of Albania)

Figure 20 Residential Housing plan years 80'. Sarande, South Albania.

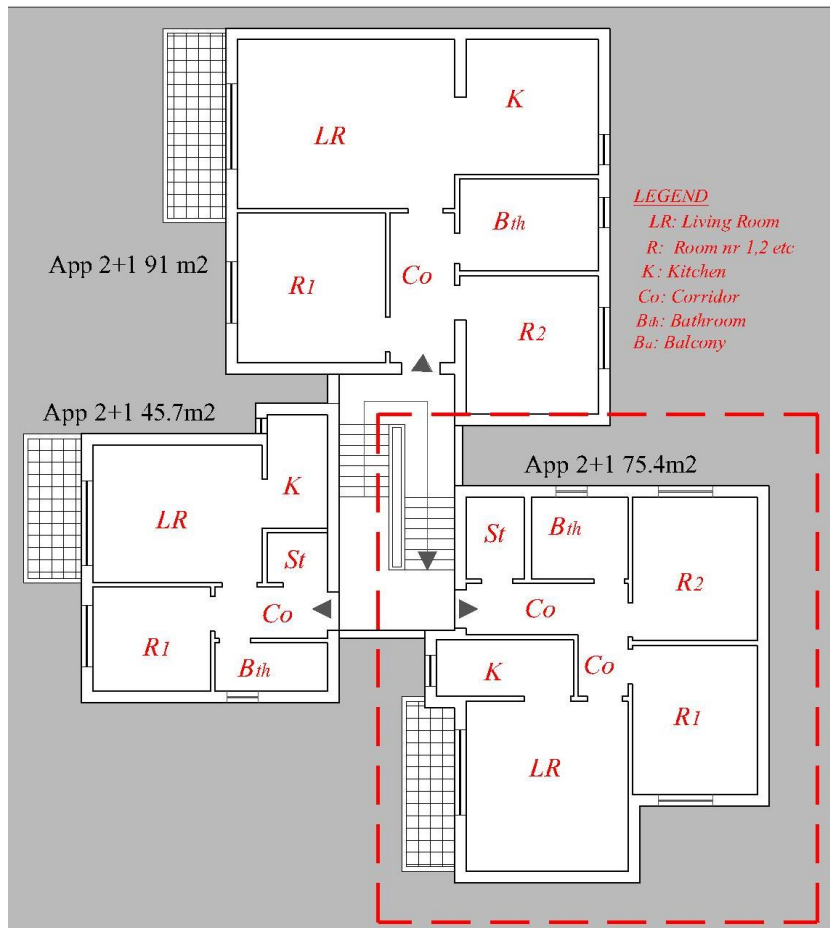


Source* Author from the Site visit

The residential house of 5 floors, in Saranda, built in the early 80's, has four dwellings per floor. The apartments are 56.5m² for an apartment with two bedrooms and a living room and 42m² for the apartment with one bedroom. The apartment has an annex which is used for storage for groceries which was later transformed in the kitchen area.

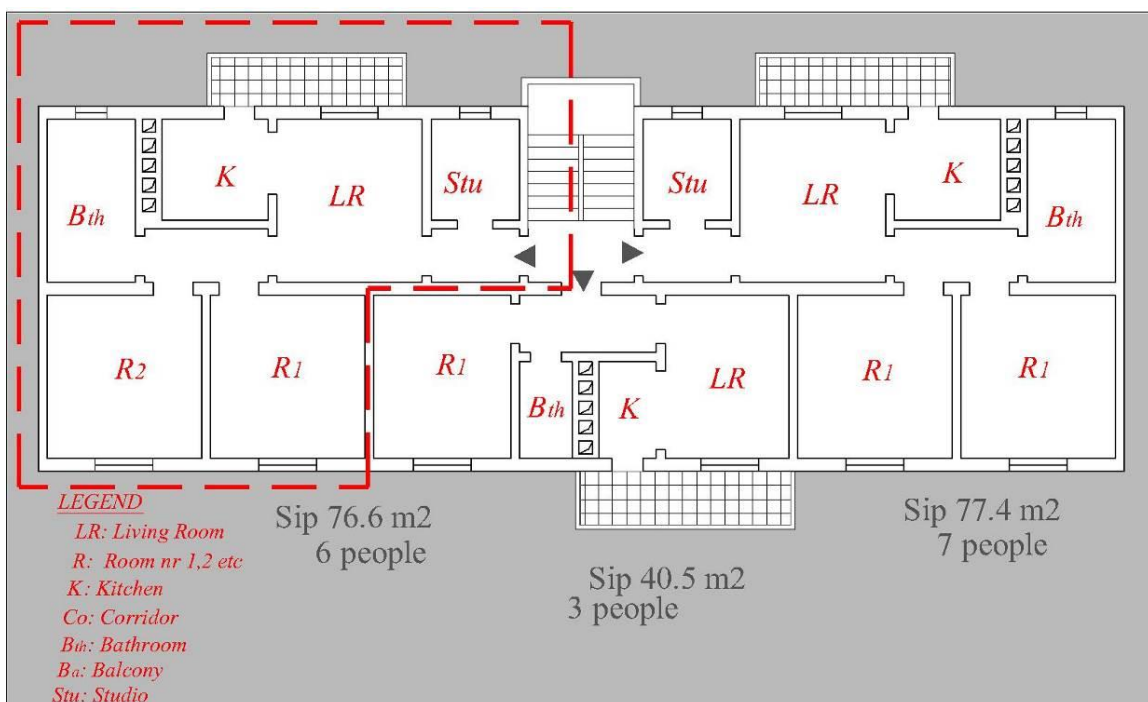
The building located in Saranda, has 3 dwellings per floor, two of which have two bedrooms and a living room. They have surface area of 75.4m² and 91m² and one apartment with one bedroom and a living room surface 46m². In the late 80's the surface area of the annex shifts to the kitchen.

Figure 21 Residential building, years 88. Saranda, South Albania.



Source* Author from the Site visit

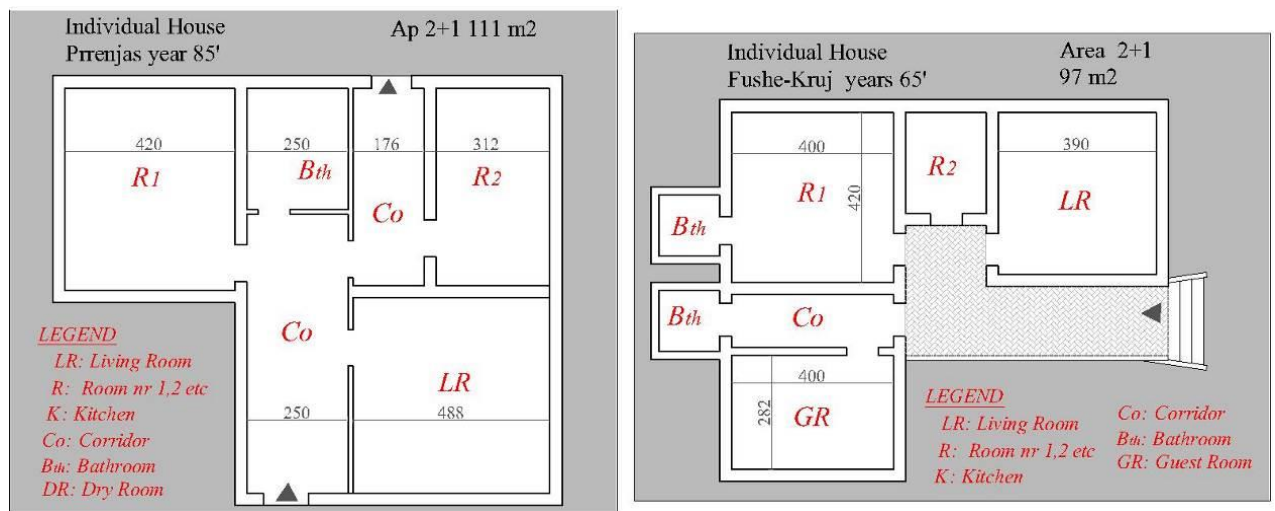
Figure 22 Residential housing plan, year 88. Burrel. North Albania



Source* Author from the Site visit

The “Burrel” housing plan is a residential building of 5 floors with 3 dwellings per plan and the construction has the system of retaining walls starting from 50cm in the lower floors to 30cm in the upper floors. The constructions is in the north of Albania. Consequently, the heating construction has taken over a large surface of the plan. To fulfil the project’s rules, all rooms have to have a window including toilets and the common areas such as stairs. From three dwellings per floor, 2 are 1+2 representing the two bedrooms and a living room apartment, of around 75m² housing 6-7 persons. The 1+1 was the apartment with one bedroom and a living room whose surface is around 40m². What is really new in the “Burrel” apartment, area no 2, is a Studio Room. This was planned because these buildings were built for the engineers of Burrel who lived there with their families. The surface areas of the apartments in the North are smaller to heat faster as they are living in the coldest cities of Albania. Even so, the surface was very small considering the number of people living there (6-7 people in a 75m² apartment.) All apartments until the late 90’s have only one bathroom even though they had two or three rooms.

Figure 23 Individual House years 65’ Fushe-Kruje, Centre Albania and Individual house years 85. Prrenjas, East Albania



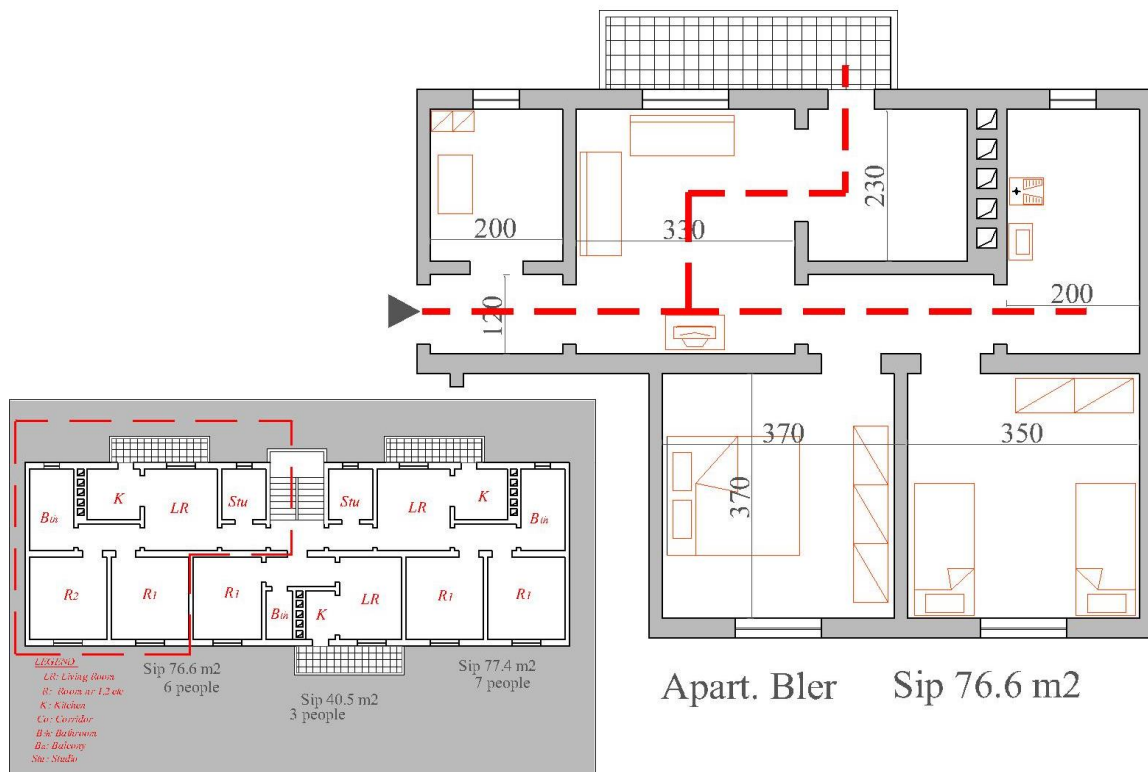
Source* Author from the Site visit

From the individual houses above, both one storey buildings with two bedrooms and a living room despite the fact that they were built 20 years apart, the corridor is one of the main areas due to its multiple uses, not just as a corridor but for storage as well. The Individual house of 1965 testifies to the necessity of having the toilets attached to the house. The two toilets in this building was rare during that time, but this family could afford to build two toilets responding the tradition of hospitality - one for the guest and one for daily use. The leader of the family was working in the government so the entrance for the guest room and the toilet was separate from the daily used area.

It was common to find houses in the rural area with one toilet close to their working area, the garden. To be highlighted are the conditions of the flooring in this house. The guest room has flooring in solid wood and a fire place to warm the visitors. Carpeting was wall-to-wall and the room was kept very clean. In contrast, the flooring in the other part of the house was covered with big smoothed tiles of stone connected with poor concrete.

The apartment below is one of the on-site apartments in Burrel, studied above, focusing on the functionality of the rooms to understand the style life. This residential housing plan was not used for mass housing production. There were 6 people living in this apartment. After the fourth child arrived, the studio room has been transformed into a nursery for the baby. The corridor was connected just with the studio and living room which was connected with a generous kitchen and the balcony. Both bedrooms are separated with a new corridor from the living room, an influence of the projects of the late 80's. According to modern trends, the sleeping area was created to be as private as the design of the layout could accommodate.

Figure 24 Furnishing Bler's House year 88



Source* Author from the Site visit

In the prefabricated layout, there is a reiterative rectangular shape 3.6x4.8m due to the size of the prefabricated panel, as well the construction of a system with retaining

walls. The residential house plan is very clearly made based on squares 3.7mx3.3m, 3.7mx3.5m and 3.7mx3 3.7m . The furniture layout is drawn from the interview onsite of the family memories.

4.1.3 Furniture design process

Knowledge and analyses from the anthropological scholars point of view, helped this research to comprehend and more deeply analyse, the problems of Albanian life's dynamics during the period under study, regardless of the different ideologies that each of us has, but also to improve our lives in relation to its effects and consequences. In his book *Nen Shenjen e modernitetit / Under the sign of Modernity*, the author defined communism:

The Communism especially for Albanian society in an anthropological point of view is manifested and articulated as a systematic and fashion-oriented endeavour. It was a good project of social engineering that embodied or sought to produce a quantitative and qualitative emancipation both for society and for the individual. (Lelaj, O ³⁸,2015)

To better understand the lifestyle during the communist era in Albania, interviews with a target group of people living in that period are done and a literature review based on their daily life was collected. The voice of “personal memories” is transcribed by various interviews for the purpose of this research during the years 2014-2016, as well as from social media, magazines, TV show, and books. Building a piece (Anex I) of history from “collective memory” is one of the merits of this study.

4.1.3.1 Centralized design process

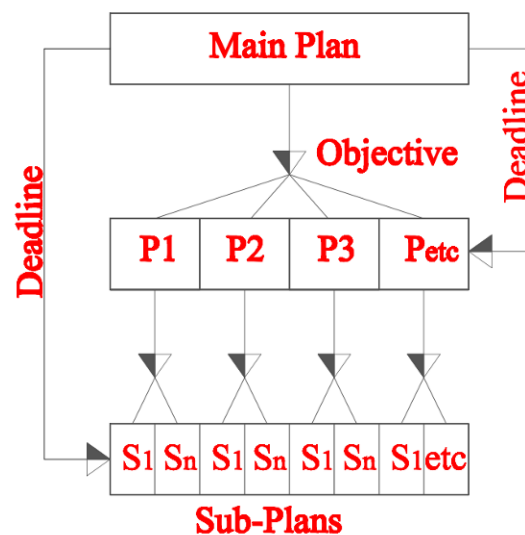
According to Schumpeter,³⁹, an economist and political scientist, socialism is a way of organizing society in which the means of production are controlled, and the decision on how and what to produce and on who is to get what, are made by public authority instead of by privately-owned and privately-managed firms. The central planning

³⁸ Olsi Lelaj studied anthropology and sociology at the University of Malta and obtained his doctorate from the Doctoral School of Ethnology at Folklore, Center of Albanian Studies, Tirana. He is currently a researcher at Anthropology of Modernity at the Department of Ethnology at Tirana's Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Arts Studies. His main interests are state, society and culture during state socialism, social class formation and ethnic Albanian thought

³⁹ Joseph Schumpeter and Austrian intellectual is best known for his book “Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy,” as well as the theory of dynamic economic growth known as “creative destruction”. (Joseph Alois Schumpeter: Biography". *Concise Encyclopedia of Economics*)

of the economy and all other sectors that are so indirect or straightforward about the economy, this is the beginning of the fragility of socialism, states Verdery⁴⁰ in her book *What Was the Socialism and what comes Next?* (1996). In her book, Verdery explained how this central planning of the economy was drawn; the main plan was composed by planners which were called objectivesVerdery⁴¹ in her book *What Was the Socialism and what comes Next?* (1996). In her book, Verdery explained how this central planning of the economy was drawn; the main plan was composed by planners which were called objectives, the plan should be embedded in parts and each part in other sub-parts that were turned into goals that should be attained at a certain time. Calculations could then be made on how many investments would be needed and how much raw material was needed for the goals that were to be achieved at a scheduled time.

Figure 25 Economy's' Central Planning.



*Source: Author based on literature review

During the time and work process to achieve the planned objectives managers of different sectors would face some problems since on one side the objectives were progressively increased and on the other hand the raw materials were missing or did not arrive at the right time or in the required amount. For this reason, the managers and the chiefs of the plan reacted by manipulating the plan. This meant that when it came time to

⁴⁰ Verdery,K. Among the first anthropologists to work in Eastern Europe, Katherine Verdery had built up a significant base of ethnographic and historical expertise when the major political transformations in the region began to take place.(<https://press.princeton.edu/titles/5845.html>)

⁴¹ Vedery,K. Among the first anthropologists to work in Eastern Europe, Katherine Verdery had built up a significant base of ethnographic and historical expertise when the major political transformations in the region began to take place.(<https://press.princeton.edu/titles/5845.html>)

plan for the next year, managers of each sector manipulated it. To achieve the coming year's objectives, they asked for more investment and raw material than what was needed. As a result of this situation the information coming from the planning bases to the planning centre was not accurate. Manipulation of the central planning caused many cases that more materials than what was needed to be produced were sent to the manufacturer. In this way, managers used the leftover materials for these two things: firstly, they could be used for the next production and secondly, they could switched to another factory lacking materials to use for production. In this light the main Plan of the central planning through these manipulations resulted into so called General Absence of Inclusiveness.

In this economic atmosphere where customers' needs increased, a system of indulgences and bribes were created, thus ensuring the goods were produced on time and in the requested quantity. The system of purchasing the raw material or basic goods was kept alive through a wide system of friendly relations based on bribes and mutual indulgences between managers and bureaucrats as well as sellers and customers.

Socialist economy referring to the literature is drawn below.

Figure 26 Social Economy characters

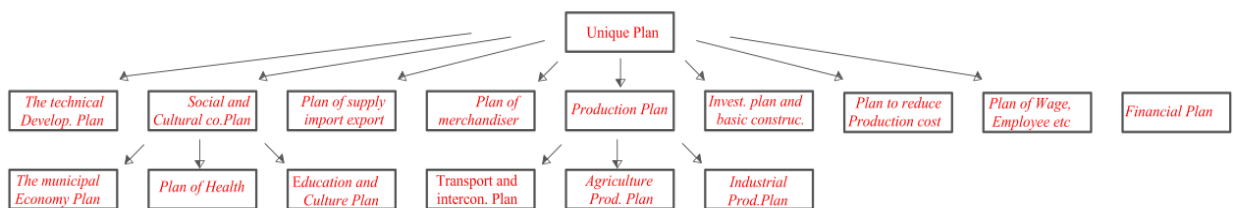
Socialist economy
The internal logic of socialism was the accumulation, control and ownership of production.
The first is the purchaser or supplier of raw material/basic goods
The main reason is the accumulation of distribution resources
The competition between the purchaser or suppliers of raw material and the consumers who competed to provide the raw material for production as well as the final product of production
Compete in enhancing skills in providing raw/basic materials and exchange in the hierarchy of suppliers
Companies will face the problem if they are able to fulfil and supply enough the market with products.
Whether a manufacture needed more investment and

failed to meet objectives, it did not come out of the system but were still there, continuing the production

**Source: Author based on literature review Vedery, K.1996*

The leadership of socialism gave importance to heavy industry more than the light and consumer industries. With the orientation towards heavy industry, Vedery argued that the power of the centre was to produce things that could be controlled continuously. The industrial products were controllable from the centre better than the products from the light industries of textiles and agriculture because of their inconsumable nature. Therefore, diverting attention from consumption, the funds to build the heavy industry increased which increased the tension on the legitimacy of the system. The politics drove the nature of production, quality and prices.

Figure 27 Planning's Strainer – The Unique State Plan



Scheme of State Planning

**Source: Author based on literature review, Bardhoshi, B⁴².1981*

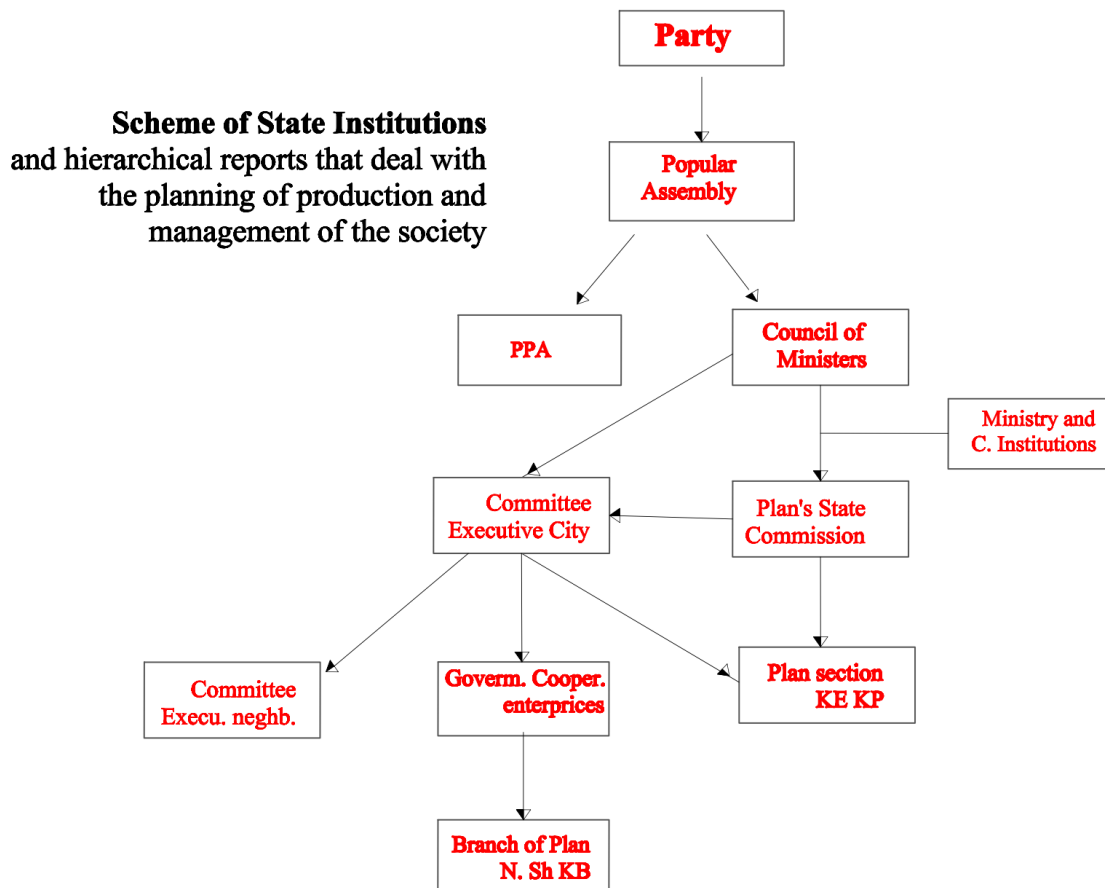
The schematic presentation of the State Plan with respective divisions and subdivisions through which the whole development of society during state Socialism in Albania was directed and controlled. The process of production of the furniture and all the house hold were very well controlled and designed through this divisions. Every production needed to satisfy each of the divisions and subdivision through the Planning's Strainer process. Raw/basic materials, output/production, labour force, salary, and any other activity within the institution were coordinated and oriented within the plan.

At the micro level, the economic institutions; factories or cooperatives, had their own plan's sections incorporated into their structure which were subordinate to the executive committees of the district or city where they were located. At the macro-level the Plan's State Commission was subordinated to the Council of Ministers while the

⁴² Bardhoshi.B, 1981. "Plani unik Shteteror mjet vendimtar per zbatimin e politikes ekonomike te Partise". Shtepia botuese "8 Nentori", Tirane

management and planning of special branches of the economy, society and culture came from ministries and relevant central institutions under the direction and dependence to the Council of Ministers.

Figure 28 State Institution Schema during Socialist era



*Source: Author based on literature review.

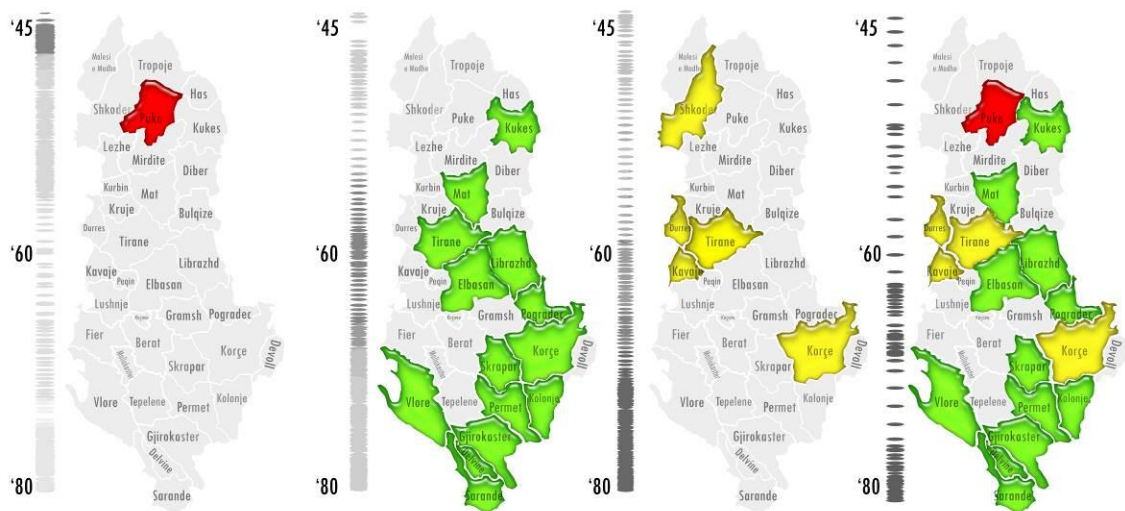
4.1.3.2 The rise of furniture manufactures

The redistribution of population during these years, gave birth to a new class division of Albanian society (from working class and leaders), the intellectual class. All classes have their demands on life style: house layout, furnishing, clothes and life activities. The demands increased the number of designs to where in the year 1983 500 models were counted (E.Sh., 1985).

factories were opened in Kavaja, Pogradec, Shkodra, and Lac (A.E 1985). Their products were competitive on quality and quantity for that time. The wood processing industry, until the mid-50's has expanded throughout Albania (data collected from data Base of Albanian Archive years 1945 to 1990). In 1951 all private artisanal entities had been taken under the government property.

The demands of a socialist government for constructing an industrial area, was that they had to be close to inhabited areas and ports, as it would lower the cost of transportation for the raw material needed for the industry as well for the distribution cost of the produced goods. In this sense, industries of wood processing especially for furniture, household goods, or other spare parts for other industry like agriculture, packages for export and bottles for alcoholic or non- alcoholic drinks, were built close to the cities (mapping below). Close to the forest were built the raw material enterprises, followed by other processes including cutting and wood treatment. Than the raw material was distributed to the manufacturers of furniture and other products made in wood.

Figure 30 Mapping of wood processing in Albania years 45-90's



Legend

- Saw enterprise
- Wood processing enterprises
- Decoration and Raw material enterprises

**Source: Author based on Albanian National Archive documents research.*

By the mid 70's the investment in wood industry technology, wood products and furniture manufacturing industries in Albania increased the volume of production. Many of the products were exported especially during the years 70-80s which helped to raise the

standard of products and production capacity and, on the other hand, hand qualified workers, many of whom immigrated after the country opened in the early 90's, and who were able to position themselves very well in the European wood enterprises.

The wood enterprise industry had the organogram like a complex centre of wood processing, producing from the raw material of solid wood pillars for mains railways, chipboard melamine, wrapping paper, kettles, etc. The most important product of the Wood Industry in those days was solid beech wood $\frac{3}{4}$ and solid pine wood $\frac{1}{4}$, Production of the wood industry from 1938 to 1983 increased 48 times (Hoxha, E. 5th plan of 5year Albanian parliament).

4.1.3.3 Furniture design process

In the early 60's, at the beginning of the standardization of mass-production, the centralized party called to raise the performance of quality, aesthetic, solidity and not have excessive designs. The need control the design drew in the whole structure from the Ministry to the manufacturers all over Albania. Referring to the notes gathered through the visits in the archive⁴⁴ the Design Process scheme was: Ministry of Industry has a special department for the designs and technology called the Design Bureau. The wood processing team's part of this department, comprised of specialists and competent in different sciences, designed or evaluated the selected designs from the factories,⁴⁵ introducing it to the Centre of Standards of the State's Planning Commission (fig 26). The final approved designs were sent to the engineer to calculate and approve of the production line. It was a detailed process, monitored at each part to ensure technological success, sustainability of the design and quality before a prototype was produced.

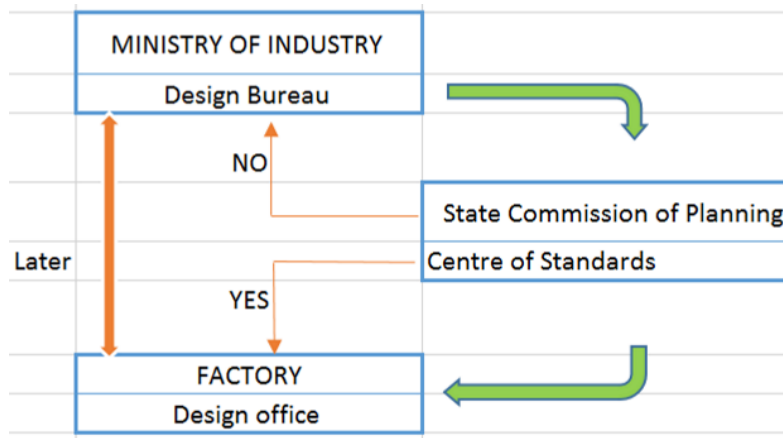
If any of the steps were not satisfying the process in cost, quality and standard than it had to be done from the beginning, if yes then mass production started as per the planned schedule.

⁴⁴ The General Directory of Albanian Archive, Tirane, Albania. Mostly of the database gather about the standardization, on the process and detailed specification are found on the *FOUND 495, 490,497* respectively The Commission of the State's Planning, Council of Ministers, Ministry of Industry.

⁴⁵ Due to years' experience even the furniture's factories were proposing new design to the Design Bureau of the factory, if the design was ok they send to the Design Bureau of wood under the Ministry of Industry. If the new design was accepted then they send the design to be approved to the Centre of Standards part of State Commission of Planning. If the new design didn't pass one of these steps it was send back to redesigned.

So the final design approved were send to the engineer to approve the production line, it was very important each part of process, technological process, if it was suitable and passed the approval than a prototype was produced.

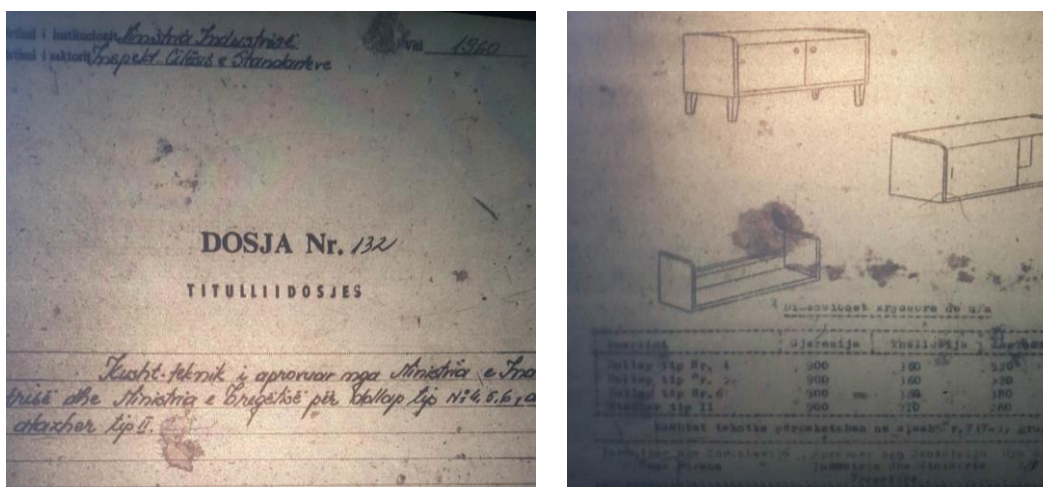
Figure 31 Design process during Socialist economy



*Source: Author based on Albanian National Archive documents research and interviews

The centralized design management built standardization of the interior furnishing from the production specification, to the production quantity and where and how they would be distributed. The file nr 132⁴⁶ (1960) is showing the steps of the well-managed authority of the Council of Ministry on the process of design. Following this, the Ministry of Industry sent this decision to the Inspectorate of Quality Control. Finally, the decision made is compiled from the carpentry. The technical specification referring to the shapes and dimensions for the Model of wardrobes 4,5, and 6 and the extensions + shelve nr 2, was produced on wood components with a maximum of 14% humidity. In the execution of the decision from the Ministry of Industry, The State Planning Committee (Komisioni I Larte I Shtetit) compiled more in depth the details of production which were sent to the Bureau of Standardisation (Bureauja e standarteve) to execute them.

Photo 2 File 132 , original doc



Source* Author form the research on documents of AQSHT, 2015

⁴⁶ The File Nr 132, Year 1960: Technical standards Approved from the Ministry of Industry and the Ministry of Trade for the Cupboard Model Nr 4, 5, and 6 (respectively the doors of the wardrobe 4,5, and 6) and the closet nr 2.

The sizes of the furniture in this file from this year changed in these sizes in that shape as in the drawing above:

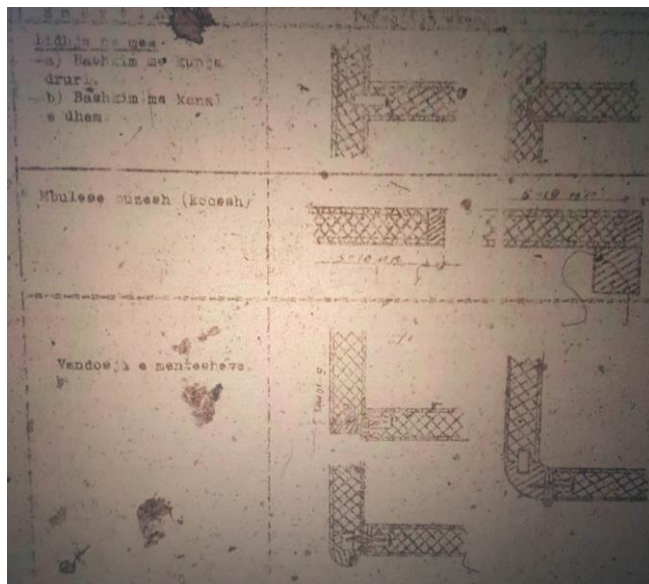
Figure 32 The standard sizes of the Wardrobe nr 4, 5, 6 and closet 2

Nr	Article	Size
1	Wardrobe nr 4	90x36x52cm
2	Wardrobe nr 5	90x36x52cm
3	Wardrobe nr 6	90x36x38cm
4	Closet nr II	90x27x28cm
Note:	the sizes are from outer line	

Source * Author from the file nr 132 (1960) , AQSHT , 2015

On the document of Standardisations, is well defined what kind of wood is needed to produce the wardrobe and how the joint between two or more elements, the edges, the hinges, and handles' technical details should be. Below are the sketches of the joints in the Solid wood wardrobe. In addition, in this document all the joints are well-defined for the wardrobe produced in chip wood board. This well-controlled process aimed to produce the strongest and best quality products with the most reasonable price.

Figure 33 The Standards of the joining and screwing details



Source * Author from the file nr 132 (1960) , AQSHT , 2015

The documents of Standardisation of producing the wardrobes has passed through

different changes and on the document in 1975⁴⁷, from the Executive Committee (Komiteti ekzekutive) has taken in consideration the production capacity and as well the quality control. The Main objective of this Resume was about the achievement of the Furniture production in Albania, increasing the wide range of the item numbers and improving the quality of them.

Still in that year the lack of interviewed process of innovation between different sectors was highlighted. For New Coming design the process was; the Design Institute and the Design Bureau of each city to collaborate with each other and to work on demand data for each city and each inhabitant, as well for the development of each city. On the other hand the results of 1975 didn't succeed due to bad corporate logistics distribution with production in every city. So, from this year forward, market demands started to be studied as well as distribution capacity and production on requested quality, numbers, cost and range of models. This report highlights the necessity of designing the products on the new apartment layout. New furniture design should be more functional and responsive to the new house layout. Consequently, the range of design products has increased, and alternative raw materials are used such as chip boards, reinforcing alternative elements and decorative accessories for furniture. It was well defined the obligation of data collecting and data processing in the number of one bedroom/one living room, two bedroom/one living room, and three bedroom/one living room apartments. The Furniture needed to furnish these houses were bedroom and living room sets, study room furniture, dining room furniture, and other accessories like curtain bars, photo frames, and spare parts for different hand tools and wooden kitchenware (doc archive 2060,2074, pg3)⁴⁸.

In this light, the 70's saw much innovation in the furniture product design, and experienced the first traces of customer participation in design. It was thought exchanging ideas and practice between factories and wood processing government enterprises would help the wood industry to recover to health promptly⁴⁹. The perfect place where novelty, training not only for the professions but as well for the public can be displayed are exhibitions. Thereupon, in 1975, the first furniture exhibition was opened and was well-

⁴⁷ The documents sent in 1975, from the Directory of Wood Processing Utilization (Drejtoria e shfrytëzimit të përpunimit të drurit) Nr 2060 of the Ministry of Industry and Mine and the Ministry of Trade Nr.2074, to Execute Committee about the consortium that was organized in Tirana on the production and distribution of furniture until March 1975. The Main enterprises of furniture production in Albania in that years, "Misto Mame", Tirane and "Nako Spiro", Elbasan were criticized about not high quality production, and the range of produced models where limited. Other Wood Enterprises like, Lac, Lushnje, Burrel, Skrapar which still have the lack of good and wide range production in the small articles and spare parts. They didn't fulfil for that year the capacity of the costume demands, other production enterprises and retail inquires.

⁴⁸ File Nr 264 (1975). Ministry of Industry and Mine. Protocol nr 2060 and Ministry of Trade Protocol no 2074, page3

⁴⁹ AQTVSH documentaries from the Albanian TV's archive are used in this research.

attended in the capital of Albania and later on in other main cities of Albania. Factories competed between each other for the innovation on design, production performance and efficiency.

Photo 3 Furniture exposition, Tirane



Source* Movie "Taulanti kerkon nje moter", Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1986 min 45:00

On the other hand, visitors could exchange their ideas and preferences on design and colours which were significant for the coming mass production. Another source of the design were the foreigner enterprises, for instance 80% of the Curved Chairs model⁵⁰ of "Nako Spiro" the factory of Curved Furniture's (wood processing enterprises located in Elbasan), were exported. The designs had to be in the factory portfolio (Interview with Wood Eng. Demir G. from the "Nako Spiro" Enterprice, Elbasan).

All the data gathered during these exhibitions and the meetings with the different specialist of different enterprises brought to light with the problems that needed to be improved and the new furniture designs that would be in forthcoming production. According to the archive document nr 264 dated May 1975, standard of pattern are given for the furniture, they had to be painted in white in oil paint and glitter, varnished (gommallek), and veneered with special oak or other veneer found in the local market. The solid wood had to be replaced with ply wood and other parts in chip board, material like abs, or plastic sheet and metal spare started to be used in the furniture production.

⁵⁰ A typology of chair, named due to the technology that needs to curve elements compound of the chair

Photo 4 Furniture exposition



Source* Movie "Taulanti kerkon nje moter", Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1986 min 45:56.

The Bureau of Price, was the price decision making office from the Ministry of trade that conducted the market research and analysed the cost of the product to put the right profit and the suitable final price for the final customers. This department was in charge of quality control before exporting or selling in the local market. The specification was very clear and well defined in every Standardisation Policy for each product.

File nr 264 is official proclaiming the duty of both ministries of Trade and Industries and Mines, to organize well their sources and the main Wood enterprises to start working for the whole Albania market's demands and distribution. In this light the final data is processed on the customer demands, price design and quality. The list consists of twenty one typologies of furniture that had to be produced referring to the File 264 date may 1975 are at Annex 3.

According to the scholar Fico (1965), he wrote in his book "Wood Processing" that furniture production categorizes: Luxury furniture and Ordinary furniture changed between each other on some variables including cost, joints, production time, kind of wood used to produce them, longevity how much durable would be during the usage, and how many quantity would be produce per each category. As in architecture the same principles were also followed for furnishing these spaces. The Project Enterprise (Ndermarja e Projektit) was commissioned for special residential housing for senior party employees for their daily life and holiday residences. Instead for the other part of population, the tendency in housing construction was to reduce the cost of construction, which significantly affected residential

and quality conditions.

Table 21 Changes between two qualities

	Luxury furniture	Ordinary furniture
Cost	high	low
Join	complicated	easy assembled
Time	long	short
Wood	very good quality	the left part from the good selected at luxury
Longevity	long	short
Costume demands	low	high

Source* Author from literature review

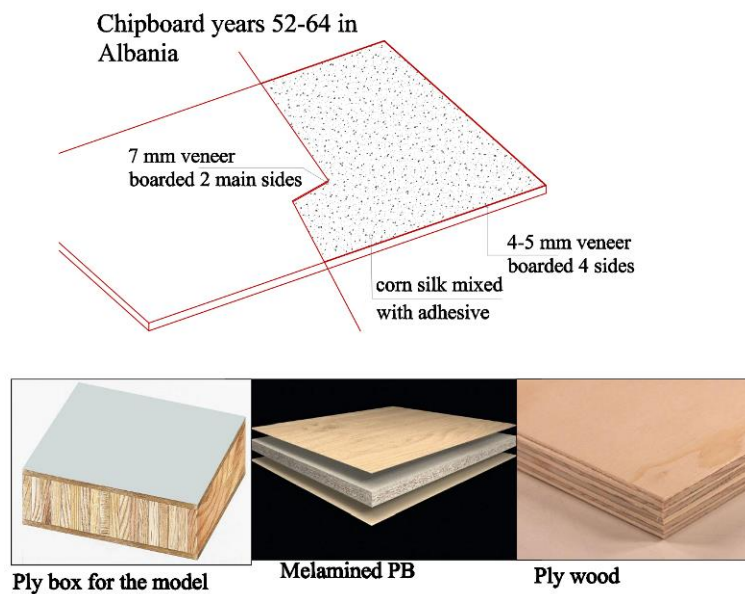
Luxury furniture have more high quality because the raw material is selected from the best part of the wood , the worker has to pay a lot of attention during the assembled , and the assembled way was more complicated than an ordinary furniture, so the labour time is longer than in the second quality. Ordinary furniture have low cost and economical quality they use the kind of joining which is fast assembled and safe , because need to produce in onetime more qty than luxury products. as well the customer demands is leading in this situation too, As far as the Luxury furniture had the demands just for the residential houses of the party employees , they had lower demands than the Ordinary furniture.

Following the Fico,S (1964) information, Albanian forest has a diversity of raw material, Oak wood, Beech wood, Fir wood, Maple wood, Chestnuts wood etc.(A.E. 1977) Fir was also often used thanks to his beautiful natural surface, white, light and elastic easy to be processing elaborating is easy to work in /with it used for furniture. Maple wood is strong wood white elastic and with it where produce more luxury furniture the same category was use also, Ash wood, Walnut wood. Especially for the curved furniture was used Chestnut wood. Wood from trees like birch, elm, poplar, pine were strong and mostly used for windows doors or as the frame of the furniture.

With the development of the industry, where many handmade wood processing has been replaced by machine made, the necessity to minimize the cost of the furniture, new alternative raw material for the furniture industry come up. The first particle board made in a ply wood box filled with corn silk mill mixed with the adhesive, started to be produce and used for furniture until middle 60'. Then more option like chip boards and melamine particle board were produced in higher quality. The production of chip board and particle

board was made in Elbasan and Tirane , wood enterprise are used for the furniture production , which after 70' their main production was exported. Plywood was the main material used for the curbed furniture such as leg of coffee tables (table used in the middle of the living room), arms for the armchairs, office furniture and “luxury” furniture produced for the houses of Party employees.

Figure 34 Furniture's raw material used in the furniture industry during socialist era



Source* Author from the searching review in National AI Archive and literature review.

Organizing the distribution from the factories to the wholesalers was responsible the transport enterprise in every city where the manufacture was located. The wholesaler has to distribute to the retailers in the city and to the villages per each location as it was planned (Eng Demiri G. interview). Every family that needed a furniture needed to apply maybe months before for the authorization to buy a furniture, and lack to the competition they families would just wait in the queue. When the furniture arrived in the retail each family has to find the transportation by them self (P.C interviewer). Normally in this situation as always been used the “network” or status co, to have it possible to arrange the transportation towards the house. Normally when a neighbour has bought a new furniture all the neighbours were enthusiastic to help them with the delivery inside the house.

From the movie are taken moments of the New Coming Neighbour, the transportation car model and the process of delivery at home.

Figure 35 Neighbours curios for the New Neighbour



Source* Movie "Edhe keshtu edhe ashtu" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1989 min

Figure 36 Delivery at home by neighbours and workers



Source* Movie "Edhe keshtu edhe ashtu" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1989 min 5.53

Figure 37 Difficulties on duty during transportation



Source* Movie "Edhe keshtu edhe ashtu" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1989 min 6.18

4.1.3.4 Unpretentious mass-interior design.

The “Socialist” house layout comprises living room, balcony, bathroom, bedroom (one, two or few three), kitchen which was called “annex”. There are some main basic principles of projecting this model of housing leading from the functionality, minimizing the cost, simplicity, consequently purity, plainness.

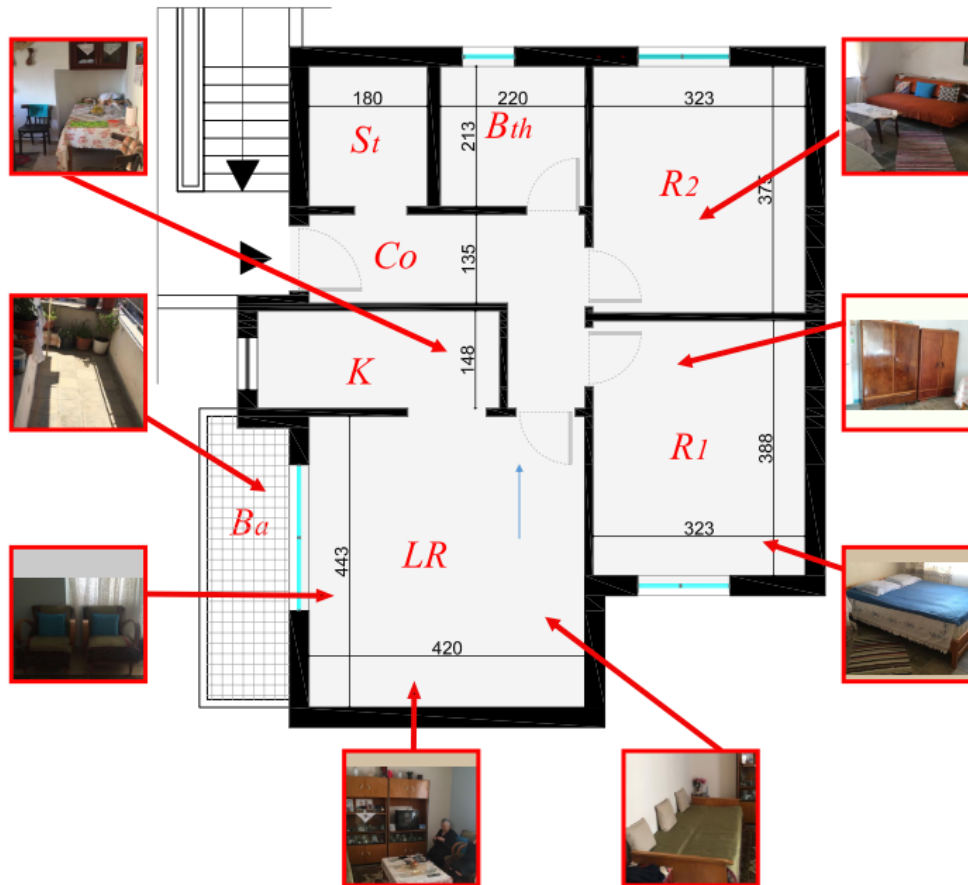
The case study of the house: Nene Telo”⁵¹ (Telo Grandma), a museum of made in Communism era furniture, enriched this research with detailed analyses on spaces furnished by sober furniture. This apartment is built in late 80’, a surface of 75.4 m² and has two bedrooms, a living room, one toilet, storage, balcony and corridor. This apartment has living room furnished with two armchair one sofa bed and the TV units. Kitchen with a narrow table with two chairs and a ceramic sink hanging on metal frame. As all the Albanians even here cooking has been replaced with the Laundry room until the developing of electrical cooker which was install in the kitchen area. Bedroom no 1 has a bedroom set , two wardrobe one double bed in wood frame and metal frame. Bedroom no2 has a single sofa filled with straw two chairs and two coffee table one round in the corner and one more bigger in square shape. Windows and doors in solid wood with mdf. Children bedroom isn’t in this house because the children were already grown up when this family moved to this house. The below undertaken case study , Is measured digitalized and together with the visits on side , research on archives, on digital documentary and interviews will be grouped on the typology of the products division on main functionality rooms; Living room , bedroom, toilet, corridor, studio room.

⁵¹ Apartment will be called Telo’s House referring to the owner name that open many times her door for this research.

Figure 38 Telo's House layout and furnishing

Nene Telo Apartment

- App 2+1 75.4m²



- Legend

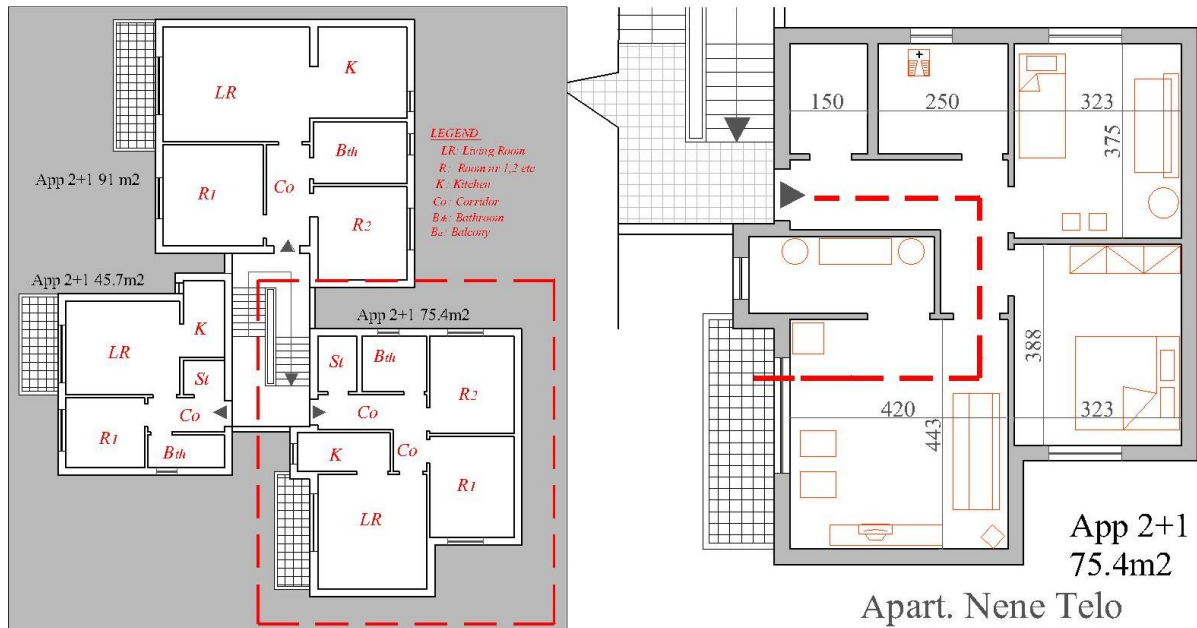
LR: Living Room
R: Room nr 1,2 etc
K: Kitchen

Co: Corridor
Bth: Bathroom

Ba: Balcony
St: Storage

Source* Author from visit on site

Figure 39 Case Study Plan



Source* Author from the visit on Site

The Living Room.

Often is attached the balcony, due to economized space and cost was attached the annex. The living room during the usage has been multifunction room, the Annex was very small to host the dining table and 4 chairs (this was a full set) for this reason the position was always in the living room consequently all the ceremonies linked with the dining furniture were take part on the living room. Mass- Production house didn't have in the layout a studio or a studding room, with studding furniture consequently for the home-work, studding were used still the living –room. Because some families were with more than 2 children during socialist era, even a house with two bedrooms was small so during the night many of the families were using the living-room as a bedroom, and one important function for the living room was waiting the guest. Below is elaborated each function in detail.

One living room during the Socialist era was furnished:

Sofa- the late 50 , sofa called “minder” Turkish ottoman sofa, just a wood box on top with a textile layer or pillow thin layer. With the industrialization, and the first cheap raw material was straw, sofa was made with the solid wood frame and filled with straw after 70’ the second option was the sofa made with foam. All this typologies of Sofa are called sofa-bed because during the night they were used for sleeping. The houses had a

limit number of rooms for a big family 5, 6, 7 person.

Another reason is because hospitality tradition impact the way people think, so the need always to be prepared for an additional space when the guest will come to visit.

Figure 40 two kinds of Sofa Bed foamed/ strawed



Source* Author vsit on site and digitalizing

Both items were not cheap if we compare the prices nowadays and possibility to buy a family. the straw Sofa beds has the price 15000 and the foam sofa bed has the price 18000 ALL. That time the salary was 5100-5600 All and the bread price was 40 all. That time customers could buy a straw sofa bed for 3 months or for 370 pcs of bread, the foam sofa needed half month more or 75 pcs of bread more than the first sofa.

Photo 5 Different Sofa- Bed's model





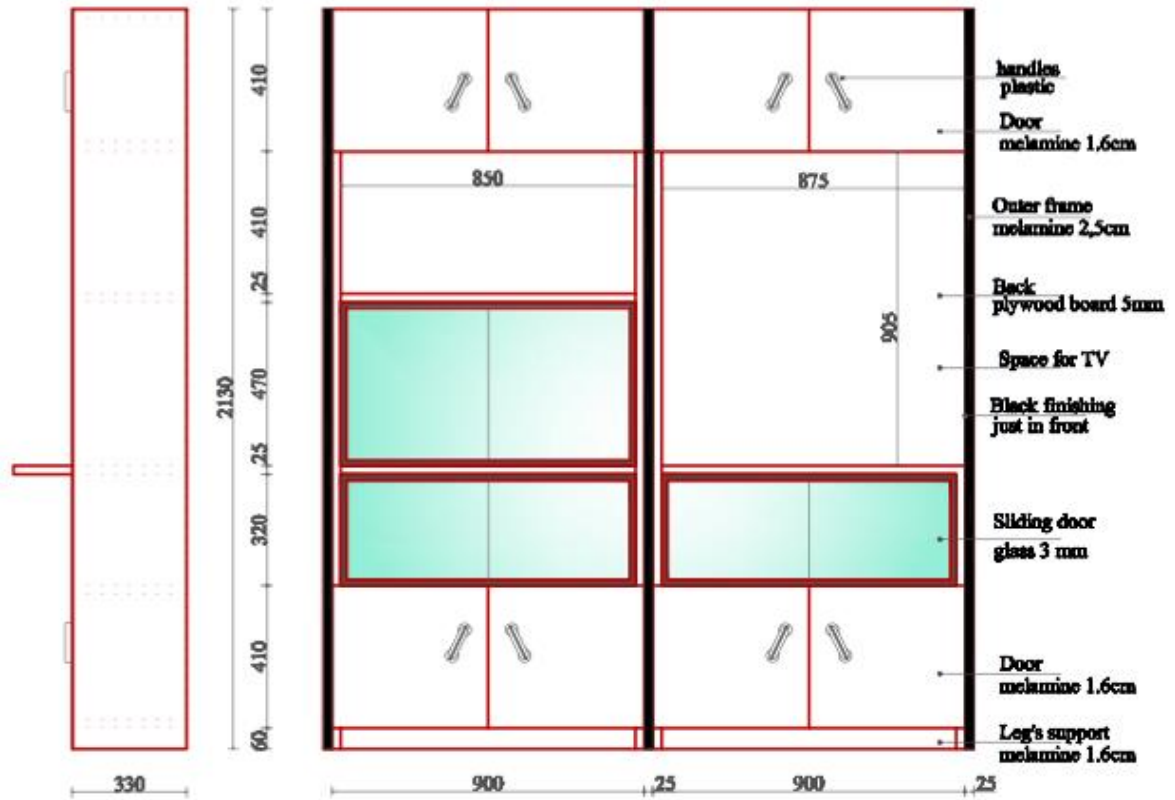
Source Author visit on site*

Interesting is the storage of the back rest of the straw sofa, often the sofa bed are accompany with sofas

Wall unit, made with beech melamine frame standard sizes but with the inner component with alternative compositions. Alternative material were mixed like glass and in some furniture produced for the rural area plastic and wires net where used as doors or shelves of the furniture.

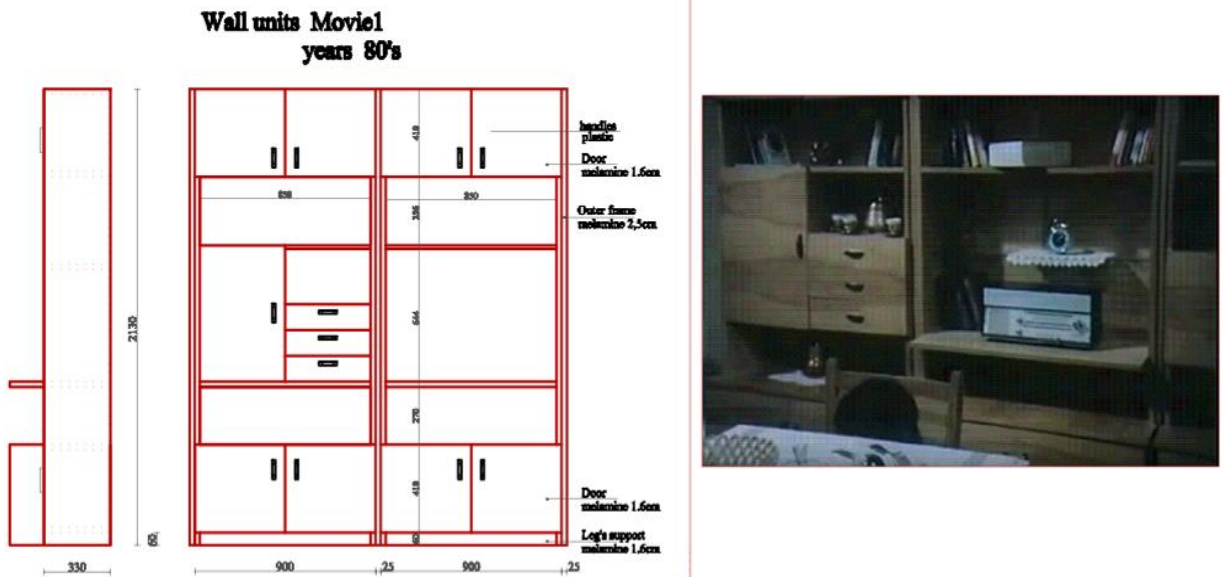
Important part of living room is the TV units which before 90s started to be more popular even for TV units cause after that it was so luxury to buy TV. The modular items are already developing in this moment, with the same sizes could be designed different products, are used the sliding doors in some parts and the differences in accessories is to be highlighted,

Figure 41 TV Wall Units years 80's



Source* Author vsit on site and digitalizing

Figure 42 TV Units same modular but different organisation



Source* Author vsit on site and digitalizing

Photo 6 Figure Different model of TV/Wall Unit



Source* Author vsit on site and digitalizing

TV unit and wall unit despite the above designs were as well shorter, small size for more multifunction use as:

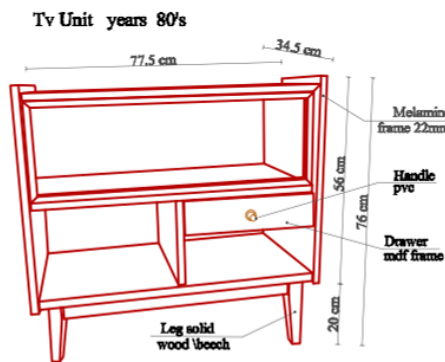
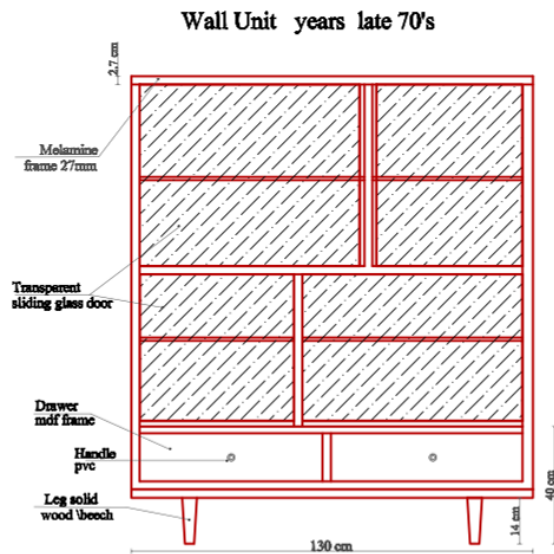


Figure Furniture used as Tv units and bookcase



Source* Author visit on site

The table in the middle , today called coffee table, with different shapes made in ply wood because mostly of them were in curved shape. And melamine top work. Shapes were oval, round, and square. As well in the same category are the corner table, high or short, square shape.

The second furniture in study is the table: This furniture was a basic one in

albanian houses , shapes and sizes were different , from round, square to ortogonals , as well triangle. The usage were different for eating or coffee table , eventhough per each function they need to respect some sturctured specification to be usefull and comod, in the book of FICO was listed the table specification for the table, the table need to have extetion

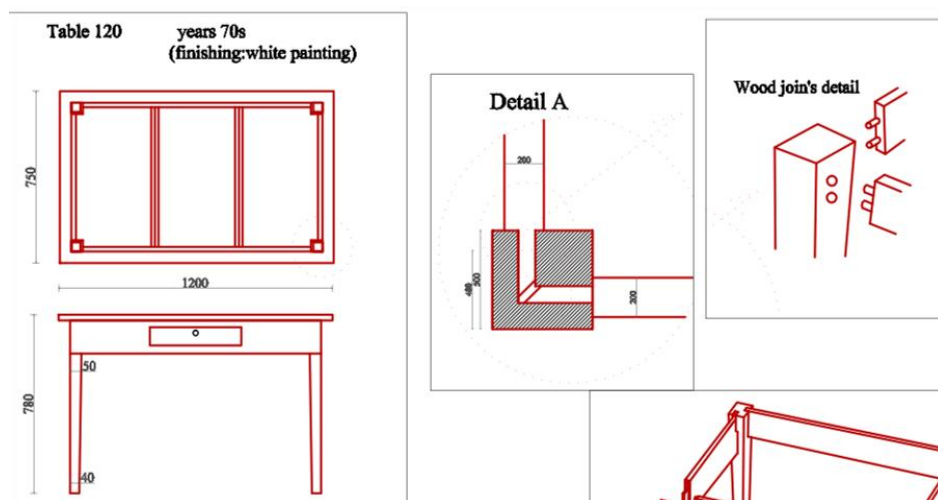
Table 22 Specification of Tables since 64s

Production	L	W	H
Square Shape Table	800-1000	800-1000	780
Round Shape Table	800-1000	800-1000	780
Rectangular Shape	1000	630	780
Dining Table	500-700	500-700	760-780

Source * Author from the Literature review

Table 1900 was called due to the selling price, it has the sizes 70x100H78cm and two extention from both sizes 445 cm. Legs are in shape of pyramid and the extension mechanism is the most interesting , check detail A

Figure 43 Table 1900



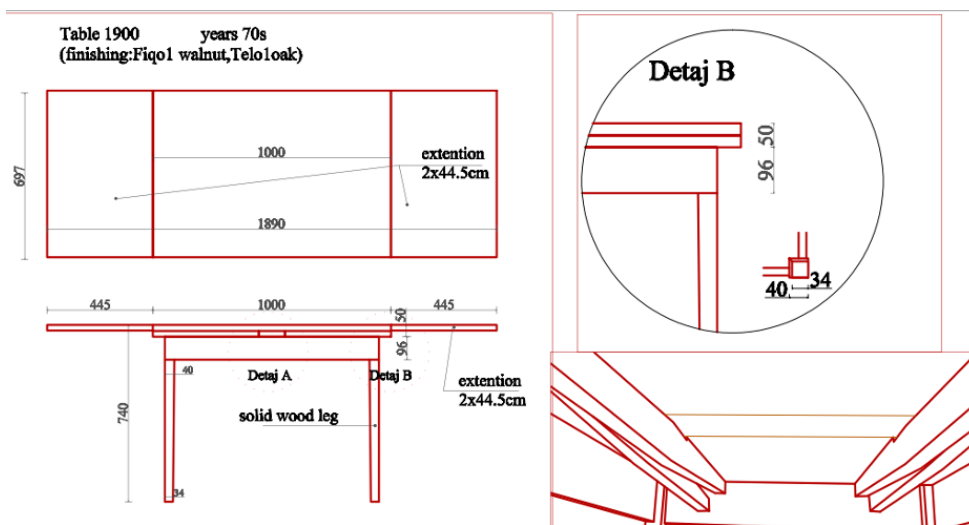
Source *Author from visit on site and digitalizing

Dining table models are not so rich in designs and colors as the chairs. White colors, light beech, and dark beech were more common, than walnut finishing few. The most well-known table “1900 All” was with extension in both sides. The other model is used for offices as well due to a small drawing

Table 1900 was called due to the price that it was sold in the market. This table was one of the most popular one due to be strong, functional, and possibilities to choose one of three colors. The part of the table are :frame which is made of solid wood and often in

beach wood cause it is strong and well workable in the woodmachine. The topwork static one or extantions , their thickness is 19 to 25 mm due to the cheapboard thickness that is going to be used, for different tables are used different topwork's thickness, The coniferous tree's board is used mostly for the topwork cause it has beautiful surface , and could resist stronger on the contact with water, , Sometimes that time was used a waterresist layer to make more stronger the surface, A very smart mechanism is used on the tables with extention, on the rectangular shape the extention is on the shorter side of the table in the round shape table the extention is a part assambled in the middle after pulled left-right half part of the table

Figure 44 Table with drawer



Source *Author from visit on site and digitalizing

Photo 7 Table in the living room and table in the dining room



Source *Author from visit on site

The second kind of table is more narrow one but with drawer, it was painted in

white. Connecting point was finger joined and row materiak in solid wood. Lags have the same shape like the first Tab43.

This is one of the oldest furniture that still keep going in the same sizes just the legs take different shape for different use.

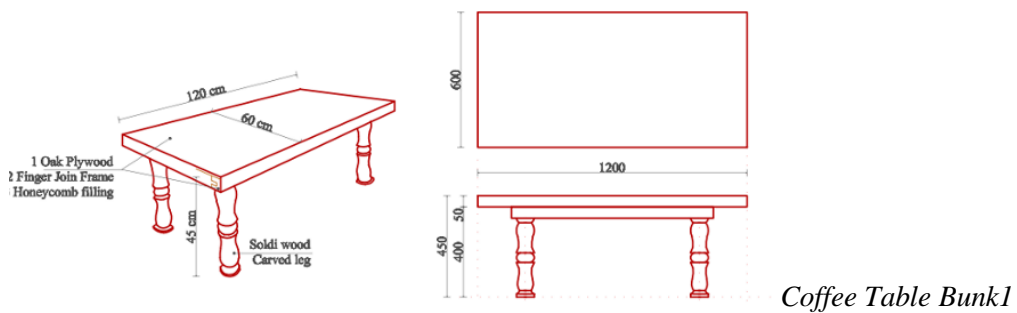
Figure 45 Coffee Table 60cm

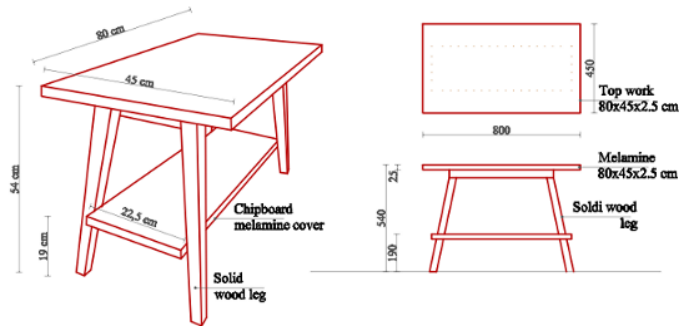


Source *Author from visit on site and digitalizing

Living rooms in communism time was a place of gathering for good and not pleased days, for birthday and for new year, for visitor and for other members of the family, Albanian consumer on the communism time tend to spend more on living room furniture rather than the bedroom, which is more private and less visible, The apartment from decades to decades where increasing which is translated more demands on furnishing and after 90s new apartments built has too many wasted space that could be used just for shelves or storages places, In the other hand the customer consumption was increasing and people storage more in their houses. It is very important that DIY stores must be next door to the customers to understand their demands and to be always one step before when they need smth,

Figure : Two model of “costumized tables”





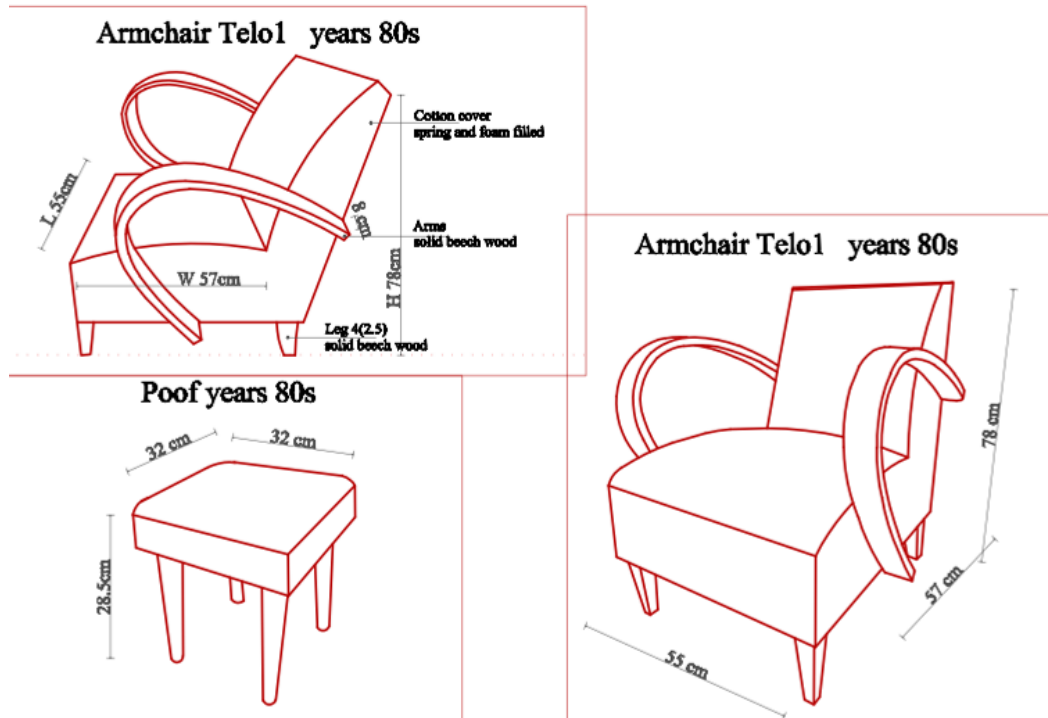
Coffee Table Bunk1

Source *Author from visit on site and digitalizing

As well in the production has been “costumized” produced furniture as the table above which mostly of the time are insrted in the production as prototypes but due to the cost or technical factors havent pass th emass production

- **Armchair** is a product that because of the price couldn't be affordable for every family which instead of two armchair because to buy and additional Sofa. Another reason why is because mostly of the family need to have as many beds as they could due to the big family living in a small house.

Figure 46 Different Models of Armchair years 80's



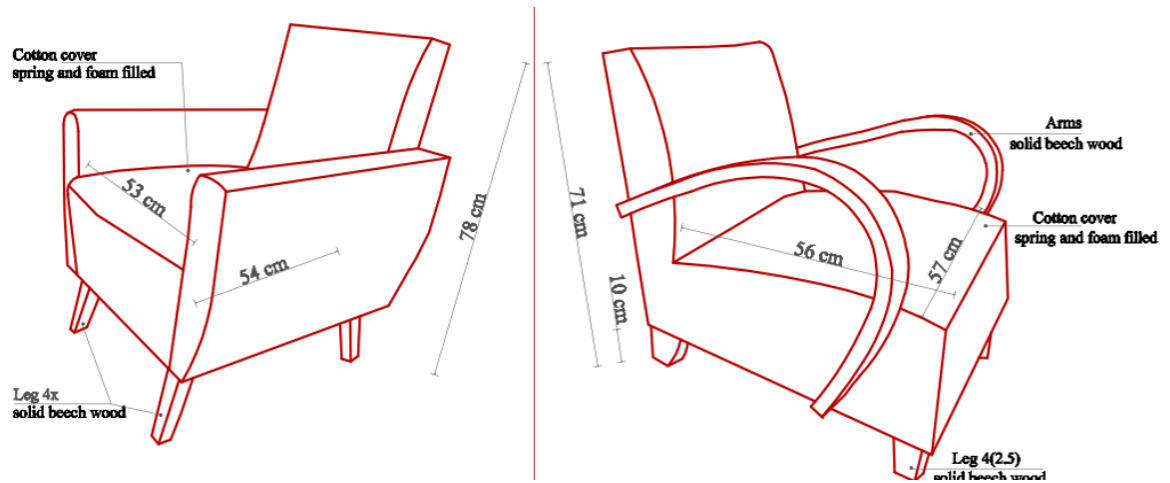
Source* Author visit on site and digitalizing

Photo 8 Armchair collection



Source* Author visit on site

Figure 47 Armchair years 80's Bunk 2 and Bunk 1



Source* Author visit on site and digitalizing

Photo 9 Different model of ottoman stool and different textile patterns



Source* Author visit on site

To understand better this samples are chose different moments:

Photo 10 Living room layout "Shoku im Tili"



Source* Movie "Shoku im Tili" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1981 min 45:39

The furnishing is late 70' production. This living room has a simple TV units, TV, a table in the middle, a Foam Sofa and two armchairs. The Carpet is with the traditional pattern and the flooring is with linoleum wrapped. Simple are the wall decorated, natural flowers and refrigerator "Obodin" will be part of the living room interior.

Photo 11 Residential building interior



Source* Movie "Edhe keshtu edhe ashtu" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1989 min 11:18

Photo 12 Living room "Shoku im Tili" - fabrics



Source* Movie "Shoku im Tili" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1981 min 1:05

The movie is the late 80', the interior is richer than the above samples, wall decorated with more wall deco, the natural flower a pedant lamp, the colored wall and the fabric of the clothes.

Pattern of fabric produced late 70 are full of geometric and flora shapes with the natural design of beech , oak walnuts wood of melamine are matching stylizing.

Photo 13 Living room "Ne shtepin tone"



Source* "Ne shtepin tone" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"19879 min 0:08

Photo 14 Living room "Ne shtepin tone"



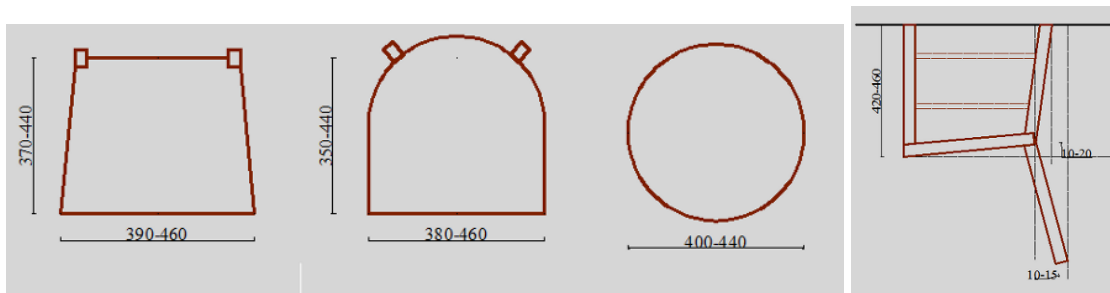
Source* "Ne shtepine tone" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1979 min 0:08

The last two photo, have more simple furnishing, they are produced years 70'. The straw sofa, simple shelf cabin, and the dining table with 4 chairs are part of the living room layout.

- **Chairs,** are many models square shape, round shapes, finished or just printed etc. Chairs are done in solid beech wood, not often are the oak chairs. The colors are similar with the table so they are in light and dark beech color, and dark walnut color with printed patterns.

The production before 64 is done like this the joining () Solid Beech wood and some parts Oak wood , were used as raw material for the frame and decoration parts. Ply woos 4- 12 mm were used for the back and seater. The assambled way has been done by Thith dhe bire te fshehur , which must be very precise , important is to be comode and to use less and less raw material and fast produced,But due to be suitbale for the human ergonometri the specification of the chairs are the same and variable to some dimensions like above this specifics are since 64 on the book of FICO.

Figure 48 chairs technical specification on the production from 64s



Source* Author from literature review

As raw material was used most common beech wood as far as it could be easily treated and machine woodcarftin especially for the frame, it was used solid wood , for the back and the seater was used 4-12mm plywood,

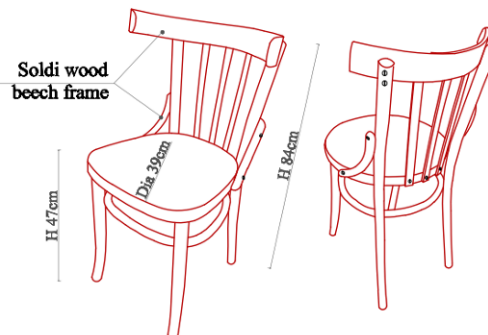
Beach solid wood years 65s 80s and the sepcification , this is ti understand if the products in it self as changed as ergonometry or just the designs in its self , replacing the materials is the same strength.

Figure 49: Chairs differences through years

Chair Telo2:Beech solid wood years 65s

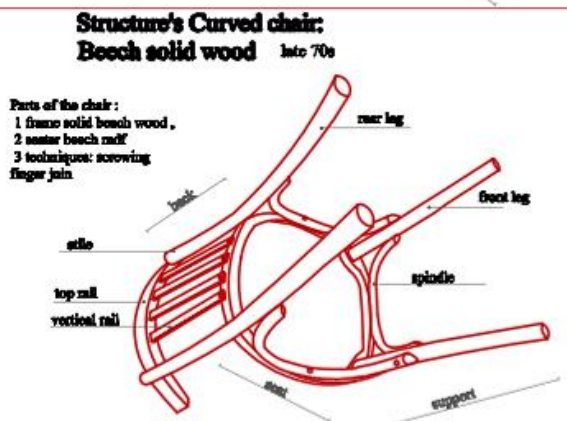
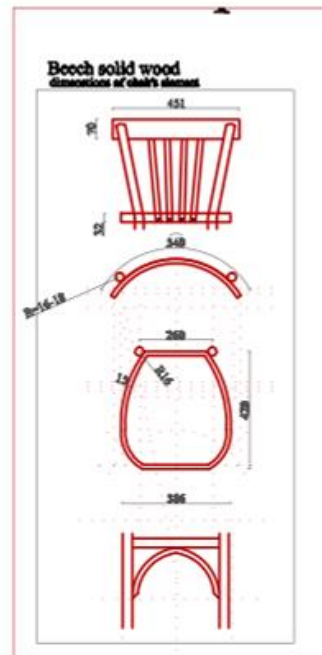
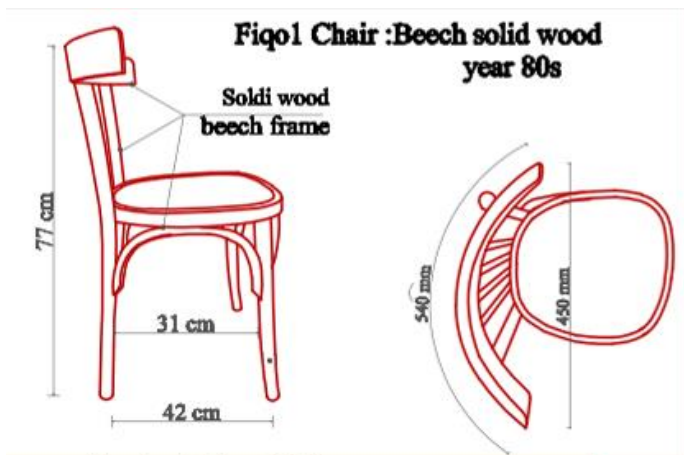


Chair Telo1:Beech solid wood years late 70s



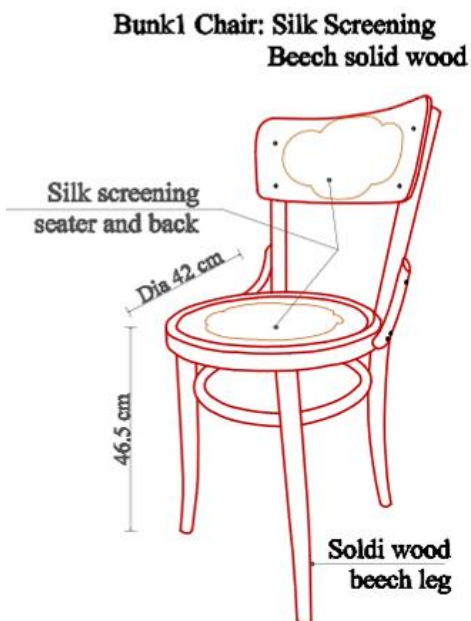
*Source Author Visit on site and digitalizing

Figure 50 Chair years 80'



Source*Author Visit on site and digitalizing

Figure : Chair years 80'



Source*Author Visit on site and digitalizing

Figure: Different chair's model produce in Communism Era



Source*Author Visit on site and digitalizing

Photo 15 Living are - dining table and chairs



Source* Movie "Fillim I veshitire" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1986 min 3.23

Photo 16 Living area- Cleaning time



Source* Movie " Fillim I veshitire" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1986 min 11.26

In the last two moments from movie are showed the position of the dining table in the living room and more information are given as the shape of the legs of chairs, fabric of

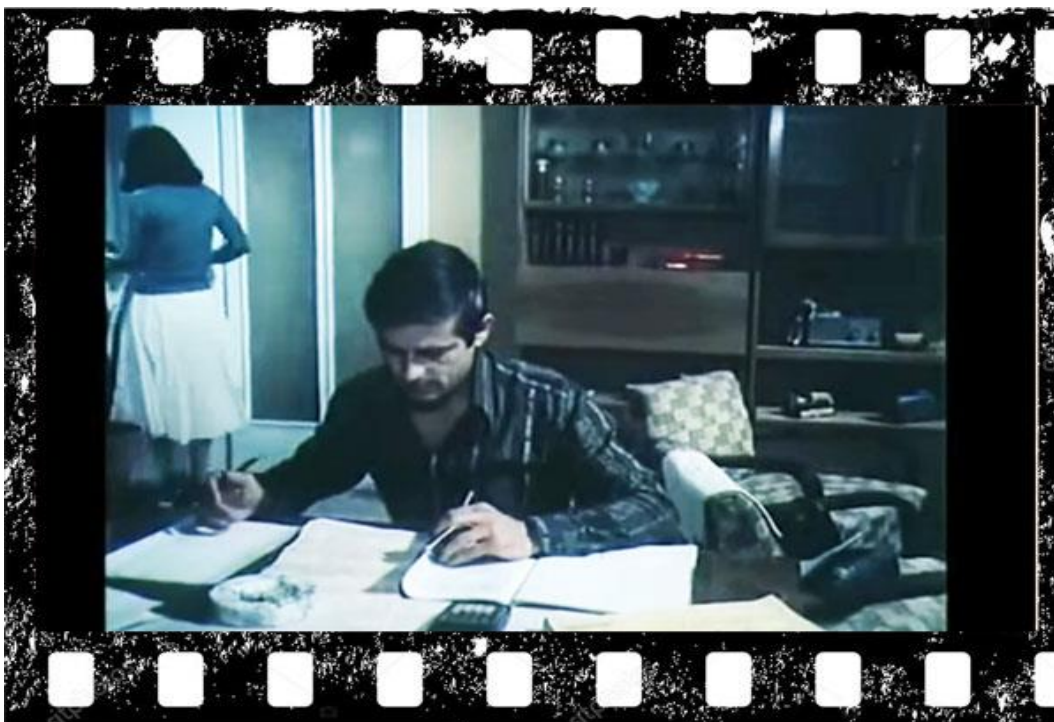
the sofa, floor, wall , door and most important the cleaning time process.

Photo 17 The Living room - studding area living room



Source* Movie "Taulanti kerkon nje moter" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot" 1986 min 40:21

Photo 18 Living room- working on projects



Source* Movie "Taulanti kerkon nje moter" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot" 1986 min 40:21

Photo 19 Living room- practicing piano



Source* Movie "Taulanti kerkon nje moter" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1986 min 15:55

In the last three pictures are showed that the living room was as well a multifunction room , living in all the dimension: relaxing, receiving guest, studding, working , eating and sleeping.

Photo 20 Party almost finished ...



Source* Movie "Fillim I veshtire" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1986 min 30.00

Photo 21 Living Room- table clothe



Source* Movie "Fillim I veshtire" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1986 min 38:48

Photo 22 Living room-white TV unit



Source* Movie "Dy here Mat" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1986 min 1:05

This finishing is not in the mass production products even though it is respecting the square shape and plain colours. The green wall painting is one of the most common paintings for wall , pear colour but only in the rural area was used the white colours for the wall.

Another model of the TV units which is the mass production are the below samples:

Photo 23 TV Units- living room



Source* Movie "Dy here Mat" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1986 min 18:56

Photo 24 Living room - used as studio and guest room



Source* " Ne shtepine Tone" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1979 min 40:16

Photo 25 Living room-Tv Unit



Source* Movie "Taulanti kerkon nje moter" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1986 min 39:42

Photo 26 Tv units - patterns



Source* Movie "Fillim I veshtire" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1986 min 35:54

Photo 27 Wall units- pattern



Source* Movie "Taulanti kerkon nje moter Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1986 min 36:16

Photo 28 Living room –Kitchen area



Source* Movie "Edhe keshtu edhe ashtu" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1989 min

Photo 29 Living Area- textile's pattern, pedant lamp and refrigerator.



Source* Movie "Fillim I veshtire" Filmhouse: Kinostudio "Shqiperia Sot"1986 min 11.45

These two pictures showed the relation between the kitchen and Annex, The refrigerator was part of the furnishing for the living room, due to lack of space of the Annex (kitchen). Checking these last picture could be build the list of the fabric produced in Albania during that time.

The Bedroom

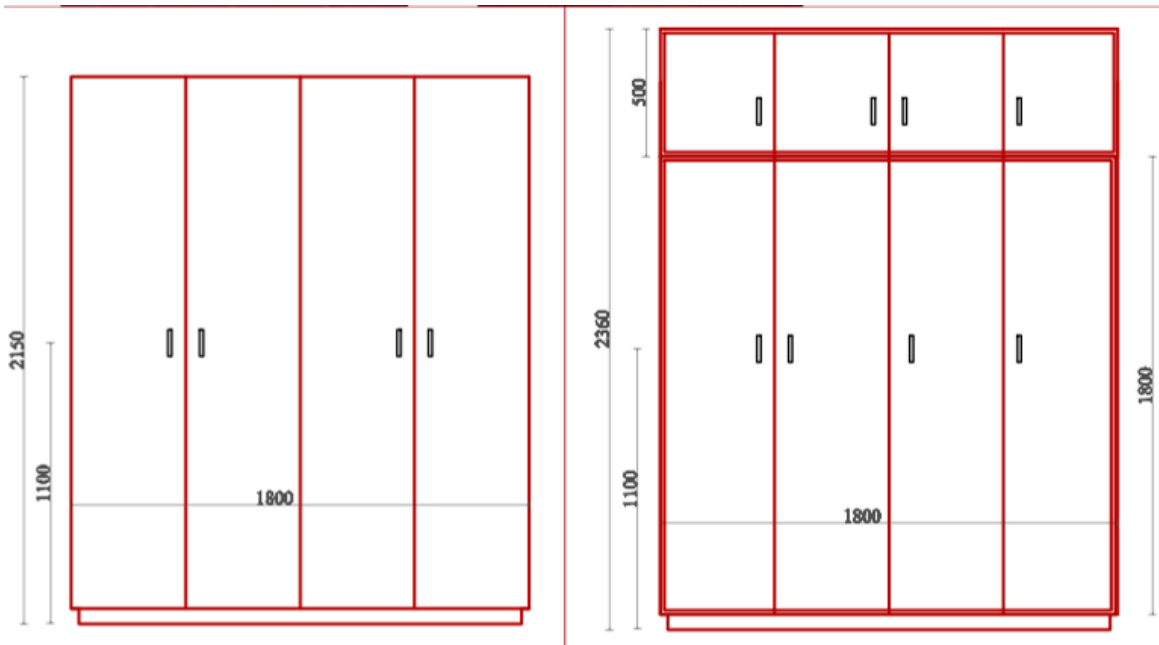
The prefabricate system enlarge the surface of the bedroom which was almost the same surface with the living room. After 70 the houses with two bedroom instructed to have a wood flooring (Council of Ministers was approved). Bedroom furniture were produces as a full set, two night stands, a chest, bed, wardrobe in different models and a mirror chest. The furniture after 70' started to be assembled due to the transportation cost and facility. Bedrooms have more possibility in wardrobe due to the customers demands, from 4 5 6 doors the wide is different, as well it was developed additional the upper part with 3 doors, this helped to have more storage but prices were not very cheap (Annex 4 prices of the furniture).

A bedroom set has as today, two night standing, chest, wardrobe e and the bed with

the same colour finishing like the other furniture.

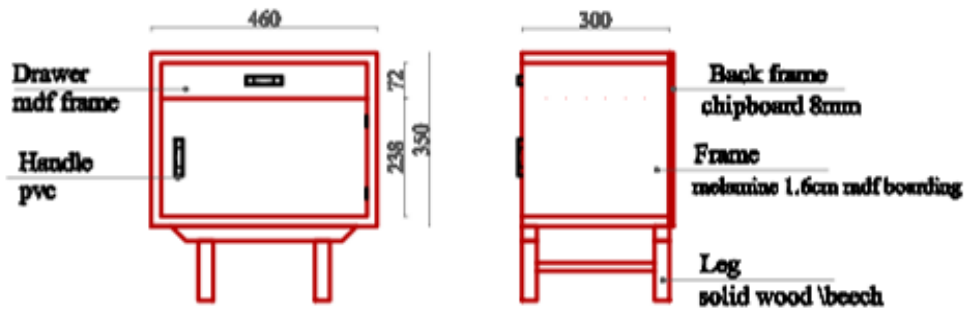
Has been two main set of furniture for the bathroom, the second looked more abundant, is taller and different finishing.

Figure 51 Figure 49 Wardrobe with extension production years 80's



Source" Author visit on site and digitalizing

Figure 52 Night Stand model 1 Years 80's.

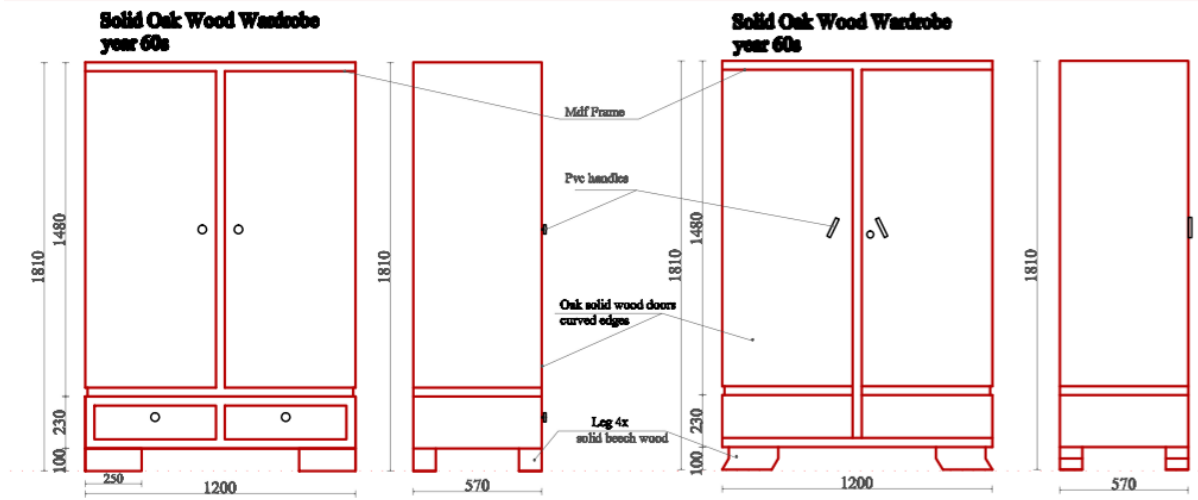


Source" Author visit on site and digitalizing

Accessories used in this period are very easily to be understand because almost the same accessories are used in the bed room furniture as well in the TV units,

Wardrobe of the years 60 is more robust, strong and almost similar, the design proportional sizes are the same is just a matter if the customers need with drawer or not, legs are different handles.

Figure 53 Wardrobe years 60



Source" Author visit on site and digitalizing

Photo; Diferent bedroom furniture



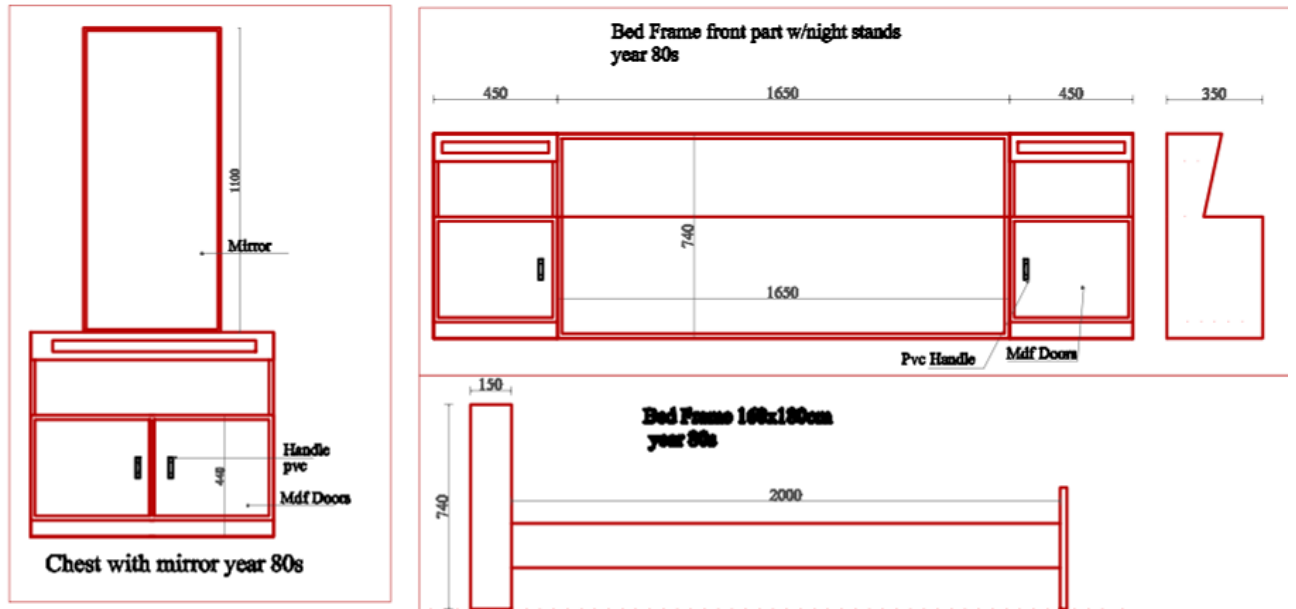
Source" Author visit on site

When bed frame come out of the production with two night stand incorporated in it,

it become very popular designs, even when the factory change the design but still incorporated the night stand the new design continued to have success still reh

Chest of the bed set was in two design, one like today with 4 5 drawers, and the second option is a short chest with mirror on it:

Figure 54 the same series bed frame and chest& Bed frame with header and joined night stand



Source* Author visit on site

Photo 30 Bedroom- pattern display



Source* Movie "Taulanti kerkon nje moter. Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1986 min 39:56

Photo 31 Bedroom –components: bed, night stand, mirror chest, lightings, wall deco



Source* Movie "Fillim I veshtire" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1986 min

Photo 32 Bedroom nr 1 Model



Source* Movie "Fillim I veshtire" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1986 min 40:36

Photo 33 Bedroom Model 2



Source* Movie "Taulanti kerkon nje moter" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1986 min 18:46

New couples were living in the house with one bedroom and one living room , coming a new member in the family needed that an additional bed that was situated inside the bedroom. Waiting for the new house , bigger than this, could cost many months or years consequently the baby bed would be replaced with a single bed, or a sofa due to replacement of the furniture's in the living room. Below are the samples of this cases:

Photo 34 Bedroom with a baby bed additional.



Source* Movie " Fillim I veshtire" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1986 min 6.43

The pictures are very vitally, textiles pattern, wood finishing, wall painting, room display.

Photo 35 Bedroom- Sofa additional on the display of the bedroom



Source* Movie "Fillim I veshtire" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1986 min 1:06:05

Photo 36 Bedroom single bed



Source* Movie "Taulanti kerkon nje moter" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1986 min 18 30

The Kitchen

Which was called “annex” but de-facto never used such like, due to the cooking equipment, which was “furnella” . It was a four legs metal frame cooker, with kerosene fuel, and due to the bed smell during burning mostly of the houses used their bathroom, fewer the balcony, as a place where to cook.

Figure 55 Cooking equipment before 90', cooker Furnella, and wood stove in cast iron material



*Source from the “black market” 2015.

The surface of this Area minimized to minimize the cost of the building. The Annex was simple with a ceramic sink wide 80cm with just a bowl and cold water, mostly of the project the Annex has a window and furnished with a shelf used for storage of the grocery or other food material. Because it was open to the living area mostly of the families preferred to close it with a curtain. The other equipment for cooking despite the “furnella” was the heater which was in different material.

Photo 37 Kitchen (Annex)- Interior



Source* “Ne shtepine Tone” Filmhouse: Kinostudio “ Shqiperia Sot”1979 min 41:29

Photo 38 Kitchen (Annex)- wall unit



Source* "Ne shtepine Tone" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1979 min 42:53

An Anex was furnished; one ceramic sink, melamine cupboard painted in light color, sometimes self-hanged shelves and for the family that could afford to buy a wood stove, it was located there. \as showed in the above pictures the refrigerator location was between living room and Annex,

Photo 39 Kitchen interior – The layout



Source* "Shoku im Tili" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1981 min 40:10

The picture above taken from a movie scheme isn't a "mass interior design", the wall is covered in wood laminate, there are two dining tables, meantime there were families in waiting list for just one dining set , and too many cabinets, like kitchen and a divider spaces cabinet, not affordable from average of people , in cost or limited or almost zero production possibility for customized products.

Photo 40 Annex furniture, apart of living room .



Source* Movie "Mimoza Ilastica" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1973 min 28:44(49)

Photo 41 Living room- or Annex furniture, which is impacting each other ?



Source* Movie "Edhe keshtu edhe ashtu" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1989 min 31:36

The Balcony

It was used for different reason from storage space, cooking until to relax area. But the balcony was a standard one depending on the building prototype but it was around 4m2 when later after 90' balcony could be as well a veranda. Flooring often was the same as the interior house flooring, tiles made in concrete with a glossy smooth surface. The average balcony surface was 4m2 although, it could be called a multifunction space. First, as a cloth drying room ,in “do it yourself” families install accessories for drying the clothes, second a small garden in or out it, and third relaxing , and having Turkish coffee.

The Bathroom

all the apartment have a window, biggest space than mostly of the bathroom build after year 2000', and sometimes used a part for cooking, due to the bad smell of the cooking equipment.

Some samples of the bedrooms are taken from the movie, but the furnishing was very simple, a ceramic basin hanged on the wall , rarely were found the wc like the below samples , that's why this houses are chosen for playing these movies, but almost all the houses has the Wc , ceramic called Turkish WC. The toilet tank was in ceramic. A simple mirror and some DIY shelves. There were few families that could have a shower. The floor was in concrete tiles meantime the walls were wrapped half of the height. There was just a cold water not mixing faucets. And in the second picture is showed a boy taking his punishment at Toilet. A not complete job, a lie, cheating or not respecting the adult were enough reasons to find yourself in the toilet for punishment.

Photo 42 Toilet furnishing



Source* Filmi “Fillim I veshtire” Filmhouse: Kinostudio “ Shqiperia Sot”1986 min 3.03

Photo 43 Toilet - Punishment



Source* "Ne shtepine Tone" Filmhouse: Kinostudio "Shqiperia Sot"1979 min 48:53 (53:11)

The Corridor

Entering in the apartment, all the rooms must have the entrance from the corridor, it was as a meeting point. The second functionality, helping heating and cooling of the house.

Photo 44 Corridor interior- Wall unit



Source* Movie "Edhe keshtu edhe ashtu" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1989 min

Furnishing of the corridor was different from house to house, not the same thing was for the furniture of the rest part of the house. Some families who could afford the

washing machine, found the corridor as the proper position, this was because the house had one toilet so the process of washing to not limit the use of the toilet. It was simple decorated on the wall with any paper calendar or wood carved wall decoration. The wall Unit, the main purpose was to hang the clothes and a mirror. With the telephone infrastructure it was as well positioning in the corridor, as a common area. As the samples below mostly of the corridor wall unit was a simple flat hanger in different shape and colors.

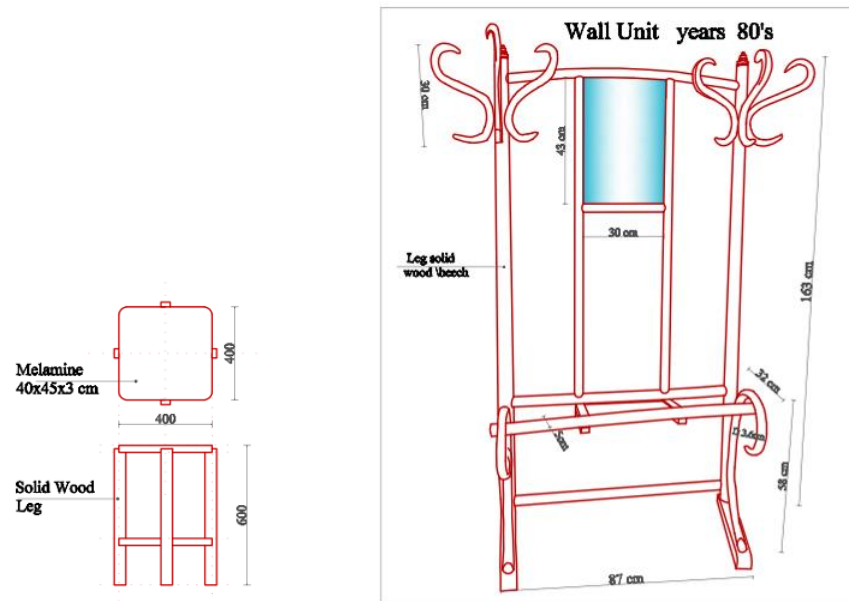


Figure 56 Furniture used for furnishing the corridor first corner Table years 65's , second a wall Unit years 80's

Source* Author visit on site

Photo 45 Corridor Wall unit clothe hanger



Source* Movie "Taulanti kerkon nje moter" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1986 min 32 22

Photo 46 Corridor interior- Wall units and washing machine



Source* Movie "Edhe keshtu edhe ashtu" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1989 min 38:11

Photo 47 Corridor Interior- "Mimoza Ilastica"



Source* Movie "Mimoza Ilastica" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1973 min 31.12

Photo 48 Corridor interior -Dy here mat



Source* Movie "Dy here Mat" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1986 min 37:37

Photo 49 Corridor- wall unit "Ne shtepine tone"



Source* "Ne shtepine Tone" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1979 min 3:38

Photo 50 Corridor Wall Unit- and furnishing of the living room



Source* Movie "Shoku im Tili" Filmhouse: Kinostudio " Shqiperia Sot"1981 min 40:26

In additional exploring these pictures and visit on site a rich Pattern catalogue has been enrich as an additional value of this research (main catalogue). Memo done during this study as well on decoration, fabric curtain, as well glass ware, flooring with linoleum, or some houses with the wood covers wall, and Lighting. There are some studies on the carpet pattern and models during ethnography studies helped to complete the full picture of the interior of the residential building.

Figure 57 Different Patterns used in Communist Era



Source* Author from the visit on site

Understanding more deeply the price level of the furniture are taken in study some representative furniture:

Figure 58 Price/Bred Level per furniture during Communist Era

Photo Data										
Article	Chair	Table	Sofa	Cloth hanger	Berdroom set	Table	Chair	Chair	Wall Unit	Sofa
Year	67'	70'	75'	75'	75'	78'	78'	80'	80'	80'
Price	600	800	7000	1940	21800	1900	430	500	18000	9000
Salary avarage	3500	5600	5600	5600	5600	5600	5600	5600	5600	5600
Bread	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
pcs/salary	6 pcs / salary	7 pcs /salary	1.25 salary / pc	3 pcs/ per salary	4 salary / pc	3pcs/salary	13 pcs/ salary	11 pcs/ salary	3.2 salary/pc	1.6 salary /pc
Price (Bread)	15	20	175	48.5	545	47.5	10.75	12.5	450	225

Source* Author from the visit on site

As the “currency” is taken bread, it is not changeable during the undertaken period and the salary after the consolidation of the system was more or less the same. Referring to the Table the price of the chair was from 10.75 bread to 15 bread or telling otherwise families could purchase with one salary 6 to 11 pcs chair per salary in respective period. The table was 20. 47.5 bread or with a salary could be purchase 3. 7 table in their respectively period.

4.2 Furniture design in post-communist era: Mass-customisation

4.2.1 The multifaceted transformation towards a free market economy

After Albania, a country totally isolated, was abandoned in 1990 faced a transition and severe disruption. Despite it, the number of scholars who are involved in research of post-communist countries from the spheres of politic, economy, social, historic and anthropology, draw several aspects of social-economic-politic life, are lowly surprised in Albanian. Almost inexistent is the interest on studies of scholars from the design’s sphere. In the light of these researcher’s background, from transition time to free market in Albania market and neighbours countries, this section is draw different aspects (economic, politic, and social in Albania context), with the focus on furniture design.

The multifaceted transformation towards a free market economy on its European journey, Albania, faced many challenges. The attraction of future EU membership exchange of rewards, accept to undertake dramatic domestic reform, with the aim to: fulfil European standards. Smith.A⁵² (1991) summarize that economic transition is linked to transitions in politics and society provides opportunities for all kind of ideas, but when the democratic tradition is missing, as it is in the case of Albania, it leaves an ideological void. The abolition of communist values does not automatically bring about new civil values. According to Sachs,J (1992) after the first wave of reforms and restraining the new-born capitalism, the political decision-making is suffering from uncertainty, hesitation, contradictory and is at times short-sighted. Albania, picture the transitional brief background, shares many commonalities with other Central and Eastern European countries.

⁵² Smith,A.H. (1991). The Implications of Change in East Central Europe for the Balkan Socialist Economies. In O. Sjoberg, & M.L. Wyzan (eds.), Economic changes in the Balkan States: Albania, Bulgaria, Romania and Yugoslavia. London:, Pinter

The final crisis of one party state, that followed Albania, traced after the death of the leadership E. Hoxha, on 1985, and for his honour was built the symbol museum of “Piramida”, a pyramid shaped building. But pyramid-word was often used in 1997, when the “Pyramids scams⁵³” or Scheme demolish. The state had been rigidly enforced for over 50 years and part of it had been in operation in 1997(Pettifer,J.,Vickers,M.,2007).

Twenty years moving towards the accession processes in the European Union as well as the demographics of the Albanian society as a whole, deeply impact the ways in which products are designed, development and produced. After ‘90s wood processing industry Albania suffered major changes from a centralized state economy organized in factory combines shifted to medium and small businesses where mostly of them have low skills level of craft but later come workshops and factories (FAO.1994).

Public or private manufactures and service enterprises has two main problems:

- firstly, most of them have still old technology or are in their earlier phases of development, they need to import innovation as far as the knowledge to build the business already exist,

secondly, the lack of the researcher system and most policies that are aimed at developing research and scientific capacities of the higher education sector. Some private companies in Albania generally are willing to spend much on R&D or to become partners in possible research projects with public institutions

The European Union supported Albania’s commitment to achieve the principles in line with the European Union regional ⁵⁴approach. The first act outset on December 1992 with the “Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation”, with a perspective cooperation between the European Union and Albania. It was followed later on 1993 by the Agreement on Political Dialogue and additional on trade. This agreement was an extension of the 1993 sectorial “Agreement on Trade in Textile Products”. The agreements supported the development of the textile industry and related investments in the European market for Albanian textile exports. Between EU and Albania were various signed agreements, extended economic and financial assistance given in the form of grants and aids. The main objective is to help Albania’s transition toward European accession and standards. In this light, PHARE⁵⁵ a programme of the three pre-accession instruments, was established,

⁵³ A pyramid scheme is characterized by a few people (including the creators of the scheme) making large amounts of money, while most who join the scheme lose money. For this reason, they are considered scams. <https://www.scamwatch.gov.au/>

⁵⁴ “Council Conclusions on Albania”, Bulletin EU, Vol. 7, No. 8, 1997”

⁵⁵ PHARE an abbreviation of ‘Poland and Hungary Aid for the Reconstruction of the Economy’, and later extended to Central-Eastern European countries. The countries included in this program currently stands at: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Macedonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland,

aiming to promote socio-economic development, to assist the applicant countries of CEE⁵⁶(Central and Eastern Europe) in their preparation for joining EU (European Union).

Albania became a PHARE partner country in the early 1992. Until 1997 Albania received millions support from PHARE, in infrastructure development, critical aid, resources into: public administration and institutional reform, agriculture, local community development, and large-scale infrastructure development. In 1992, Albania joined at Tempus⁵⁷ program, focuses on the reform and modernisation of higher education systems.

The economic development of Albania, between 1992 and 1996 had been based upon many illusory premises (Pettifer,J.,Vickers,M.,2007), but in reality had banked on the rapid accumulation of hard currency, savings as émigré remittances, which resulted in an overvalued currency. Therefore, the total collapse in production in most of the old government owned industries and transition problems in much of agriculture sector, was not far to arrive. Mostly of whom wanted to invest, a consideration part emigrant workers, found a big lack of legitimate outlets for investment. In such background Albania has experienced a rapid development of pyramid schemes. Normally, after the fall of communist government 1990, few countries experienced this phenomenon happened (World Bank reads in post-mortem report on 1997), but none one of the few countries experience such catastrophic breakdown in civil. A very strange economy, was called, where fiscal and economic life slightly disconnected. The World Bank in 1998 report, pointed out:

Albania in 1992 was an unusual country. The State was in an advanced state of disintegration and yet the strategy treated Albania as a more conventional transition economy with sector and policy deficiencies that could be remedied by a swift inflow of resources, linearization, regulatory reform, and traditional financial instruments.

Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Croatia.

⁵⁶ CEE an abbreviated CEE, is a generic term for the group of countries in Central Europe, Southeast Europe/the Balkans, Northeast Europe/the Baltics, and Eastern Europe, usually meaning former communist states in Europe

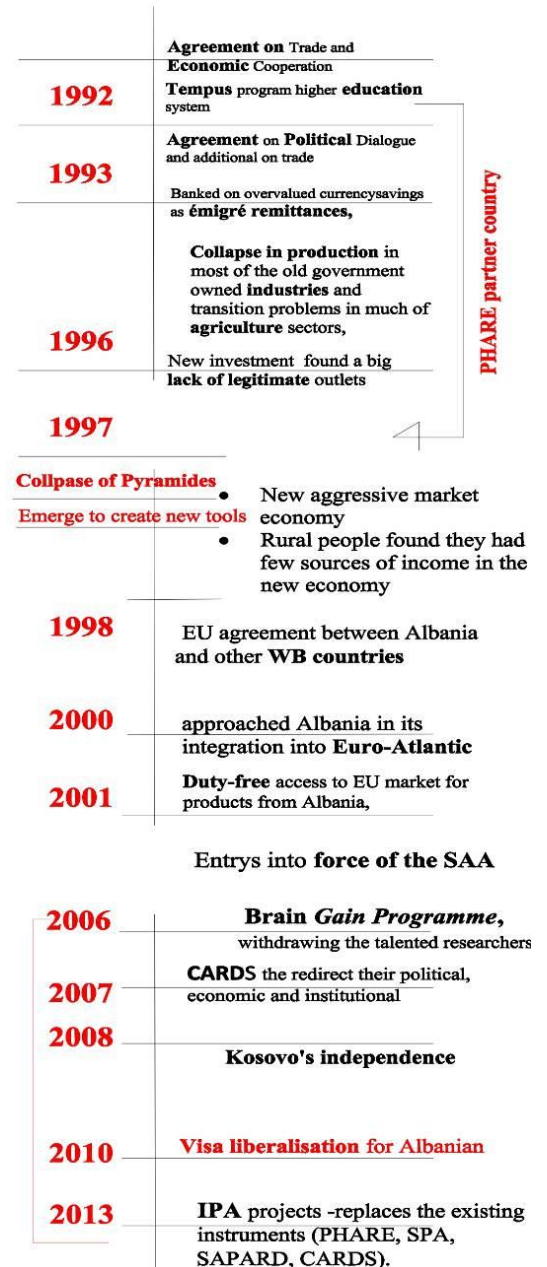
⁵⁷ TEMPUS is the European Union's programme which supports the modernisation of higher education in the EU's surrounding area. Tempus promotes institutional cooperation that involves the European Union and Partner Countries of Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean region.http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/programme/about_tempus_en.php

From the point of view of the foreigner observing superficially there had been considerable progress but in fact nearly all real economic value was being created by émigré workers outside Albania (Pettifer, J., Vickers, M., 2007). Once the crisis touched the banks, in the beginning weakly draw the attention of foreigner observing. According to Pettifer & Vickers (2007), there was little real economy available to prevent a major collapse affecting the entire foundation of society. The mechanism of Albania state couldn't control localities was too weak to prevent the government from being able to control popular street protest effectively. In this year, 1997, PHARE programme, committed millions to cross-border cooperation programs and additional special assistance worth was delivered as budgetary support to public administration reform. But during crisis in Albania PHARE interrupted the programme, due to collapse of pyramid schemes, PHARE support was interrupted. Although, humanitarian-aid continued through The European Commission's DG ECHO (Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid), in order to cover the most urgent needs of the poorest population. This aid consisted of food and medical supplies. The European Commission also continued to finance some activities promoting democracy, security and economic stability, including support to the OSCE for organising elections.

In 1997 Albanians were widespread dissatisfaction with new aggressive market economy and deep sense of grievance against the government.

Including the basic but universal and free systems, medical and education systems, of the communist period had completely collapsed and rural people found they had few sources of income in the new economy. The book of Pettifer & Vickers (2007 "The Albanian Question: Reshaping the Balkan", reads:

Few foreigners realised either, the degree to which the remnants of an extreme egalitarian ideology from the rigid communist system still affected the national



consciousness. “Enverism” did, in its way, embody a genuinely revolutionary content that had taken deep roots in popular political consciousness- perhaps not surprising given the brainwashing the people had been subjected to in their education.

During 1988-90, external reserves lost a big amount on GDP lack of control over the management. The overall balance, has to be covered (external borrowing, inter-bank borrowing, etc) total external debt, increased to about 30 percent of GDP (June 1991)⁵⁸, or measuring an equal amount of Albania’s gross export revenues for twelve to eighteen months during the peak export period of the 1980s. In the 1990s, the total trade (with exports and imports) accounted a small percentage of GDP ⁵⁹(1999). In this condition could be said loudly that Albania was a relatively closed economy and an exporter of mainly primary commodities. In 1990s, Albania lost its position in exporting towards a consideration tread weakness. The economic mismanagement followed by many other negative factors, such as reduced exports and increased imports, production-related problems in domestic supply, disruption of export to Eastern Europe markets. Consequently, in 1900 trade happened the largest deficit in non-convertible currencies of that years. The economy was bankruptcy and insufficient old structures or not capable for new one. Emerge to create new tools to help the country were needed with the aim of a future membership within the European Union. These transformations was clear as the vast tasks addressed to fulfil the European Union requirements. Albania followed reforms to shift the centralised political and economic system to a pluralistic society and decentralised market economy that offers equal opportunities to every one and a liberal democracy based on constitutionalism, individual rights, and rule of law.

In 1998, a new EU agreement between Albania and other WB countries, in the context of a regional approach, offered generalised tariff preferences for imports coming from Albania for a period of three years⁶⁰. The EU granted to Albania asymmetric preferential tariffs favouring closer economic cooperation with the Member States of the EU.(EC Regulation No. 2820/1998.) The aim was to increase the access of goods coming from the WB countries. In additional, an extended arrangement between EU and Albania

⁵⁸ Albanian Central Bank, Annual Bulletin, Tirana, 1991

⁵⁹ Ministry of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations, Annual Bulletin, Tirana, Albania, 1999. Trade accounted respectively 14 percent and 22 percent of GDP.

⁶⁰ Council of the EU, “European Community Council Regulation Concerning Agreements Applicable to Albanian Imports into the EC and the Extension of Generalised Tariff Preferences” 1 July 1999–31 December 2001, COM. (1999) 304 final, 18 June 1999.

aimed the abolishment of remaining ceilings for certain industrial products⁶¹ coming to the EU from Albania.

New Millennium started with more prosperous and promising new developments in economic and education system. In September 2000, extension of duty-free access⁶² to EU market for products from Albania, industrial and textiles Albanian products. In the context of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe⁶³ (EC., 2000)), and the eventual development in Kosova, approached Albania in its integration into Euro-Atlantic, as stated in the Political Dialogue Meeting (1999)⁶⁴, a very important goal to draw Albania to achieve it, every effort will be made to implement and actively use all existing assistance and cooperation instruments and to examine all possibilities of further enhancement. In June 2001, Commission to present draft negotiating directives for the negotiation of a SAA with Albania⁶⁵. The Negotiation for the association process of Albania finalised on April 2009 “Entry into force of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA)”

In 2001 First year of the Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation (CARDS) programme specifically designed for the SPA countries⁶⁶. The aim of the European Commission to simplifying and accelerating the assistance to Western Balkan Countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia). The objective is to redirect their political, economic and institutional development to align them on the European Union’s values and models⁶⁷ (EC., 2000). The CARDS was replaced from IPA, since January 2007 Council adopts a regulation establishing a new Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). It simplifies and projects EU external aid over the pre-accession period. IPA replaces the existing instruments (PHARE, SPA, SAPARD, CARDS)⁶⁸.

Kosovo’s independence, in 2008 offers Albania a new perspective in terms of hastening integration into regional and European schemes. Integration remains the only

⁶¹ European Commission, “Commission Proposes Increased Market Access for Products from the Western Balkans”, IP/00/586, 7 June, 2000.

⁶² European Commission, “The European Union and South Eastern Europe: Building a Brighter Future, November 2000”.

⁶³ ibrid.

⁶⁴ “Joint Statement following the Political Dialogue Meeting at Ministerial Level between the European Union Troika and Albania”, Press/99/121, Luxembourg, 27 April 1999.

⁶⁵ The Commission recommends the undertaking of negotiations on SAA with Albania. The Goeteborg European Council invites the Commission to present draft negotiating directives for the negotiation of a SAA with Albania. <http://www.integrimi.gov.al/en/program/eu-albania-history>

⁶⁶ <http://www.integrimi.gov.al/en/program/eu-albania-history>

⁶⁷ European Commission, “Commission Proposes to Simplify and Accelerate Assistance to the Western Balkans”, (IP/00/456) Brussels, 10 May 2000.

⁶⁸ <http://www.integrimi.gov.al/en/program/eu-albania-history>

solution capable of putting an end to the region's rivalries and historical hostilities.

The Albanian Diaspora in the USA has been always so presents and influence in economy politic as well in education. Excellence needed to attract Diaspora, therefore in 2006 was launched *Brain Gain Programme*, with the main purpose withdrawing the talented researchers from the scientific diaspora to return to Albania. Only after two years an Excellence Capital has been established to support human capital. Meantime National *Agency for Information Society* was established to coordinate government activities in information technology and communication.

The role of research in driving innovation and development processes has been significantly affected by the transformations in the knowledge production system and the new dynamics in the interrelation and communication networks between the university, the government, business, civil society and media. Hence from the Triple Helix model - university-industry-government relations - we have moved towards the Quadruple Helix. The later embeds the Triple Helix by adding as a fourth helix the 'media-based and culture-based public' and 'civil society'. However, the application of such models in emerging contexts such as the Western Balkans is complex and very much dependent on the national and regional research systems and socio-economic priorities.

The Quadruple model can be applied in Albania if we acknowledge the role of non-R&D innovators in this emerging contexts, which implies that a considerable part of the innovation process is not technology and R&D driven. While it is generally accepted that higher education institutions through cooperation with the business and government sphere could contribute to economic growth and regional development in emerging economy contexts too (Huggins & Strakova, 2012) Considering this point of view, The Triple Helix model was initially not relevant to the WB countries because of the limits of the three helices such as low scientific capacities both in the private and the public sectors, low R&D investments, absence of frontier technologies and the lack of strategic innovation governance (Švarc, 2014: 239). Albanian research institute were previously separated from the education institutions, it was attached to the ministries.

Years 2006-2013 were big changes for research system experienced to introductions of national strategies, accession to EU policy, action plans and programmes addressing research, education, innovation and technology. The Knowledge-based economy in Albania is developing through: the establishment of new faculties of science and technology, programme by the Albanian government, action plans, innovation, science and ICTs.

During these years higher education shift in upgrade level: establishment of new faculties

of science and technology, in 2007 was introduced The Bologna Process⁶⁹), participation in the EC Framework Programmes Erasmus+, Horizon2020.

On 2009 the National Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation as instruments for designing the foundations of a functioning scientific research system. The Albanian Government took an initiative on 2014 towards the accession perspective to EU, as an indication of the country social, economic, and cultural development, giving a special focus on the R&D and scientific progress.

December 2010 Visa liberalisation for Albanian citizens travelling to Schengen area⁷⁰

Table 23: Synthetic facts about Albania

	DATA	YEAR	SOURCE
Population	2.892.302 inhabitants	2016	INSTAT
Area	28,748 km ²		
Capital	Tirana		
Capital Population	800.791	2016	INSTAT
Ethnical Structure	Albanian(82.58%), Greek(0.87%),Roma(0.3%), Aromanian(0.3%), Macedonian(0.2%), Egyptian(0.12%),Montenegrin (0.01%)	2011	Census 2011, INSTAT
Language	Albanian		
GDP	2,8%	2015	The World Bank
Average salary /month	400Euro/160Euro min salary (exch 135)	2015	INSTAT
Unemployment	16.10%	2014	The World Bank
Important Industry	Agriculture, food processing, lumber, oil, cement, chemicals, mining, basic metals, hydro power, tourism, textile industry, and petroleum extraction	2015	INSTAT
Government	Unitary parliamentary constitutional republic		
Doing Business in AL	Increased 40/108 (2014) to (46/189 2015)	2016	The World Bank

**Source: Author based on literature review.*

⁶⁹ BP is a collective effort of public authorities, universities, teachers, and students, together with stakeholder associations, employers, quality assurance agencies, international organisations, and institutions, including the European Commission (http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/higher-education/bologna-process_en)

⁷⁰ <http://www.integrimi.gov.al/en/program/eu-albania-history>

4.2.2 Architecture and design perplexity (bewilderment)

In the book *Between Vacuum and energy* the authors Aliaj, Dharmo, Shutina, (2010) defined the periods 1990-2000 “City Made by People”, Albanian society faced internal migration which brought not only negative aspects but also carried with it a significant opportunity for economic development. Albania lived a spatial crisis experience, from one side due the absence of any central planning criteria, has been attempted sprawling construction projects and in the other side, the urban level resized relation between city centre and peripheral area. Throughout Albania, the changes after 90’s were characterized by the unauthorized constructions. It was the moment that Albanians had gained the legal right to freedom of movement, unlike what it was , controlled migration that, seeking a better life conditions comprised better infrastructure, employment, public and social services and housing.

Housing typified by the unauthorized constructions, were one of the source of perplexity, distress and vexation of the urban space, society, economy and consequently living conditions. This phenomenon happened for two main reasons: first, due to the migration from rural area to urban area, or from small cities to big cities where Albanian thought to have better life condition, the demand for housing stock has been increased, second, public authorities couldn’t manage to provide legal and affordable alternatives.

In contrast with pre-existing planning sequence; first Plan , second Supply infrastructure third and four, Build and Inhabit, in early 90’ it changed, appeared to be deformed. Firstly the new arrival came, the new inhabitants, built home construction with an infrastructure provision waiting to have a planning solution of this spontaneous developments.

Table 24 The differences of Urban Planning Sequence

before 90'	in 90'
Urban Planning sequence	
Plan	home construction,
Supply infrastructure,	infrastructure provision
Build	planning only being addressed subsequently
Inhabit	planning aimed only to improve the de-facto situation of spontaneous developments.

**Source: Author based on literature review*

The aim was just to improve the de-facto situation. Which happened not only in the informal areas but also in so-called formal areas emphasizing once more the incapacity of the absence of official oversight, the identification and legitimacy of local leadership.(Aliaj, Dharmo, Shutina, 2010) . The state still plays a minimal role in the coordination of construction activity although the privatization, a new paradigm for Albanian meant as well “occupation” of public spaces and reshaping or replacement of traditional. Informal architecture is driven by the user facing the interests of the market economy where the state's role is negligible in everyday life.

The consolidation of national efforts towards Euro-Atlantic integration, has open a new phase in urban planning, aid for development and planning programs. Followed with the EGUG program, its aim, to lead professionals and municipal authorities to integrated, dynamic, and multidimensional urban planning approach. Since 2000, Albanian society has faced the challenge for stabilizing a democratic society between radical economic reforms aimed at boosting growth and development and within European integration.

The privatization and new market in the housing section was associated with consequences in social and geographic segregation, including families with the lowest opportunity to secure their accommodation, the difficulty to maintain and improve common ownership especially in multi-family dwellings. But in the other hand due to the new economy has been improvement of the housing conditions for the majority of citizens, increasing the quantitative and qualitative market share of the housing stock with the greatest opportunity to exchange goods and services from individuals and private firms.

During the first years of 90', the evolution of the typology of housing has to respond to the new housing demands. The following developments are; numbers of floor in the new construction has increased, “extensions” of the socialist period buildings, have been constructed, and the individual housing keep increasing even after 90'. The relationship between client- construction, during the late 90s become closer, as the result of two main moments, first the client has given the possibility to choose the planning organization in the early stages of building, the second, the client could prepay a part of the amount, having the possibility to choose in advance the better location of apartment and some discount. It was often happening that the prepayment wasn't for an apartment in project still not constructed yet.

The Individual housing one and two floors, from 1991 to 2000 has increased due to the migration of the rural area to the urban area (INSTAT, 2001), building their house construction in a provisory infrastructure. The residential housing in high building

construction has increased after 2000'. Individual housing are in wide varied from simple constructions with minimal furnishing requirements up to notorious construction with exterior embellishments.

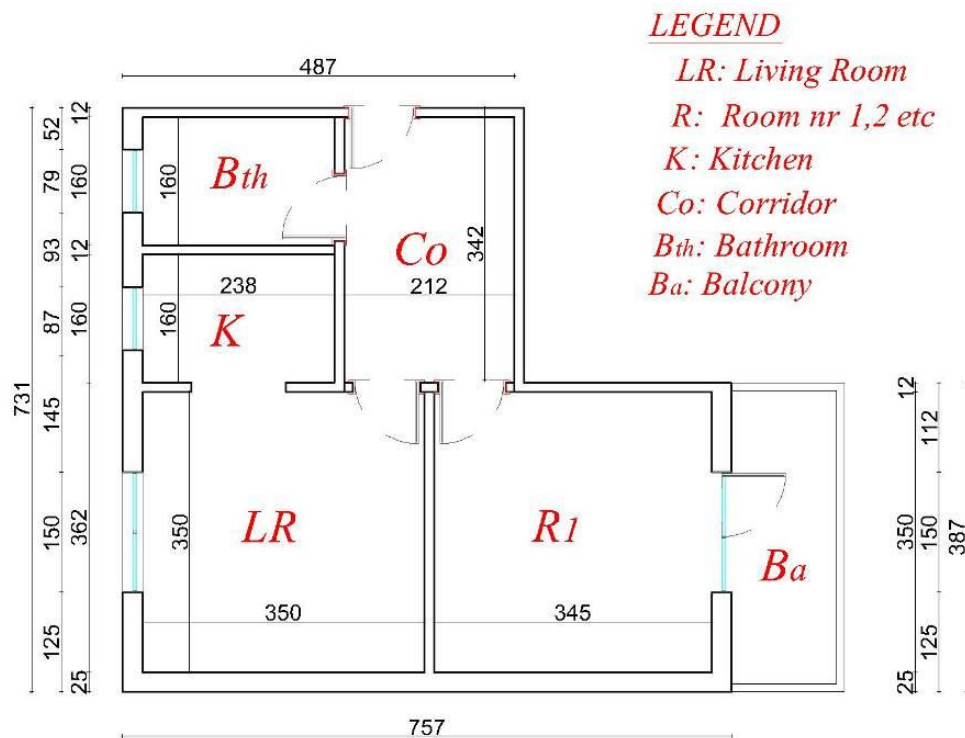
Table 25 Building characteristic on the construction period

Building characteristics	Period of construction							
	Total		1991-2000		2001-2005		2006-2011	
Total	598,267	21%	124,474	10%	57,136	8%	48,847	
Number of floors								
1	510,528	88%	102,665	82%	45,242	79%	39,110	80%
2	60,862	6%	16,382	13%	8,059	14%	6,052	12%
3-5	20,804	5%	4,474	4%	2,527	4%	1,876	4%
6-10	5,575	1%	870	1%	1,094	2%	1,661	3%
11+	498	0%	83	0%	214	0%	148	0%

Source* INSTAT 2011.

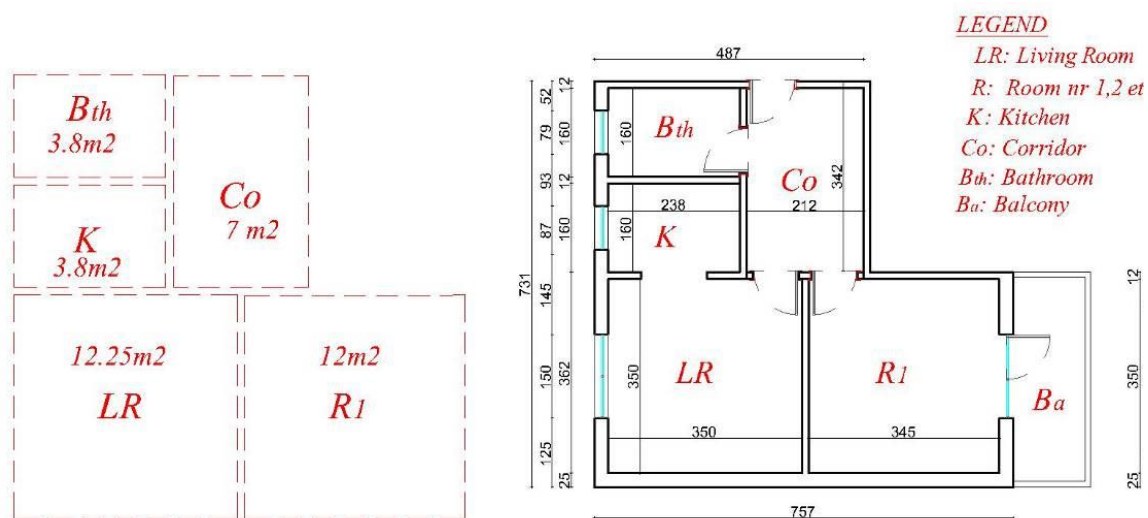
The number of dwelling per floor has been increased minimizing the surface of the apartments. Although the construction is made by column and bean, where capability of building bigger space inside the house was available, still the houses shrank due to maximizing the number of dwelling per floor.

Figure 59 Plan of the House build 96'



Source*Author from visits on site

Figure 60 The surface of the house build in 96



Source* Author visit on Site

The typology of the building mixed the residence with local trading or service, reached its maximum in Tirana, even in many cases overcame even on the second and third floors third, of course, in the context of new typologies of high-altitude housing 8-12. Maximizing the number of dwelling in one floor apart the reduction of the residential area, brought the lack of natural lighting for the stairs, as well the toilets and often the kitchen to be without a window.

The demands of the houses with two rooms is 50% in the Urban area (tab4), this is guiding the constructors to respond the market on the below distribution numbers of rooms.

Table 26 Distribution of Households According to Number of Rooms

Description	Gjithsej	Urbane	Rurale
	Total	Urban	Rural
One room	15.3	22.0	8.9
Two rooms	45.1	50.0	40.4
Three rooms	27.4	19.8	34.5
Four rooms	8.7	5.7	11.5
Five and above	3.6	2.5	4.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source* Household Budget Survey, 2006-2007, INSTAT 2015.

According to the table INSTAT the expenditures of each family from 1-7 members have the “furniture, house hold variable” one of the most consideration expender. The family with two member spends as their third priority on furnishing and house hold expenders. Families with one member, five and six member, spend for furniture as their fifth priority. The amount spent per family on furniture and house hold, still family with 2

members are spending more following from 3 to 6 members at home.

Table 27 Monthly Consumption expenditures by household size.

Main group expenditures	1person household	With 2 members	With 3 members	With 4 members	With 5 members	With 6 members	With 7+ members	Total
Food and non-alcoholic beverage	50.6	53.8	48.2	46.8	49.4	50.3	52.1	49.4
Alcoholic beverages,tobacco	3	4.2	4.5	3.8	4.1	4.4	4.9	4.2
Clothing and footwear	2.7	3.6	5.3	6.1	5.8	5.4	5.7	5.4
Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels	12.2	10.8	9.9	8.4	8.7	8.2	7.9	9
Furnishing, household equipment and routine household maintenance	4.1	5.6	5	4.9	4.9	4.7	4.2	4.9
Health	3.1	3.5	3.3	2	2.6	3.2	2.8	2.7
Transport	3.9	4.5	5.2	6	5.8	6.2	7.1	5.7
Communication	3.5	3.8	3.9	3.7	3.3	3.2	3	3.5
Recreation and culture	0.9	1.5	2	2.9	2.6	2.5	1.9	2.3
Education	0.1	0.7	1.3	3.7	2	1.5	0.9	2
Restaurants and hotels	10.6	2.9	5.6	5.6	4.8	4.1	4.6	5
Miscellaneous goods and services	5.3	5	6	6	6	6.3	4.8	5.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source * Household Budget Survey, 2008-2009

Mostly of the main groups that spend more money in the furnishing, two to five members live respectably in the apartment less than 69 m² (tab 1.5.7, INSTAT 2013). The layouts of the apartment with this surfaces are: one garsonier, or one bedroom with one living room or the third option, one living room and two bedrooms. Due to small surface the kitchen interior and living room interchange the functions. A single room house with more than two person increase the demands for more furnishing the house. The data collected for the groups of exponders are taken during 2008-2009, when Albania experienced the introductions of national strategies, accession to EU policy, action plans and programmes addressing research, education, innovation and technology. The Knowledge-based economy in Albania is developing through: the establishment of new faculties of science and technology, programme by the Albanian government, action plans, innovation, science and ICTs. Launched Brain *Gain* .

After 90' the economic mismanagement reduced exports and increased imports, deficit in non-convertible currencies and Albania lost its position in exporting, as result of destroyed industry during the demonstrate of 90'. In this light the first purchased products from the families were electronics and electric equipment's like television "with colours", oven, and alternative of washing machine and heaters and cooler. Furniture's, if there was not a necessity to replace due to the quality, families weren't replacing, or if they could afford it. Below picture mid 90' is showing the wall unit used as TV Unit, is still the product produced in communist time, but the television is new with "colours.

Photo 51 Colored' Tv in a communist era TV shelve



Source from the archive of A.D*

Photo 52 Celebration during earlier 90's



Source from the archive of E.M*

Photo 53 Celebration during earlier 90's



Source* from the archive of E.M

Photo 54 Foto interior 1996



Source* Author

Photo 55 Shooting Day, a tradition, years 96'



Source Author*

Picture nr 3 is enriching the archive of post-communist interior design with this elements ; fabric pattern(mostly of the houses has bought once this fabric due to the chip price and not too much options to choose), clothes, hair stylish, wall decoration,, light colours of wall , curtain still from the production of before 90', and furniture, Straw Sofa and heater.

Photo 56 House interior years 2000 and the way of celebrations.



Source from the Archive B.B

Photo 57 House interior years 2000'



Source* from the Archive B.B

After 95-s even though manufacture infrastructure improved, policy making increased the engagement, World Bank and other banks supports the development, there were still a lack of innovation on Design. The manufactures copy successful global design or the costumers, their self, search from different sources specific design to be produce from the local manufactures. In this light, the involvement of the costumers are the first steps in design process, The manufactures and furniture stores to be more competitive and successful needed to respond the costumers needs.

Years earlier 2000', more stylish sofa, wall decoration and second picture TV Unit in glass.

Figure 61 Winter interior of apartment East Albania



P
Source* from the Archive A.D

.Figure 62 Celebration



Source* from the Archive A.D.

Figure 63 Children the main actors of the celebration's day



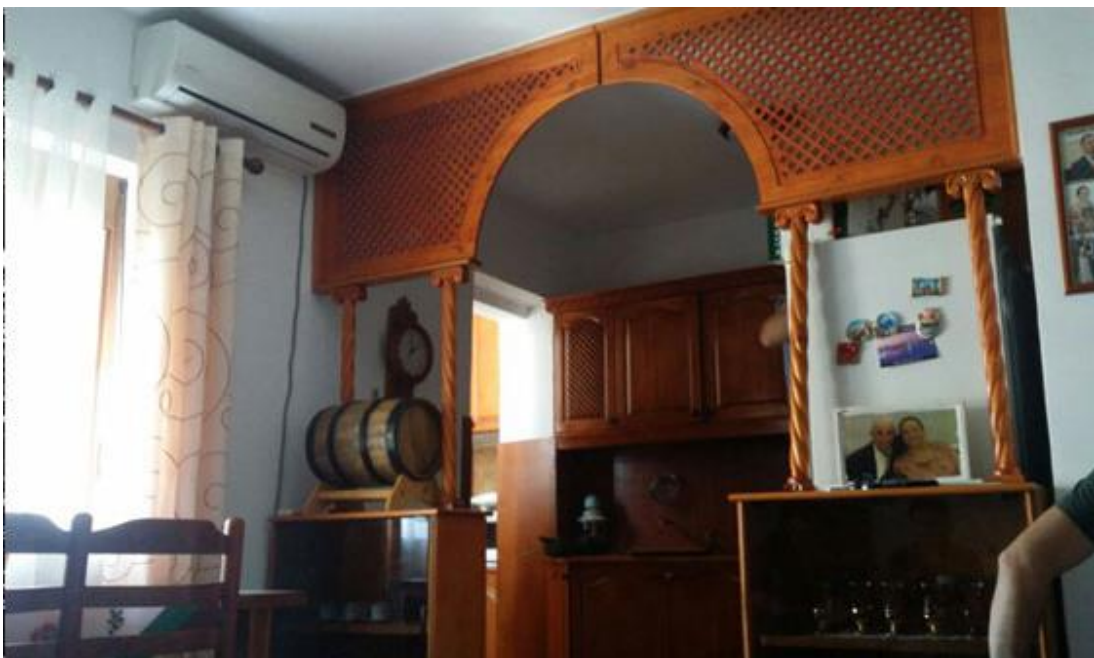
Source* from the Archive A.D.

Photo 58 Playing with the Christmas's Pet, years late 90'



Source from the archive of A.D*

Photo 59 Kitchen Furnishing 95'



Source from the Archive A.D.*

Photo 60 Interior detached house, years late 90'



Source* Author visit on Site

Photo 61 Different Sofa Models years 90's



Source* Author visit on Site

Figure 64 Furniture produced during late 90's



Source Author visit on Site*

Photo 62 Different living room furniture after 90'





Source Author visit on Site*

During all this interior design pathway a very important factor are the emigration workers, until to the word crisis 2008, they were an important pillar of Albanians outcomes. They brought a very consideration amount, Pettifer,J.,Vickers,M.(2007) stated as until , 1997 it was nearly all real economic value created by émigré workers outside Albania. They were eager to purchase a real estate property, a land or an apartment. Often emigrants families bought apartments where never lived this influences the purchasing power of stock housing but not the furnishing.

This numbers changed after 2008, many emigrant where the big numbers are in Italy and Greece, lost their jobs. Referring to the INSTAT tab 1.1.10 the returner are more than 60% only from the years 2008 to 2011. With a target group 20-29 and after 2009 increased the number of age 50-59.

Figure 65 The returners emigrants in Albania, 2001--2011

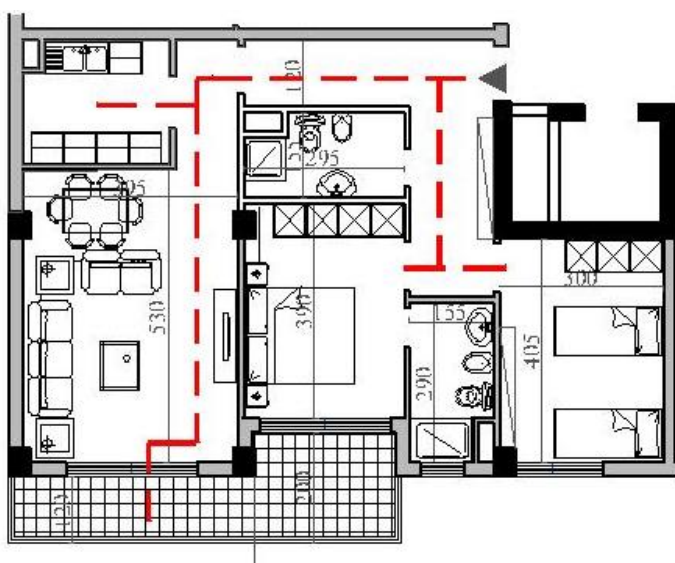
Sex and age group		Year of returning											
		Total	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total	Total	139,827	5,058	7,267	8,161	8,228	9,376	8,350	8,584	11,572	18,775	27,150	27,306
	Under 10 year	9,902	-	101	261	377	481	471	567	772	1,557	2,709	2,606
	10-14	6,070	326	560	649	524	567	443	329	357	554	804	957
	15-19	5,384	255	359	381	326	358	265	240	322	570	982	1,326
	20-24	12,282	191	226	328	300	362	377	546	1,081	2,197	3,488	3,186
	25-29	19,690	278	450	606	703	926	1,108	1,354	2,061	3,409	4,595	4,200
	30-34	20,989	692	1,043	1,248	1,402	1,621	1,473	1,517	1,836	2,907	3,752	3,498
	35-39	17,744	950	1,265	1,430	1,412	1,491	1,189	1,167	1,464	2,007	2,759	2,610
	40-44	12,973	813	1,063	1,058	993	1,089	854	803	993	1,428	1,894	1,985
	45-49	8,995	499	677	665	622	655	582	500	696	992	1,538	1,569
	50-54	7,455	355	481	479	462	525	451	430	591	899	1,385	1,397
	55-59	5,689	238	334	346	320	383	339	348	435	714	1,032	1,200
	60-64	4,702	201	246	239	309	337	294	263	330	608	866	1,009
	65+	7,952	260	462	471	478	581	504	520	634	933	1,346	1,763

Source* Author from Tab 1.1.10, INSTAT 2014,

The returned emigrants, the knowledge on products and on furniture, analysed in the (Tab 57) the increasing the amount spent for the furniture and maintenance, increased the demands for improving the condition home. In the other hand since early 2000' the layout of the house has been enrich with new rooms or functions. The need to add one more toilet at the layout has been widely projected in the early 2000', a wardrobe room and a dry room has been more often projected in the individual houses. Storage and bigger Balcony. The last one has been enlarge the sizes more because the constructor interest than the market demands requests. They wanted to maximize the profit, because the price of a

Balcony is sold with the same price of the house inside.

Figure 66 Apartment build years late 2000's



Source*: Author visit on site

4.2.3 Consumer culture impacts on furniture design and moving towards D-I-Y

As drawn from literature above, the process of product design, development and production is intertwined with the human factors such as emotional and cognitive as well as with contextual factors such as social, cultural and economic in a particular market. In light, the dynamics of the Albanian market occurrence of; first, the multifaceted transformations following the collapse of the communist regime , second , moving towards the accession processes in the European Union , third, the demographics of the Albanian society as a whole, deeply impact the ways in which products are designed, development and produced. With the free market economy, first, the role of the state was diminished significantly and the Albanian society embraced the mass consumption cultural trends. Secondly, the levels of migration and emigration raised significantly which resulted in the need for new products for home furniture and decoration. In this sense, the path of transformations of the Albanian customer with the market economy which then led to the development and consolidation of the DIY market in Albania.

An important dimension that scholars analyse is the hierarchy of needs as developed by Maslow , in architecture, design , production etc. This hierarchy of needs helps to explore the reasons why the product design changes in different contexts as per the needs of the individual. When it comes to furniture, a basic need should be defined as a need for the item itself. Question like; What is needed to improve their buying culture?, Do customers buy because they need or because they like the products? , needs to be answered. The hierarchy of needs leads that a furniture design must meet the lower-level needs before addressing to the higher-end needs. In this light, the ‘functionality’ must come first, before ‘creativity’.

In this sense, furniture during socialist era, produced at minimal cost, with practical considerations dominant throughout, Albania, other Easter Balkan country, may be held to be less fully aesthetic, than those on which the designer has more freedom of choice in the use of materials and the distribution of the parts. The produced furniture’s designs were very well controlled from the centralized system, and until the first exhibition opened on 1975, consumers where not participating on giving opinions. The role of consummatoms were more a visitors giving their opinion how much they like the new arrivals, and this was all their contribution. According to Maslow we must be reasonably well satisfied as to our lower needs, just being supplied each family with furnishing, , before we can be motivated

by our needs at the higher levels, choosing design or contribute in this process,

MEGATEK , the DIY retailer, is experienced the same steps of mostly DIY stores, in the global market, since they established. This DIY retailer, embrace faster market competition even though Albania is not a new markets, customers demand raising the quality purchased products which also need to be extremely price sensitive, and the technology.

In communist time there where a problem of interfacing the Media, it was the political dogma pushes or learning how to leave, what to buy, the salary was also one reason to obligate what kind of furnishing should be bought. Tab 33.

Table 28 Factors of designs in communism and globalisation

Communism VS Globalisation		
Value	Communism	Globalisation
Production	mass- production	mass- production
Target group	youth	youth
Design	limited	limited
Cost	economical	economical
Alternative	no more than what it si given	no more than what it si given
DIY	communism system - d it by yourself believe in our own capacity	believe in their capacity - guiding you with instruction
Leaded	political dogma	economical dogma
Aim	to not think for more alternative	to not think for more alternative
Why limited design	to be everybody the same	to have less different design to have more qty produce per item = more profit
Media	poor	rich
Pressure	politically high	economical /social high

Source* Author

In Albania Mass media was just RTVSH– in every political reunion there was a frustrating history of how we have to behave ware or leave. Referring to Atkinson: (2006: pp. 2-3) the ‘D-I-Y’ has served as a ‘leveller of social class’ in two main ways: first, overcoming the stereotype of manual labour only as a financial necessity, second, allowing

the working class to engage in leisure activities

Indeed MEGATEK interfaces technology and Media, especially - IT based software tools can be applied successfully to make it possible to shorten product development time and sales-to-delivery process. Which improve the selling of the factory and reach the costumers satisfied. In the words 'D-I-Y' was developed under specific historical and socio-economic context over the past 50 years which was made popular by the mass media particularly so after the World War II, today IKEA is beating its competitor thanks to the marketing knowledge, using the mass media, sample of it is how Ikea has survived in china meantime Home depot not.

4.3 Case study: Megatek SA

Looking into the international literature on 'D-I-Y' retailer's capability to understand the dynamic of adaptation in the hosted market. The international retailer is shaping the local market but is also constrained by it and thus this analysis serves for the case of Albania as well. An **interesting** phenomenon in here is the movement from 'D-I-Y' towards 'Do-it-for-me' (DIFM). This background analysis is also useful for the third objective regarding a comparative analysis of the current trends in 'D-I-Y' product development between the Albanian market and the most renowned international retailers. The analysis will be helpful to transfer the key findings into the research context of the DIY market in Albania. This analysis will be carried out through desk research by making reference to secondary resources such as: journal articles on product design; studies and reports on IKEA and other furniture retail stores; online resources, blog entries, newspaper articles and other media sources regarding DIY in a global context and particularly IKEA and other DIY companies

4.3.1 Background: Introducing Megatek SA in the Albanian market

The definition of 'D-I-Y' as craft consumption is restricted only to the instances in which: (i) the demand for the product is generated by the consumers; (ii) the construction of products is more than just the sum or assembly of ready-made parts. In this sense, the human contexts such as emotional and cognitive as well as lifestyles and attitude affect principally the generation of different types of demands for 'D-I-Y'. Secondly, the

individual input and creativity will differentiate between a practical 'D-I-Y' task as craft consumption and a merely assembly of ready-made units.

When Megatek opened its door on 2009 in Tirana, a consumer boom, beginning in the 2005s has started. Though Megatek, a retail for building material and home improvement was the second until that year, already the consumer culture to buy in the shopping Centre had started. The biggest one are: Shopping and entertaining centre QTU (2005), Shopping and entertaining centre "Casa Italia" (2006), Electrical Appliance Shopping Centre "Globe" (2007), Shopping and entertaining centre "City Park" (2009). In this line is worth to line; on 2006 open House and garden maintenance store "Jysk" which was close after 3 years operation and on 2008 open the first House and Garden maintenance retailing store comparing with Megatek but unfortunately it was close after two years. There were the years of greater choice, quality, different brands in clothes, food, groceries, electrical electronica appliance, until to cars. But in the other hand the increasing of building industry was rising, advertisement as new marketing index for Albanian consumer culture was succeeding. Many different tv show from cooking until to maintenance of house where stacking the housewife in front of TV (especially after the law of Copyrights transmissions many small tv channels were close and the "survived" one felt their programme with many different TV show).

In this background Megatek, the retail store opened. The first costumers running to buy where the target group of 30-40 years old, mostly technical and building material specialist. A big store in Albania with a surface of 28 thousand m² is paramount investment even for the region, where normally have a surface of the store 8-13 thousand m², The bigger shareholder of the business has a plastic pipe factory with a high performance in the market but this targeted since the beginning the store as Big Building Material Centre. For this reason the store had to rebuild his imagine in the market as DIY store inviting more training groups and important make the store more familiar for the female costumer.

Referring to Instat data there is a sensible the increasing on the avarange wage on the public sectors from 2001 to 2008 more than 2 times more. coming years the avarange salary is increased but still no more than 28%

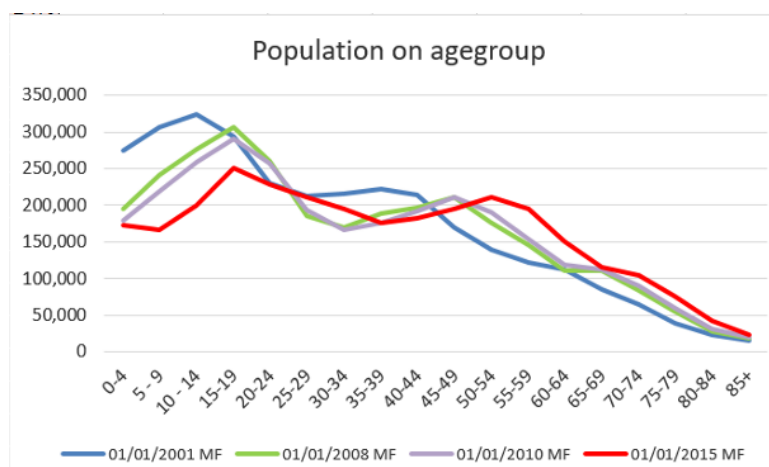
Comparing the below data:

Table 29 Average monthly wage in public sector and official minimum wage, 2000-2014

2000	2001	2008	2011	2014	Description (ALL)	2014 Euro base
14,963	17,218	36,537	46,665	53,025	Average monthly wage	392.78
7,000	7,580	17,000	20,000	22,000	Official minimum wage	162.96
	212%	128%	114%			

Source: Administrative Data INSTAT 2015

Table 30 Population on age-group



Source* INSTAT , Tab1

Referring to the graphic redrawn from the Instat Information tab1 2015 is showing and understand the concern that the population is getting older , this data I important to understand who could be the target group to buy and in the other hand which will be the target group to be employed

Table 31 Population during 2011-2015

Age-Group	01/01/2001	01/01/2008	01/01/2010	01/01/2015	Population 2001-2015
	MF	MF	MF	MF	
0-4	273,949	195,651	178,704	172,429	-37%
5 - 9	307,052	240,662	219,101	165,849	-46%
10 - 14	324,130	276,727	259,147	199,650	-38%
15-19	293,105	306,791	290,997	251,456	-14%
20-24	230,536	260,020	257,169	228,255	-1%
25-29	212,926	185,682	192,869	210,752	-1%
30-34	215,431	169,124	166,234	195,241	-9%
35-39	222,185	188,886	175,278	175,960	-21%

40-44	213,430	196,907	191,157	182,425	-15%
45-49	168,947	210,461	211,033	194,961	15%
50-54	139,787	176,316	190,500	211,418	51%
55-59	121,451	145,469	154,191	194,670	60%
60-64	112,957	109,872	118,635	149,719	33%
65-69	85,736	110,490	112,282	115,335	35%
70-74	64,650	83,724	89,953	104,316	61%
75-79	38,541	54,779	60,292	76,077	97%
80-84	23,641	27,806	31,327	41,876	77%
85+	14,866	18,899	19,805	22,616	52%
Total	3,063,320	2,958,266	2,918,674	2,893,005	6%
Decrease		3%	-1%	1%	6%

Source*: INSTAT 2015

Before entering the market has been a full year studying customer's needs, studying market and how to adapt a Do It Your Self-store in a country like Albania, a developing country, with a cheap labour cost and low average salary, fancy customer's needs but with the most economical demands. After a Year studying, grouping the demands on quality price design, sourcing in and out Albania, abroad and in local market, but at the beginning years 2009 -2012 biggest no of factories were in Asia, meeting price quality flexibility packages demands but not the delivery time to be shorter and shorter. There were coming a new solution which I will elaborate below. .

It was very important to understand the houses typology and their trendy. Until year 2000 building builds for residential purpose was increasing, the demands until 2010 was for houses with two and three sleeping room and two toilets often without window due to maximizing the number of apartment in the same surface that could be build less. That's why apartments had smaller each functionality area and customers required functional, modular solutions. Megatek made slight changes to its furniture's design, row materials made of , instructions, to meet local needs..

Gathered information from Instant it was the time to invest on home furniture's and building material because buildings and especially on repairing, organizing, gardening products.

Year 2009 started with a simple layout of the store 8 thousand m2 and the gardening was less than one thousand. The building material products occupied almost half of the total number of article in the store. The purchasing were more Asian orientated due to the customer's demands value proportion to quality. But after 3 years what the selling data show us where best sold divisions: sanitary ware, lighting division, flooring division

followed from more high profit divisions like textile furniture gardening.

Megatek's major costumers were Middle class, they like to furnishing their houses with fast assembled products, don't need to wait days sometimes month that their sofa or kitchen unit or bedroom to be produced. This target group were costumers that rent houses or invested all their money to buy a new apartment but not enough money to purchase furniture. They wanted to spend not a big amount on furniture but with reasonable price-quality products they can have within a day their houses furnished. Lighter colours, trendy and fancy designs.

All the furniture's have assembling instruction; its time to "Play Lego" was the training on assembled the table in the yearly event organized from the company in its premises. Because assembled the furniture is really like playing with big Lego parts to be assembled.

DIY Products are assembled to safe two main cost; the labour cost in the factory which mean products are packed in the packing semi assembled, and to safe the cost on the transportation, more purchased units per transportation units and as well the costumers could transport by them self from the store to their houses thanks to safety and easy package.

Packages is very important in the DIY products, firstly need to ensure safety of the product during the transportation from the factory to the store, during the storage on the shelves than from the store to the costumer, secondly the box must have all the information on the products and on the safety during usage of the item,Barcode, information on specification warranty etc.

Warranty, on the supermarket like Megatek , it is part of service , to offer the costumers full service and to insure them for the quality they are buying is what they are paying. Product price is studied in different channels, on brand, on quality on market, gathering this information evaluate the final selling price. Prices in the store are electronic which mean you don't need to print them but everything is controlled from the soft.

Megatek is one of the few companies in the region and the only one in Albania that control the prices by soft, offering too many possibilities on offer, promo by date buy rush hours and generate a lot of statistics to study the coming offers.

Offers are organized monthly, on the yearly events and important in the festive days especially Christmas and New Year time, Megatek birthday, Easter, Seasonal offers like coming back school, university, go swimming etc.

Hobby, Swimming, Babies, Laundry and storage divisions are the most eventually

ones developed last two years in Megatek. And enlarged divisions like textiles, kitchen furniture and table ware, office furniture.

Figure 67Table Development from 2009 to 2016 of Division in Megatek

Megatek's Divisions 2009	Megatek's Divisions 2016	Development
Christmas	Seasonal (Christmas, Summer, Easter)	Today "Seasonal not only Christmas , Summer, Easter etc
Furniture and decoration;	Furniture	Enlarging demands on Furniture and deco. dep. enrich the original dep. consequently was replaced from three main department in 2016
	Decoration;	
	Textile	
Kitchen and accessories;	Kitchen and accessories;	New department between kitchen and electrical
	Appliance	
Electrical Materials;	Electrical Materials;	
Lighting	Lighting	
Tools and Hardware	Tools and Hardware	
Sanitary Ware;	Sanitary Ware;	
Building Materials;	Building Materials;	
Paints;	Paints;	
	Art	New dep part of Paints dep before due to the enlarging the gamma of Arts , school of Art
Gardening Materials	Gardening Materials	
Heating and Cooling;	Heating and Cooling;	
Flooring;	Flooring;	
Wood	Wood	
Plumping	Plumping	
	Storage and Laundry	New department
	Cars accessories	New department
	Office	New department
	Baby	New department
	Pets	New department
	Sport and Hobby	New department
	Agriculture and	New department

Source* Author data collecting

There were 14 department when the store opened on 2009 and mostly of them had a limit range but in 2016 due to new development and responding to custom demands the store has been enlarge and the divisions needed to be split or added going to 25 divisions.

Orange cells show the old divisions- or group of products in the same category, despite it the number of codes in the same named category is increased. All the other categories are new or in 2009 where just representative and on 2016 are a competent division

It is not casual that the company developed these divisions, they had a very good performance last 4 years, as costumer demands and higher profit therefore the strategy was to enlarge their layout in the store, increase their gamma, and improve the quality level this mean from two quality make three, or from two brands make a third one more higher quality than the previous one,

Increasing the quality Megatek engaged costumers with higher quality products mostly required for institution, hotels, bars, restaurants and their green or entertainer area.

Accordingly to all the last 4 years analysing company come up with new selling platforms in 2015 B2C, e-commercial , selling online , all this needed the whole backstage support, soft , marketing , warehouse , data entry purchasing , flexibility , stocking etc.

For Albania selling online market is still in incipient stage, but every day is a new successful day for sales online.

All kind of sales need a huge transportation network, self-transportation by personal car or by bus if the purchased furniture is small packing size , or booking transportation offer from the company , its cost is cheaper than in Europe and is expensive than in China, As well, during online purchasing, transportation is optional with a reasonable fee.

Megatek identified the strategic challenges and tried to exceed them. Due to the sizes capacity and the support on the community due to work 200 people in this company with two shifts, the company was targeted as VIP Company , this gave the profit to use Megatek warehouse as the custom warehouse, it helps to have better item's cost, avoiding taxes until the moment the product is sold.

4.3.2 Megatek profile and product portfolio

Two main factors on the cost of a product: exchange rate and transportation, the

second one is thought since the beginning of the concept of designing a DIY product, the second one is settle from the main central Bank. I.e., Sofas always take a big cbm in the container, the capability is too small so the cost is higher. And the last reason is flexibility, if I order a sofa in china can't be flexible because a fabric that i added as a new item will be in the store after 4 months meantime production in Albania could test at least in the same period of time two to three kind of fabric.

Albania insure valuable wood resources, high quality of row material, the cost of labors is low, educated workers, open mind to new technologies, strategic geographic position. In the other hand Megatek will give back contribution on knowledge, service, new technology helping the economy of Albania to grow.

Table20.is highlighted the important indexes why the company many of production during last 4 years has been orientated towards local market.

Table 32 Difference of production abroad and in local market

Megatek	abroad	local
flexibility	slow	high
production qty	big	small
transportation cost	big	inexistent
exchange rate	yes	no
leading time	long	short
service repaired	slow	fast
package	very good	few very good
instruction	very good	few very good
final cost	cheaper	reasonable
profit	high	good

Package quality and information, instructions are basic requests on DIY furniture, still in local market we have a long way to rich Asian production. A promotion item, or best price to compete the market or a big number of production the best service is still in Asia. Local market production in the other hand has big advantages, following the proceeding is still cheap and coherent by the Product Developer of the company. So the Product design process is faster and better quality control which mean better product quality. Sometimes the package of Albanian production are really not satisfied but still there are some furniture factories in Albania that they produce, develop and export the

production in competitive quality with other European production factory,

What needs to be highlighted is that during this last 4 years producing in local market the company founds an environment that needed to be elaborated, more profiled and production process developed.

Developing linen department, furniture department in local market, in Albania are the above reasons, but as important as them is the long successful history on textile and wood industry as the chapter 3 explain. Albanian carpenter, wood crafting and textile industry during communism had very good quality products mostly for export and after 90's due to privatization of the property many of them have heritage or foreigner investments has settle new technology in Albania producing in a country with low labour cost, well trained and long experience foreigner investor could have a lot of profit when they export the goods made in Albania.

Accordingly Megatek had a rich abroad experience, clear strategy on the new products needed to be developed in local market: design, cost, size, and the manufactures had been experienced. But once the product developer went into the market to find appropriate manufactures for a DIY store there has started the real problems.

Basic one, many of this manufactures didn't declare income, no VAT no, no possibility to purchase. So the first stage was to rehabilitate the selected manufactures why they should start to declare the income. After a conviction period that last not for a short time we start to study the developing of the prototypes.

Figure 68 Changes on the production line before/after responding to the DIY product development

BEFORE		AFTER
one worker	Frame	one worker
	Filling	one worker
	Covering	one worker
2 days	Production	10qty 3 worker per day =3,3 per worker per day
weak in one or two process	Quality	higher
Didn't have	Package	additional process to wrap the goods before loading or once they are produced

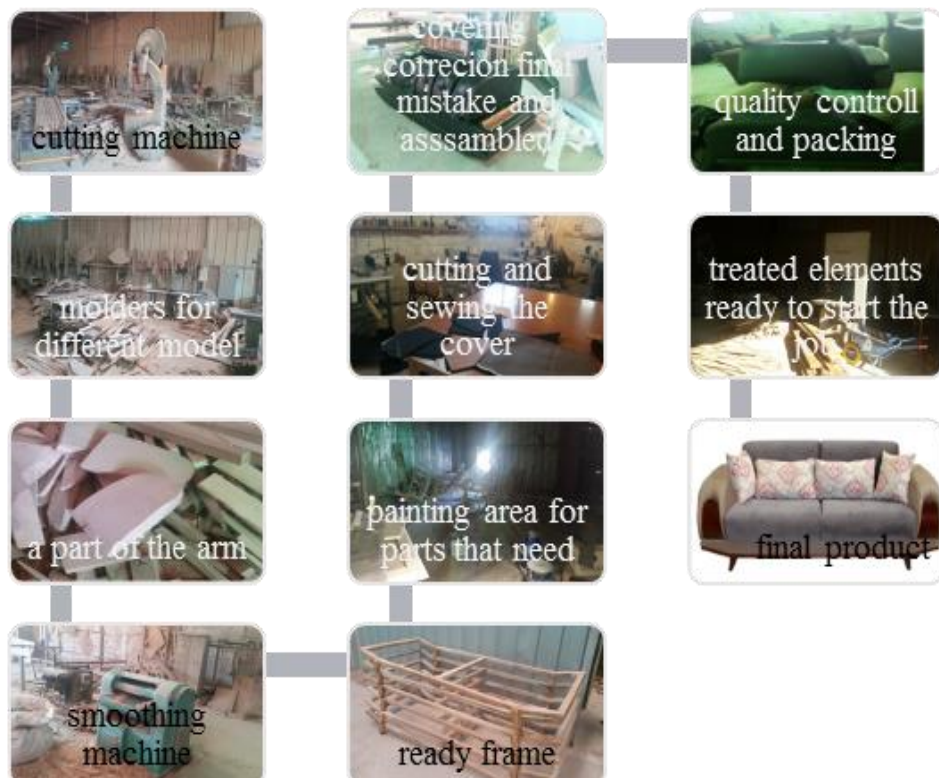
Producing a DIY product needs to simplified the assembled way at home from the costumers which mean need special hinges, support, joiners, very precise sizes during

cutting of the wood elements, to be easy for assembling, and high quality control to not miss any part before packaging. Packaging was a real big Problems, in the beginning was spend more time to find the appropriate supplier of cartoon packaging strong and cheap. Until that time packaging was though a useless, wasted investment, and we learn the manufactures that all the additional service like safety package and instruction must be attached to the final cost of the products.

In some factories, not big one but 10 years experienced had the producing process one person one product, example: one armchair one craftsman, needed to be a carpenter a painter of the legs, to fill with filler, and in the end to tailor the cover.

This cost 3 days one sofa one person but the problem wasn't only in the long producing time but one person can't be a good painter a good carpenter and a good tailor. In one of this process he was not good experienced consequently the product in one of this process wasn't good quality. Megatek needed a long collaboration investing its human source in a serious partner that have good will for longevity. So sharing the abroad experience and designing the production process increased the qty produced per day and the performance of furniture's quality.

Charter showing production line redesigned in the factory



The production line was designed from the beginning and the first prototype was

tested on 2013. It has some disproportion from the original sketch, like wide arms, shorter backrest but they were improved in the next productions.

Product developer knows how to make the product cost effective because the lack of knowledge on cost keeps the design (product) just a drawing. Cost effectively mean to achieve competitive prices well calculated raw material, labours, machinery, ability to cover the market and respond to customer satisfaction.

It was lack of finding the same accessory of sofa bed, with the same old price which was incorporate in the three seat sofa that made the changes on the production. The new accessory purchased needed a frame of 140cm not anymore 183cm this helped in two direction: first three seat sofa has been stronger after the bed accessories has been taken out. Its frame was well joined on all structure. The two seat sofa was developed as three seat sofa with a storage inside the frame to install the bed accessories. Both elements of the sofa set has been improved giving more suitability on the quality. Costumer has again a sofa bed set but more competitive price and more good quality products.

Totally different was when Megatek meet big factories that produce furniture for local market and export. Their factories were not different from the abroad factories. After discussing on the cost, slight changes on design or color from their original prototype.

Table 33 Type of Factories that Megatek work with

	big	medium	small
Design	Factory's design	Megatek's design	Megatek's design
Changes	slight one	Megatek 's design	Megatek 's design
Comfort the law	yes	too much pressure yes	using others companies vat
Min order	50 -100 pcs	10 pcs	1-2 pcs
Quality	precised	good enough	good
Costumer service	professional	trying to replace	less replace
Package	Very good	Almost good	Very weak

The big factories already know what costumers need, they have developed furniture from the competitive prices to very high prices to respond all kind of costumers like Megatek or specialized store for furniture. Their request due to the high mechanized production line need to reach a min production quantity, in this way one pc produced could be profitable. Big number on production is needed in abroad factories, but a local supplier

is still better option cause is close to Megatek , could be used its own warehouse.

Textile suppliers are more dynamic , the designs change often 4-6 times per year, depending on the season , on best sold item analysing , on the sizes , filling, packed single or as a full set etc.

Megatek and its suppliers interaction between exchanges their experience, talking the same language, growing the standard and service walking together thought globalization

Company in itself is an innovation for Albania market they educate the costumers to make shopping; to understand the quality, difference on the prices, make self-combination and they indicted other stores to think better for the hygiene and display conditions of home furniture and decoration products. Is the same contagious effect on coffee businesses, for more than 6 years in Albania are operating three main coffee brands as Starbuck global coffee brand. Many of their shops are close to the entertainment area, close to crossroads and near the location of universities. Being successful are many reasons, close to the traffic area, very nice looking, speaking the same interior language, being innovator have originality on the way how they look like, service and menu. In this picture many other coffee bar even though not a chain wants to look like one of them; taking care about the interior, commodity, service and originality on menu. Albania is Mediterranean country, a Balkan country and the stereotypy is not by chance that we like to enjoy having coffee. Costumer's target groups are students, young generation that have time and job to earn money, new couples that enjoy to go out.

These groups are easy to be educated, embrace easily novelty and have beneficiary possibility to fulfil their needs and wants.

Megatek is more comprehensive business, the above target group is very important for the retail store, especially on the novelty; colours, shape, new departments are targeting to them, second important group are women in any age, retired as well. Women they have time and money to spend, they stay all the day at home and get bored with old decoration or furniture at home, they cook wash clean so they really know what the house needs and wants. Accordingly Megatek two years after the retail store opened enlarge the textile division, decoration division for interior and exterior products, furniture's division was increased twice. Consequently new strategy followed from the company enjoyed success.

The third target group are professionals, journeyman with different skills, painters, plumbers, mason, contractor on flooring, gardener etc, they needed not only what was missing in the market until that moment but as well more professional tools affordable to

be purchased from an individual user. But brands like Borsch ,Philips, Black and Decker, Grohe etc, had not been as successful during the time that we wanted to decrease the prices due to new opening and low monthly salary as the moment that Megatek decided to put the right prices and stop losing from the its profit.

In the emerging market, low-price strategy isn't working successfully, this "big" western brands are the inspiration for Albanian costumer. Still in Albania purchasing good brand is showing good economically position in society for instance; purchasing a brand tool is showing that the costumer is a professional, with good skills, or who is purchasing a Grohe shower mixer is showing the position in the society middle and upper middle, Couse they could afford to buy 3 times higher prices than a made in China mixer, even though many of Grohe products or spare parts are produced in Asia too. Referring to INSTAT average salary of 400 euro is equal to buy a full set of Grohe misers for bidet mixer, sink mixer, shower mixer and basin mixer. Hence, still in Albania purchasing furniture, decoration Branded is showing a position on society.

Megatek after consolidating strongly in the market made in Albania furniture and linen continued to pay a lot of attention on the increasing quality of the items especially with logo branded Megatek, The row material was more good quality and the guaranty after usage is from 5 to 20 years for this kind of products. Local competitors copied Megatek's designs, for similar items, decreasing the selling price. Instructions, packages and the product's labels are some extra cost which they were avoided to purchase that's why was easily to understand the differences.

Costumers in Albania are very price sensitive, and when the company started eco-friendly project on the plastic bags, with a very symbolic prices, costumers found it annoying to pay extra for them. Shopping bag not anymore eco-friendly since than are free of charge. Even though there are some sensitive costumers on eco-friendly practice, but still the countries like Albania emerging the economy, in developing are not ready for environment-friendly practices, in particular if these furniture and goods result in higher prices.

Megatek on 2104 adapted : one-way layout, leading customers counter clockwise along what Ikea calls "the long natural way" designed to encourage the customer to see the store in its entirety (as opposed to a traditional retail store, which allows a customer to go directly to the section where the desired goods and services are displayed). There are often shortcuts to other parts of the showroom.

4.3.3 From D-I-Y to D-I-For-Me: Adapotion of Megatek to Albanian customers' needs

D-I-Y' depends on the effective interrelation between materials, tools and skills of the user. For instance, some decades ago painting or plumbing were conducted by professionals, but nowadays DIYers can perform these tasks with the facilitation of tools and materials easy to use by amateurs without the necessity of particular skills. As Watson and Shove (2008: p. 12) point out: 'this can be seen not simply as de-skilling, but as a redistribution of competence enabling a wider range of people to paining doors or plumbing'. For the realization of such 'D-I-Y' practical tasks intermediaries are also needed such as manuals, instructions sheets etc. In this way, DIYers are able to build their confidence and competence in order to take new tasks. However, this is also much linked with the social, cultural and economic context as argued above. For instance,

IKEA found necessary to adapt the concept of 'D-I-Y' assembly to the features of the Chinese market. In lieu of the cheap labor in China, the 'D-I-Y' notion has not taken hold and thus IKEA reports that Chinese customers use its assembly services more than customers in other countries (Chu, et.al., 2013: p. 9). This seems to show a tendency to move more towards 'Do-It-For-Me' rather than 'Do-It-Yourself' notion, which needs to be further explored.

Research on the relation between society and technology have shown how products or artefacts configure their users to a point where it is argued to think of objects and users as hybrid with no clear boundaries (Watson & Shove, 2008).

International retailers even though they studied before entering in a anew market close or far away from their origin still they need to motorizing the costumers for understanding the local consumer behavior and take action promptly like offer or promotions on product, service. Bigger companies once enter in the international market, always they are copied form the local manufactures or competitors.

DIY companies organize training, seminars to listen their supplier and costumers, as well the member loyalty card is very important to gather data and to know the preferences of the costumers. Gathering and monetizing the information from above actions will help to redesign, to adapt better to the local context. For instance the alliance between B&Q and Hair the local manufacturer of household appliances to enables the costumers to afford a global solution and additional service like installation and maintainer

service designing, Due to the fact that all the new apartments are bought half constructed columns slab and beam the other steps is going to be done by the costumers. The assistance of this team is very important to purchase the DIY products at B&Q.

Companies acquire knowledge, intentionally or unintentionally, through direct experience or learning-by-doing (Palmer&Quinn, 2005).

But the history of DIY has showed that some steps are not follow well and many stores are bankrupt.

The landscape of market in china in the late 90' was; traditional retailers, wasn't able to full fill the swift economy, rising living standard. Chinese costumers weren't used to buy in a self-service store, in an open shelves especially in the street market or wet market. The lack of knowledge is a factors on not right purchasing, and this needed a lot of training to inform and educate the Chinese market.

DIY retail stores have a level of product standard: sustainable quality of the product, size weight dimension setc, standard on packing quality and information, row material. A DIY store entered in the new market with this standards often in the beginning find this difficulties of the local production, but after some years these standards are embraced from many other suppliers and retailers, and many suppliers have reorganized their production line, quality controls and especially in Albania market the legal practice.

In the country where labor cost is lower or inexpensive DIY market find the résistance on selling DIY products.

4.4 Concluding remarks

The transition from communism to post-communication and related democratisation and market liberalisation, affected profoundly the Albanian society, polity and economy. The country witnessed drastically political, economic, and social changes, evident even in such private aspects of life as residential home layouts, interiors and furniture. Through the detailed analysis of the data gathered and presentation of model, designs, layouts and other visual aids, this chapter explored the underlying factors behind home furniture product design and development in Albania in a comparative sense. The findings point to the shift from mass production during communism – strongly affected by the communist political dogma – to mass customisation of home furniture designs – much impacted by new customers' needs, demands, advancements in technology, new lifestyles, immigration path, urban and rural migrations and overall socio-economic development of

the country. The findings support the initial main argument – hypothesis of this study – that “the impact of moving from mass production in a centralized economy to free mass customisation in market economy has not radically transformed the fundamental properties of home furniture but has affected the design, development, delivery and materiality of products”.

This chapter was organised along the two main research objectives: first, it explored house and dwellings layout during communism as well as home furniture designs and second, the findings on home furniture designs and product development were presented for the post-communist period. Each subchapters starts with a short historical and contextual overview of Albania pertaining to the time period of the analysis and it is then followed by exploration of the typology of housing in Albania – various typology of layout are introduced and explained by looking into socio-economic factors. A particular focus for both communism and post-communism is the concrete furniture designs and product development. The typology of the furniture designs according to each housing typology, identified above and relevant time frame are outlined. The main findings are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER V– POST-COMMUNIST ERA TOWARDS MASS PRODUCTION PARADIGM

In the beginning of the 20th century, the ideas of modernism were spreading fast around Europe. The most well-known were in Germany, the Bauhaus. In Italy, the architects-designers of Group 7, known as rationalists, adopted the modernist ideals, such as simplicity of form, as well as the use of new materials and technology, and hoped that rationalism would become the official aesthetic of fascism (Woodham, 1997). By the mid-1930s modernist buildings were being erected not only in Europe and the US, but also in Japan, South America, and the Middle East (Wilk, 2006). Modernism was becoming truly an International Style and its practitioners were making decisions and implementing them not just in their countries, but also on a global scale. In 1933, during the fourth congress of CIAM (International Congresses of Modern Architecture) assigned areas separated by green belts, with large multi-unit apartment buildings, were to be the universal solution to the global housing problems (Wilk, 2006).

The CIAM congress and the Athens Charter constituted the principles of modern architecture and urbanism that guided European architecture up to the 60s. But in the 1970s, these principles were guided by post-modern Western architecture and urbanism, because they have come up with new concepts for environmental protection, participation, social compositional, and heritage preservation. On the contrary, Albania was isolated in the 1960s and hence the modernism principle was at the founding practices of professional schools and at the same time universities embraced the ideology of the communist regime until the '90s. In this light, post-modern Western architecture and urbanism would penetrate in Albania only after the changes in the political and economic regime after the '90s.

Similar to other countries at the time such as France, Russia, Germany and the rest of the East Europe, Albania needed to increase the housing stock market and to fulfil the demands of the population and thus in line with the European practices prefabricate housing was the main construction method at the time.

Box House-Box rooms⁷¹

⁷¹ Prefabricated buildings, monotone (Kolevica, P. 2004) concrete apartment blocks constructed years 70'-80' in Albania. Every construction elements; floor, wall, and ceiling panel is structural. But the stability of the corpus was provided by massive stair. For these reasons, lack of structural skeletons interiors, the squared planed room and the cube space rooms were the components of prefabricated houses.

Prefabricated housing – built during communist era in Albania – has changed the landscape of housing developments with implications for the long-term sustainability of neighbourhoods. After the fall of the communist regime and with the market economy, Albanians aimed to improve their house commodity and as a result prefabricated housing needed to be transformed to become more liveable. The most popular actions impacting the city have been: replacing the old windows with new material, vinyl windows, and wrapping the buildings in polystyrene sheet insulation. In addition, a layer of stucco was applied in such cases giving the city multicolour painting, often patterns in a single or double façade compositions. This process has multiple effects: it was a form of art; it made the city more lively and colourful; more importantly it improved thermal and soundproof qualities of the buildings, which are known to encounter difficulty in heating and cooling and lack of soundproof.

Photo 63 New landscape of prefabricated housing



**Source GPA; City Development Strategy Project for Tirana, Albania.*

These state funds have covered only façade work changes but windows replacement and updating of systems or installations of buildings are done at a large extent by the habitants with their own financial resources. Eventually, one can noticed a reinvention approach of pattern, motives, colour, and furniture produced during communism. Wrapping the façade of the building with a giant carpet motives produced during communism was another project of municipality of Tirana.

Photo 64 : Motive of Carpe, applied on facade



**Source*Author.*

Table 34 : Motive of Carpe, applied on facade



**Source*Author.*

The most frequent interior's intervention are electrical and hydraulic installations of the house, wrapping the bathrooms with new tiles, and houses with different material that the households can afford. This was firstly done with ceramic material but later gress porcelain, porcelain; alternative wood flooring was used as well. The intervention has been done as well in the layout of the houses. The modern life of years '60s-'90s is back and can be seen at the reconstructed location of "Pazari i ri" (New Market).

The construction of mix typology (residential with commercial), existed earlier in Tirana along the main roads, like “Pazari i Ri” where many wood crafts, gold crafts, silver crafts, etc. had their workshop ground floor and their houses upper floor. But despite this the new urban planning during the ‘60s formalized this urban element, which can also considered a new element of Modernity. The allowances of commercial activities along the main roads also had an important impact in an aspect of modernizing the city and life in general. The same residential apartment build in new housing typology are still well performing their original modernization. (See Photo 12 and13).

Photo 65 Tirana years 40’ Commercial and residential in the same infrastructure



**Source: Social Media*

Photo 66 Tirana years 70’/ today Commercial and residential in the same infrastructure



**Source: Social Media*

In the following period, after ‘90s, the mix of residences with local trading or services, reached its maximum in Tirana. New typologies of many floor residential building (8-12 floors) in many cases overcome even on the second and third floor. This is going in proportion with the growth rate of total construction and population density in

Tirana.

Photo 67 Tirana typical construction nowadays - infrastructure but commercial is more than one floor



**Source: Housing advertisements online*

After the '90s constructions in urban area have grown sufficiently, which have increased the construction quality and enhanced the age structure. During 1990-2001 25% of the housing stock in Albania was constructed and almost 40% of it was built in urban areas. But during the transition the demography has been changed drastically, which has shifted the individual housing typology from rural area to urban area. This is why during this period individual housing typology has increased from 96.3 to 98.5 % (REPOBA 2001, INSTAT 2001).

In the '90s-'00s city developed in height, many high buildings have been constructed. Individual house has always been the main typology of the housing. Also because until '90s over 70% of the population lived in the rural areas. Later on more and more people moved to urban areas and the land was occupied in the city with new constructions. As such migration increased drastically from rural to urban areas.

Table 35 Building's number by Years before 2001, of Construction

Year	Number			%			Urban VS Rural	
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
before 1945	40,438	17,042	23,396	8%	12%	6%	42%	58%
1945-1960	68,468	16,510	51,958	13%	12%	14%	24%	76%
1961-1980	154,701	29,932	124,769	31%	21%	34%	19%	81%
1981-1990	115,727	22,074	93,653	23%	16%	26%	19%	81%
1991-1995	52,880	23,261	29,619	10%	17%	8%	44%	56%
1996-2001	74,966	31,674	43,292	15%	23%	12%	42%	58%
Total	507,180	140,493	366,687	100%	100%	100%		

**Source: Author based on INSTAT 2004 tab review*

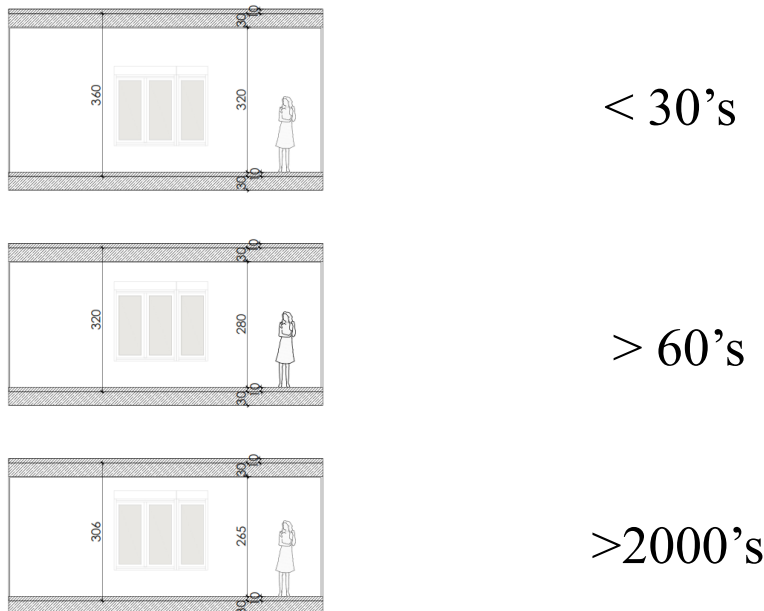
During the post-communist area international development aid as well as strengthening of the governmental funds and programmes, aid and financial resources were provided to support initiatives and actions targeting social and economic dimensions of life as well as education. Although in the first 10 years of free market, 21% of the housing stock has been built, this improved the quality of the apartments and the average target group. Albanian Skyscrapers have reached their higher quantity during 2001-2005 from 83 building over 11 floors comparing with 214 build.

Table 36 Number of floors build in different construction period

Building characteristics	Period of construction												
	Total	Before 1960		1961-1980		1981-1990		1991-2000		2001-2005		2006-2011	
Total	598,267	44,195	13%	78,495	11%	64,943	21%	124,474	10%	57,136	8%	48,847	
Number of floors													
1	510,528	37,418	85%	67,404	86%	56,826	88%	102,665	82%	45,242	79%	39,110	80%
2	60,862	5,383	12%	6,393	8%	4,190	6%	16,382	13%	8,059	14%	6,052	12%
3-5	20,804	1,199	3%	4,192	5%	3,304	5%	4,474	4%	2,527	4%	1,876	4%
6-10	5,575	190	0%	492	1%	612	1%	870	1%	1,094	2%	1,661	3%
11+	498	5	0%	14	0%	11	0%	83	0%	214	0%	148	0%

**Source: INSTAT 2004 (tab review)*

Figure 69 Comparison on the height of building

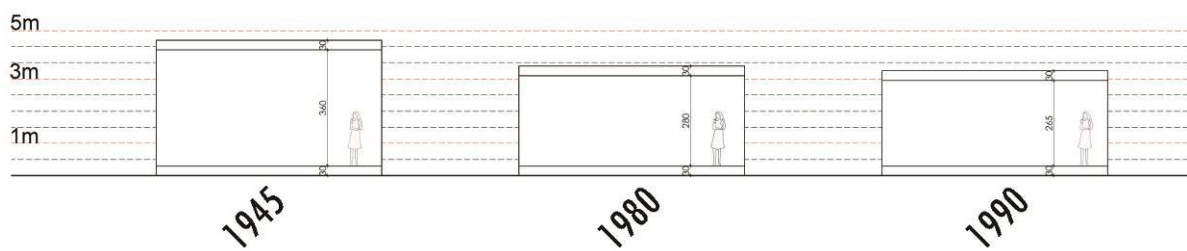


**Source: Author based on literature review*

The height of the buildings have changed during years in Albania and the reasons

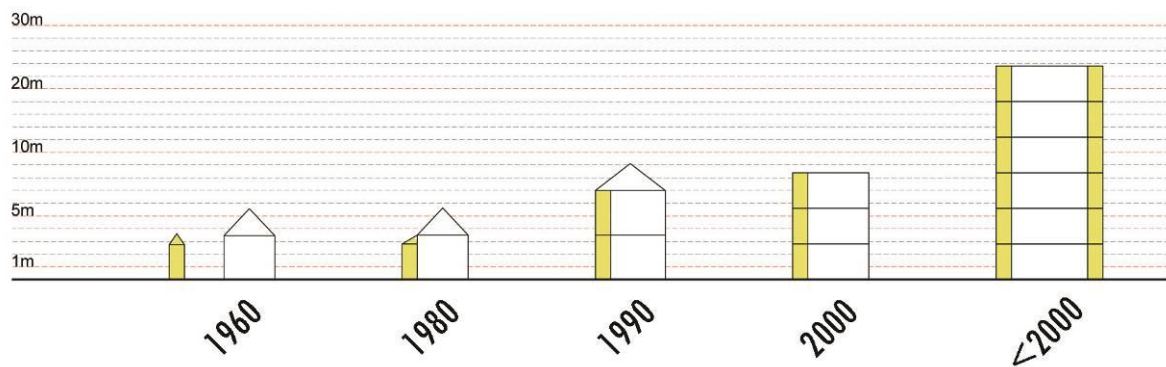
for this relate to urban planning as well as financial such as: firstly, very low value of land, secondly market inexistent construction, and real estate, as far as everything was controlled by the state and so the urbanization pressure was limited. The heights has changed with the new residential building after the WW II, from 320 to 280 and today one can also find building at 265cm too. This is so because of the technical and economic opportunities of the time, and second, later due economized budget. With the free market this height has been kept to maximize the profits per m3.

Figure 70 Evolution of the floor and building height



**Source: Author based on literature review and visit on site.*

Figure 71 Fig: The co/relation of the Wc space with the house during years



**Source: Author based on literature review and visit on site*

Referring to data collected during this research through observations and houses visited on site, the WC position can be separated into these main periods or models: before the '60s there were very few houses with a WC close to the house. Later the WC was shifting closer to the house and it became part of the composition of rooms in a house or apartment plan. In the years '00s, the projects of the residential houses have two WC instead of one in a house and for apartments with two and more rooms there are also two

WC. The graphic is showing the development of the building through decades. Due to the migration, the density of the cities has increased resulting in the rise of the numbers of the floors.

Analysing the data given by INSTAT in 2001, housing with the surface above 79m² are 25% of total number, the housing with surface 50-60 m² are bigger in the number 44%. This data are very constructive to understand the inner space that needs to be furnished. So 75% of the total dwelling has the surface less than 69m². In this light, the bigger costumers for the building construction are going to buy a house less than 69m. In this light, the functionalities between the spaces are interviewed and the need for multifunction furniture emerged.

Table 37 Inhabited dwellings by urban and rural area, surface area and number of occupants

Urban and rural area, surface area	All inhabited dwellings	Number of occupants								
		2	3	4	5	6 +				
Total	709,865	126,690	18%	125,578	18%	172,574	24%	120,864	17%	120,570
Less than 40 m ²	217,984	31%	44,051	41,778	53,389	32,799	26,790			
40-69 m ²	315,340	44%	54,616	53,975	75,255	56,321	58,639			
70-99 m ²	121,726	17%	20,181	21,049	30,191	21,498	22,894			
100-129 m ²	40,880	6%	5,833	6,743	10,331	7,594	8,858			
Total	Mbi 130 m²									
130 m ² and over	13,935	2%	2,009	2,033	3,408	2,652	3,389			

Source* Tab 1.5.7 INSTAT, 2015

The rooms in a residential apartment has shifted as below, responding a new way of furnishing:

Table 38 Morphology of the rooms for the residential apartment years 70'-2000'

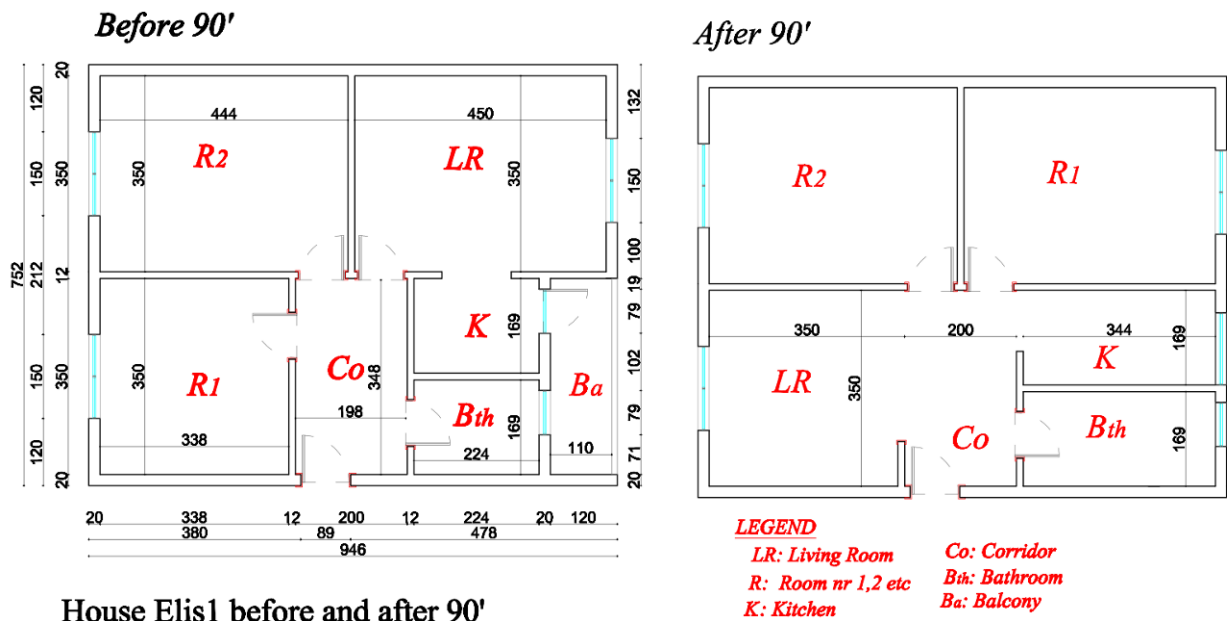
Room	Year 70	Year 80	Year 90	Year 2000
Living room	boxes shape , due to prefabricated construction system	enlarge the surface, during the night could be used for sleeping	the surface enlarged due to the new building construction system	often integrated with the kitchen area
Bed room	one or two	one or two	one and two often , three few apartments	one , two , three sometimes wardrobe additional
Kitchen	Anex, cooking often balcony or bathroom	started as	shifting from Anex to kitchen room	often integrated with the living room
Bathroom	with a window	yes sometimes in mostly out private houses , app one in	one big bathroom with window	2+1 house has often 2 bathroom, often without a window

Source* Author from the literature review

The prefabricate building and other residential construction built in communist era, have passed through extreme transformation in exterior – that part that has been invested

by government budget – and interior mainly by the household financial resources. In exterior despite the facades, “extension” has enlarged the inner space of the house but reduce the public space. Often this additional construction has not been done in right infrastructure. This has turned to be a big struggle for cities and communities. The samples below analyse the inner dynamics.

Figure 72 Changes in the Interior of Prefabricate House, Tirana, Albania



House Elis1 before and after 90'

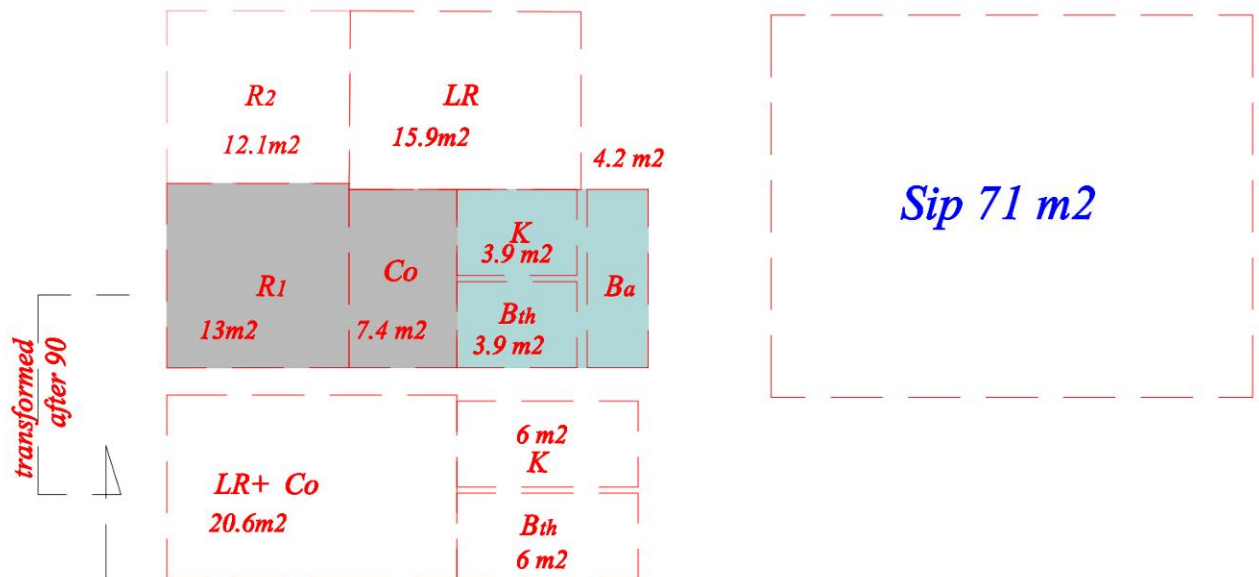
*Source: Author based onsite visits and digitalizing.

Prefabricate houses due to the construction system unchanged or flexible could be only the room’s functionality. The impact resulted in these transformations:

- As illustrated in the 4.1.2 the layout projected in communist time all the rooms had the entrance in the inner corridor as a meeting point, but this room’s intimacy was disturbed with the new dynamics of life.
- The need for bigger toilet room, enlarging the space of common area; living room, kitchen room, which braked the boarders between each other, giving less importance of a balcony, shift the layout form “before 90” to “after 90”.
- The corridor, after 90 integrate its function often with the living room extending its area (although this solution resulted in a new disorder, no achievement of microclimate’s function, allowing easy heating or cooling of the home environment).
- Extending the surface of the living room, as above solutions of integration of corridor and living room -as well the new house’s projects were draw with the interplay

of the functions- because there was a need of extending its size. Before 90' it was 3.5x4.5m after 90' it become 5.5x3.5, and easy reachable after the house entrance. New house's projects were drawn on these interior functionality principals.

Figure 73 The schematic changes during the transformation



**Source: Author based onsite visits.*

Families with two adults and a child or 3 adults are the target group that furnishing and maintained of the house is their 4th priority. (Tab 24)

Table 39 Expenditure Structure by the 12 main groups and by household type

One person	Adult with children	Two adults without children	Two adults with children	Three or more adults without children	Three or more adults with children	Total	Main group expenditures
45.5	51.8	46.7	44.4	42.2	44.5	44.3	Food and non-alcoholic beverage
3.1	3.0	3.6	3.0	3.6	3.9	3.6	Alcoholic beverages,tobacco
4.3	6.3	3.9	5.8	5.2	5.1	5.1	Clothing and footwear
12.9	12.6	11.9	10.4	9.0	9.9	10.2	Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels

5.3	7.3	5.9	5.5	5.1	5.4	5.4	Furnishing, household equipment and routine household maintenance
7.0	3.9	7.8	3.9	4.1	4.5	4.8	Health
2.6	1.3	5.0	8.3	6.5	7.6	6.8	Transport
3.4	3.2	3.6	3.2	3.6	3.0	3.3	Communication
2.3	2.5	2.5	4.0	2.9	3.2	3.1	Recreation and culture
4.9	1.6	0.7	1.9	7.8	4.0	4.2	Education
3.3	0.7	3.1	2.9	4.1	2.7	3.2	Restaurants and hotels
5.4	5.8	5.2	6.8	5.9	6.1	6.0	Miscellaneous goods and services
100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	Total

**Source Household Budget Survey, INSTAT 2014*

Figure 74 comparison of the price of furniture in different period based on bread-currency

YEAR	DESCRIPTION	FIGURE
< 1960	7KG BUTTER = 4 CHAIRS 7KG BUTTER = 1 TABLE	
> 1970	60 BREADS = 1 CHAIR	
> 1990	40-60 BREADS = 1 CHAIR	
> 2000	30-60 BREADS = 1 CHAIR	

**Source Author based on literature and documentaries review.*

The comparison analyse between three periods showed that in the centralized economy the possibility to choose different furniture design was limited, and the main raw material was wood. The diversity of furniture designs were guided by two main target

groups respectively the social classes; working class and party employee and location; rural or urban customer. The purchasing power, correspond the above groups during 1960' to 1985'-the salary and the bread price has not changed or sliced changed- has been stable. Instead after 90' due to the politic, economic and social factors analysed in chapter IV the imported products and later the local production competitive in a free market, the diversity of furniture design arise, the purchasing power as well. New alternative raw material, replaced the wood material giving more wide range of furniture design.

Finding an answer to the question what to produce requires to look into aspects such as target group, age, social and economic status, amount to spend and layout of the apartment. Three main sets of decisions need to be made by any economic system: what to produce, how to produce, and how to share out the product of the economy. These three basic questions related directly the product design and development process and in our case to home furniture products. As such in a centralised or planned economy it is the government or its central planning agencies that decide what to produce when it comes even to home furniture, how to produce it and the ways of sharing the products. By contrast, in a free market economy these decisions on product design and development are determined by buyers and sellers interacting with each other without government interference.

Centralised and free market economies occupy two polar extremes in the organization of economic activity. The primary differences lie in the division of labour or factors of production and the mechanisms that determine prices. The activity in a market economy is unplanned; it is not organized by any central authority but is determined by the supply and demand of goods and services.

Table 40: Centralised vs. free market economy

Centralised economy_communist regimes	Free market economy_liberal democratic regimes
Governments own all of the factors of production such as land, capital, and resources	Private ownership of the means of production
Government determines when, where and how much is produced at any one time/how it is exchanged	Voluntary exchanges / contracts Supply and demand forces determine when, where and how much is produced at any one time
Government set prices	Market sets prices
Government totally controls the economic activity	Government ensures regulatory and legislative framework are in place and respected

**Source: Author based on literature review*

Definitions are more elaborated on chapter 2. Analysed in Albania context in subchapter 4.1. Table 29 is drawing the comparison analyse between this two economy according to Vedery (1996).

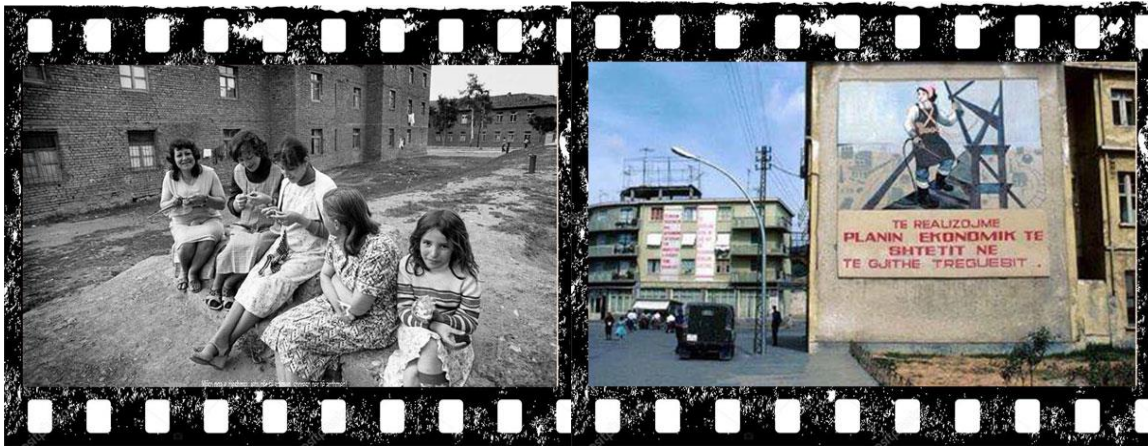
Table 41 ; Social Economy VS Capitalist Economy's characters

Socialist economy	Capitalist economy
The internal logic of socialism was the accumulation, control and ownership of production.	The internal logic of capitalism is the control and overwhelming ownership
The first is the purchaser or supplier of raw material/basic goods	The first is the costumer
The main reason is the accumulation of distribution resources	The main reason is the increase in profit
The competition between purchaser or suppliers of raw material and consumers who competed to provide the raw material for production as well as the final product of production	The competition between companies
Compete in enhancing skills in providing raw/basic materials and exchange in the hierarchy of suppliers	Companies compete with each other to expand on the market
Companies will face the problem if they are able to fulfil and supply enough the market with products.	Companies will face market demand
Whether a manufacture needed more investment and failed to meet objectives, it did not come out of the system but were still there , continuing the production	A company must succeed in fulfilling its goals, if not then it goes bankrupt

**Source: Author based on literature review Vedery, K.1996*

Figure 75 DIY – cleaning, ironing, crafting, Motivation



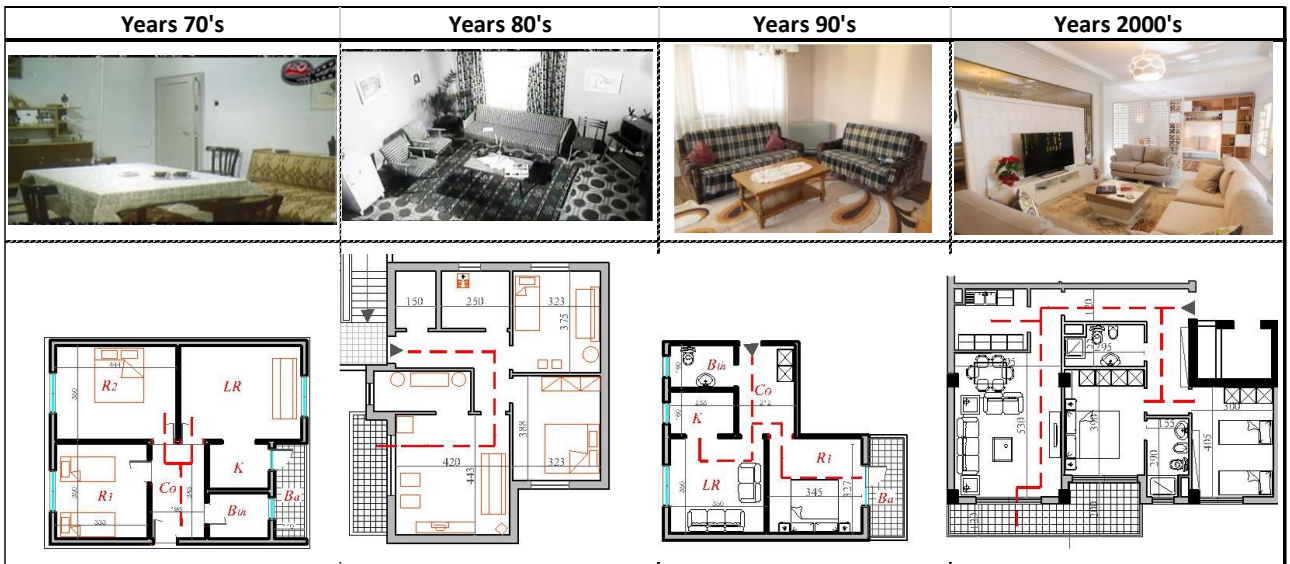


*Source; Social Media and Cinematography

The leadership of socialism gave importance to heavy industry more than the light and consumer industries. The orientation towards heavy industry Verdery K (1996) argued that the power of the centre was to produce things that could be controlled continuously. The industrial products were controllable from the centre better than the products from the light industry; textile, agriculture because of their inconsumable nature. Therefore, diverting attention from consumption, the funds to build the heavy industry increased which increased the tension on the legitimacy of the system

Given all the variables Matrix of furniture design process in Albania, is built.

Figure 76 the evolution of the plan and Interior through decades in Albania



*Source: Author based on literature review Vedery, K.1996

The dynamics happening in the interior through the years is schematized in the above picture, as analyzed in the chapter IV the economic, politic, social factors have

impact in the evolution of the house layout reinventing new interior in Albania context.

Consequently this transformation in the interior , the raising of costumer culture on shopping developed new type of retailer , different for what during transition has the market been used, e DIY retail store. It is very important to understand the adaption of the products in a country. Referring to the charter of the case study at the Business Today, 21st July 2014 comparing Ikea in Europe Ikea in China we can build a comparison Table to a DIY store in Albania and we will find the results has below:

Table 42 Megatek: Albania market is in the middle of two markets

IKEA in Europe	IKEA in China	Megatek Albania
Value proposition good quality,	Good quality,	Value proposition good quality,
Stylish and prices so low that everyone could afford it	Western styled aspirational brand for the middle class population	Western styled aspirational brand for the middle class population
Product: style, functional and home furnishings	Slight modifications to products to meet local market needs and reflect Chinese apartment sizes	Slight modifications to products and assembled instruction to meet local market needs and reflect new style life
Store locations: suburbs next to highways so they can be easily accessed by car	The outskirts of cities, next to rail networks as most consumers use public transport	Store locations: suburbs next to highways so they can be easily accessed by car
Price: Low cost	Affordable	Affordable
Promotion: IKEA catalogue is the main marketing tool	Advertising in Chinese social media and micro-blogging Weibo has been popular	Advertising in Media, brochure, leaflets, and social program.
Logistics: Products are sourced and made in developing countries like China and Malaysia and then shipped to Europe.	Raw materials and products are sourced locally. IKEA build two factories in Shanghai to avoid high import taxes	Logistics: Products are sourced and made in developing countries like China Italy, Turkey and then shipped to Albania.

**Source Author from analyses of literature review*

The above Table shows some main points principles that a DIY company need to fulfil , when his expanding the market DIY stores are effecting in different countries with different economic politic and social. In this light Megatek , in Albania context is in the middle of a West DIY store because his costumers consider its products ; value proportion good quality , store location in the superb and the logistic, purchasing products in the

developed countries. But prices of a DIY store in Albania are considered affordable, need a lot of advertising, always purchasing products need to have a light changes during the production to be more suitable for the current market, and this products are if they are from western style are more preferable.

Concluding remarks

Lifestyle improvements

The state interventions in prefabricated buildings through the cities in Albania have brought about a revitalised panorama of their facades. These interventions carried out by the local governments in most cases and sometimes even by inhabitants themselves have contributed not only to external stucco and improvements of facade, but also a break in the monotony of the aesthetics of communist buildings. More colours, more styles, more art and thus more lively neighbourhoods at least in appearance. In the recent years, there is a turn back to traditional Albanian motives when it comes to reconstructing main cities areas such as the reconstruction of the ‘Pazari i ri’ in Tirana that connects with the traditions of the old Tirana town.

The external interventions in prefabricated buildings in cities in Albania have been made by the local government with public funds and have aimed at transforming facades and appearances of neighbourhood. Interior interventions have been made by the financial resources of households and inhabitants and the main rationale has been to change the functionality of rooms.

As such bedrooms have become more intimate and living rooms have been merged with corridors and at times even with the cooking area or kitchen. As a result there has been an increase in the need for multifunctional products for houses and apartments. These multifunctional products need to be aesthetically clean and easily combined with the rest of the housing furniture. In all cases main aspects such as height, breadth and functionality have had to be maintained as shown by the observations in this research.

Based on data obtained from INSTAT, Albanians are spending more and more on house furniture and household equipment as well as routine household maintenance. However, the most interesting target group are families with two members or families with two members and one child. As a result, businesses need to be attentive to the needs of this family typology and respond to their demands when it comes to home furniture and other

equipment. This also implies paying attention to their budget and financial means.

In addition to basic spending per each family such as water supply, electricity, gas and other fuels and of course in addition to necessities such as food and non-alcoholic beverage, other approximate spending includes furniture and transport. In this regard business should be careful to the need of customers to buy not only furniture but also have a solution for spending related to transport of such purchased furniture. For example companies like Megatek produce furniture that are pre-packed and easy to be transported thus lowering the costs of transport for households.

CHAPTER VI – CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Main Findings of the Study

The study highlights that furniture design during communism can be characterised as mass production strongly impacted by the political dogma of the time. The two main features of this mass production were: standardisation of home furniture design process and product development and rationalisation, which referred to the quantity of products one household could actually own. The political dogma limited the mass consumption of products regulated by supply – demand balances, which are common in free, market economy. However, the study confirms that the wood processing industry became highly developed in communism and from the first wood processing plan in Puka in 1945 and Misto Mame in 1952, many more were set up in at least 23 cities which had proximity to raw materials, namely wood. The wood processing used standardisation procedures, high technology for the time and many of the products were exported particularly in the 1970s and 1980s. The encompassing features either for export or local use of products was the high quality of products and materiality used. For instance, after the 1990s wood-processing workers constituted one of the most skilled labour force segments of the Albanian emigrants to Italy or Greece or other countries in Europe.

When it comes to house layout during communism, the study shows that from 1945 to 1990 there was an increase in the quantity and typology of housing (dwellings, residences, buildings, apartment blocks, private houses). This of course coincides with the increase in population as well as opening up of new towns as industrial areas and further development of existing towns or cities becoming crucial regional hubs. Also, the end of the war and the attempt to catch up with industrialisation meant more constructions. During this period there was a new trend to move away from 1-2 floor building towards 4-5-6-floor buildings particularly for residential purposes. As the majority of Albanian population lived in rural areas, the prevailing type of residential building was that of private house – one floor buildings – that occupied 85% of the total buildings according to INSTAT, whereas 2-6 floor buildings occupied only 15% and only 30 buildings were 11-floor high. Even though apartments increased in number during the 80-90s, they did not even occupy 10% of the total number of dwellings built during the communist era. The study shows a drastically change after the fall of communism whereby the number of

apartment buildings and high-floor residential buildings reached unprecedented levels combined with changes in residential home interiors. Moreover the detailed house layouts and type of furniture are presented and analysed.

The underlying factors that impact the functionality, utility and materiality of certain home furniture products over others have been also explored related not only to changes in lifestyle, but also to macro level processes such as social and economic ones. In line with the political dogma and discourses and reflecting shifts from the Soviet alliance to the Chinese and then to self-isolationism, during communism home furniture in Albania became simple, plain, and rectilinear and was made out of new materials that were lighter – both physically and visually – and cheaper. In addition, the number of furniture pieces and items of home décor were minimized. Utility was encouraged compared to what could be perceived as an inclination towards aesthetics, luxury or western influences. However, a change to minimalism was a tendency not exclusive to the Albania or communism block. Architecture and interiors worldwide were becoming more basic and functional, due to what is now known as modernism.

The study confirms that when it comes to home furniture product design process, communism regime was controlling not only the production but also the way of living and thinking; this was also mirrored on furniture design. There were two categories of production: luxury furniture and normal ones. Archival data shows that the high quality and most expensive raw materials were used for the luxury designs. Also, the wood must pass all the process before starting the furniture production in the high quality standard and then the join connection and assembled accessories were also important – emphasising quality over time of production. For normal home furniture designs other secondary materials and processes were used. For ‘ordinary furniture’ the time phase was faster and thus the assembled accessories and joins where suitable to be faster. The total control over production can be spotted also on the standardization of mass-production, whereby centralized party calls were disseminated to raise the performance of qualities, aesthetic, solidity and most importantly not to produce excessive designs. The Centre of Standards of the Commission of the State’s Planning decided on designs and models. The final approved designs were sent to the engineer to calculate and approve the production line. The party line thus controlled each part of the product design and development process, technological process, sustainability of the design and quality before a prototype was

produced. This process is completely different in post-communism, whereby the market forces define the quality and quantity of production.

After Albania emerged from 50 years of communist rule, the transition from a centrally planned to a market-oriented economy, together with substantial international aid and other strategic assistance from the European Union, World Bank, USA and other countries helped the country make progress. As such Albania grew from the poorest nation in Europe in the early 1990s to middle-income status in 2008, with poverty declining by half during that period. Albania's economic transformation continues and growth performance model is yet to be consolidated. Experts point to the need to shift from consumption-fuelled to investment- and export-led growth. Raising productivity and competitiveness in the economy, creating more jobs, and improving governance and public service delivery remain key objectives. Enhanced regional connectivity and access to regional and global markets, coupled with export and market diversification, can also help to promote faster growth. Such macroeconomic factors influence also the wood processing sector and then consequently home furniture product development and emerging trends in house and residential buildings.

During post-communism, wood processing sector had to re-position itself in the market following the initial shock of the total destruction of the state controlled sector. New companies started to emerge and in the past three decades enterprises have consolidated their position in the market in terms of wood processing industry. The study shows that especially after the '90, Albanian wood industry has been under a complete transformation process, not only in terms of the structure and organization of the enterprises, but also in the type of raw materials used to produce wood objects with a greater range of choice as well as in typology of products developed. The study also demonstrates that factors such as: usage of good management systems, transfer of technology, proliferation of ICTs, access to regional and international markets - allowed companies to be more successful, and achieve their profitability and productivity despite operating in a challenging environment.

Wood processing industry in Albania, as well as other industries are facing several challenges. One issue is also lack of reliable data that could serve as a baseline for further advancements. This study shows that today production of furniture is based mainly in

furniture produced on cheap board and MDF. This is an indicator of the radical transformation of furniture structure and design process. All Albanian businesses nowadays are producing furniture with raw material sawn and bodies of planks provided by our forests. Most of the materials are actually imported and nowadays-alternative materials to wood are used such as: melamine, MDF, cheap board, wood elements, and planks not just solid wood. With regard to the furniture sector, only 29 percent of production is sold within the country, targeting mainly low-cost products for low-income customers. More than 80 percent of raw materials, primarily wood-based panels for domestic furniture industry, are imported. Albania also imports significant volumes of ready-made furniture, including office, kitchen, and other furniture. Office and kitchen furniture are imported primarily from Italy. The main products produced in-country are semi-ready elements for chairs, tables, and other articles for export; chairs; bedroom furniture; tables; doors; windows; and flooring. Of course this represents a total different picture when compared to communism where local production was used also for exporting.

The study confirms the theoretical framework in that the process of product design, development and production is intertwined with the human factors such as emotional and cognitive as well as with contextual factors such as social, cultural and economic in a particular market. In this sense, the dynamics of the Albanian market in lieu of the multifaceted transformations following the collapse of the communist regime and moving towards the accession processes in the European Union as well as the demographics of the Albanian society as a whole, deeply impact the ways in which home furniture products are designed, development and produced. With the free market economy, first, the role of the state was diminished significantly and the Albanian society embraced the mass consumption cultural trends. Secondly, the levels of migration and emigration rose significantly which resulted in the need for new products for home furniture and decoration. These social and economic changes as well as an increase in consumer culture – similar to global trends – have led to the mass customisation of home furniture product design process. What is more the process of industrialization and mass production has been considered as a process of alienation of the individuality, whereas DIY as craft production and consumption is viewed as an expression of humanity. These are also demonstrated by the case of Megatek.

By exploring the case of Megatek, this study argues that DIY product design is a function of the contexts in which the product itself is introduced, but at the same time

contexts, i.e. social, cultural, economic conditions as well as human factors, i.e. lifestyles and attitudes, emotional and cognitive, are affected by the introduction and usability of DIY products. In this light, DIY product design and all it concerns is a chain of relationships through which consumer goods are linked to competence, competence to practice and practice back to the consumption of consumer goods in a potentially unending and co-evolutionary cycle. DIY product design involves transformations in the relation between technology and user competence as the former has become more accessible and adaptive to the amateur user. DIY market in emerging country like Albania move from DIY towards ‘Do-it-for-me’ (DIFM), and it will continue like this as far as the labour cost will continue to be inexpensive.

DIY retailers like Megatek are producing more and more “multifunction” products like thin wardrobe, for house, for books, for clothes, or shelves or boxes with different usages or one item to have more than one usage like ottoman poof with storage inside, Products design of DIY stores like shown in the case of Megatek pass through changes very fast because DIY stores are closer to the final costumers and they have a big competition. Technology is affecting the design of products; TV screen are the new generation and many manufactories change the design of TV units from 60 to less because the TV screen is very thin. DIY stores help opening new business, they require the packing to talk more than what a person in the store can, about the sizes, specific of products, warranty way of usage, this has become a big industry because the numbers produce for the DIY stores is very big so this make new companies to developed and serve the new market. As illustrated in the case of Megatek, packages bring safe products from manufacture to DIY stores, and then to costumers, package is very important to be always smaller for the same item, this changed the design of some products like: a sofa to have lower space in the container, is produced with a storage space inside it to put the arms, the cushion and after this space could be used as storage. The case of Megatek shows that DIY stores educate the costumers to buy, educate the local supplier to produce consequently raise the standard of life.

In the past 100 years human beings and their bodies have not changed their ergonomic parameters and for this reason the basic specifications of the furniture projecting must be respected, but designs come in the market with different shapes and material due to the development of technology, education, demography or their cultural

context. For instance sofa bed are most popular products in east Europe than in west Europe because first is the tradition of inviting guest and sleepover, second the houses are still smaller for many members living in the same house. The leaders of the coming trend are exhibitions where the biggest company of technology, machinery, wood processing, wood, and accessories attend in. Albania is no exception to other countries in the developing world that are not so much sensitive to eco friendly production or packages especially when they have to pay extra money for them. However, increased attention is being placed on environmental issues and this affects wood-processing industry too. As such the impact of moving from mass production in a centralized economy to free mass customisation in market economy has not radically transformed the fundamental properties of home furniture but has affected the design, development, delivery and materiality of products.

6.2 Original contribution of the study

The first original contribution of this doctoral study is the thorough analysis of the furniture design process and products during the communism period in Albania. The findings are entirely based on collection of primary data through systemic review of archiving and document analysis, in-depth interviews and observations. This doctoral study thus presents a comprehensive picture not only of furniture design process and products but also of interrelated dimensions such as house layout, socio-economic and political contexts that led to certain types of product design during this period. This doctoral study shows that the most outstanding feature of furniture design during communism was the “purity of design”, which comes as the result of an entire well-organised and performed furniture design process. This process was based on the principle of rationality and necessity that is also interlinked with the socio-economic and political contexts during communism in Albania.

The second original contribution of this doctoral study refers to the thorough analysis of furniture design process and products during post-communism in Albania, i.e. free market economy and democratization period. The socio-economic and political factors related to democratization impact directly the furniture design process and products during the first decade of post-communism. For example, demographic movements influenced significantly furniture design processes and tendencies in Albania. To mention but a few:

mass emigration of population from Albania towards European countries such as Italy, Greece and Germany and the internal migration from rural to urban areas. In addition, mass constructions without proper architectural planning, uncontrolled movements from rural areas into cities' suburban, land occupation and construction of private houses as well as large apartment buildings in the main cities of Albania. Another factor is the high level of imports without control of quality given that there was a high need from Albanian population to poses objects that they lacked during communism. This was then followed by the deconstruction of small joineries and wood crafting. As a result during the first decade of democratization and free market economy, the doctoral study shows that the furniture design was “turbo design”.

The third original contribution of this doctoral study refers to the in-depth analysis of furniture design after 2000's in Albania with a focus on D-I-Y market and design process. In this period there was a boom of shopping centres/malls in Albania although the customers were not yet educated in this regard. The market in Albania is now more stabilised and constructions was to a certain extent put under proper regulation. As a result quality furniture products and/or designs came from abroad, but they had to compete with small factories and joineries in Albania (such as those in Fushe Kruja), which did not produce quality products similar to the challenges of IKEA entry in China in its first phase. Some of this shopping centres or furniture stores such as Praktiker and Jysk entered the market in Albania, but failed and had to close down. Jysk returned in 2017 with shops within shopping centres. This doctoral study focuses on the successful case of Megatek as a D-I-Y department store.

The reasons why Megatek was relatively successful in the Albanian market are: first, it managed to adapt to the needs and cultural attitudes of Albanian customers; second, it adopted the global trends on furniture design process and products, but at the same time it worked to educate the Albanian customers towards D-I-Y products; third, it developed its own prototypes in furniture design. In addition, there is also a nationalistic dimension of Made in Albania products and the demands from the market for such products. This study shows that Megatek started the democratization of D-I-Y furniture design in Albania involving people to democratize the products, relating to the efficiency of the market and the culture of the people. Megatek was also able to educate the right models to the customers regarding not only furniture, but also housing and thus contribute to its success

of Made in Albania products. It cooperates not only with global firms, but also with local producers. The latter produce as per Megatek owns prototype of product designs. The contribution of Megatek for Albanian economy can be easily highlighted: first, it increases efficiency; it keeps money in Albania and third, contributes to the socio-economic development of the country.

The added value of this doctoral study lies in the historical analysis of furniture design process and products and the interrelated factors such as socio-economy, political and cultural. In addition, this doctoral study has produced an original database of furniture design from 1945 to 1990 as well as an original database of D-I-Y furniture designs after the first decade of post-communism. Because this is a topic at the intersection of many research programs and academic fields it will attract the interest of diverse researchers who will utilise different dimensions and data from the thesis. Academic for further studies could use these databases. Also they could be used by business to bring back original furniture designs in the market, but also by the government.

What is more the examination of home furniture development is a clever and interesting proxy to study the overall development and transformation of Albanian society in the past 25 years and to show how domestic conditions and international pressures/constraints have interacted to change the behaviour of Albanian consumers. Even more importantly, the thesis provides a novel framework for examining home furniture development in emerging economies and post-communist countries. In addition, the thesis provides also a potentially suitable framework to examine similar countries to Albania and also rely on the development of home furniture as a proxy for studying consumers' behaviour.

In conclusion, mass customisation can be viewed as a collaborative effort between customers and manufacturers, who have different sets of priorities and need to jointly search for solutions that best match customers' individual specific needs within the realms of a manufacturers' customisation capabilities. In today's landscape, many commercial sectors, whether it be retail, service, technology, or manufacturing have started taking the likes and dislikes of the consumers very seriously and thus enriching mass customisation. In this light, the impact of technology advances and Internet is highly relevant and future research should be dedicated to this in the case of Albania.

6.3. Policy Implication and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this doctoral research project, two main project ideas are suggested for future development: first, “Moving forward – Comeback” Project and second, development of “Communist Heritage Tourism”.

“Moving forward –Comeback” project

The findings of this research encourage the other Albanian designers to take a proactive approach of the databases offered by this doctoral study and to evolve them in other advanced levels. Some examples could be:

- The revamped communist objects of everyday use
- The legendary brands from the People's Republic of Albania
- Looking forward, the designer, researcher, universities, enterprises and government to work together on the project “The Comeback of Communist Design”

Develop “Communist Heritage Tourism” Project

The observations, in-depth interviews and literature review conducted during this doctoral study strongly suggest that it would be beneficial for both economic and cultural reasons to focus on a project that seeks to develop tourism based on communism heritage similar to other countries in East Europe. This implies: first, to develop “Communist Heritage Tourism”, such as the case of BunkArt1 and 2 or some not official guides in different cities to visit Bunkers or some tourist random visits to High Security Jail of Communism Regime. However this kind of tourism can grow based on a proper strategy including the finding of this research as well part of the package; second, bars and restaurant as well as hotels could furnish with the same style of ‘communist heritage’. However, attention should be paid here to the interpretation of heritage of communism. The idea is not to transform communism into a positive image and thus increase nostalgic dimension, but to focus on the architectural and cultural heritage that emphasise a variety of interpretations of communism heritage in Albania. Considering that Albania has been very isolated (self-isolated) during communism and also considering that in the past 20 years, western tourists have started to be interested in the heritage of the communist period, in seeing what it was like to live behind the Iron Curtain, the communism heritage tourism could be profitable for small businesses in Albania.

The products from the first project can also be used for the second one.

Recommendations for the business sector:

1. DIY businesses need to follow very carefully the needs and demands of their target group and produce based on a proper analysis of social, economic and cultural contexts. Successful DIY retailers will be those who best understand customer buying patterns and use this knowledge to create a unique point of difference: an easier shopping experience and a wider offer that excites the customer, providing a logical reason to invest in the home.

2. Supply chain allowing stores to hold the right products at the right time; a well-known and trusted online offer and good reputation in customer service. We should also expect to see a growth in private label which holds stronger margin opportunities and Successful DIY retailers will be those who best understand customer buying patterns and use this knowledge to create a unique point of difference: an easier shopping experience and a wider offer that excites the customer, providing a logical reason to invest in the home. For consumers to focus on durability and value.

3. DIY business need to be flexible and be able to adapt to the local conditions of the market and the demands of the customer like in the case of Megatek or IKEA in China or IKEA in Europe.

4. The sector is highly cyclical, and trends in home improvement industry are closely linked with the performance of the housing market. To increase sales in this market, retailers will need a flexible supply chain allowing stores to hold the right products at the right time; a well-known and trusted online offer and good reputation in customer service.

5. We should also expect to see a growth in private label, which holds stronger margin opportunities, and for consumers to focus on durability and value. Companies for product design such as measures and functionality can use the findings of this research.

6. The DIY business should open up to academia and consider universities as partners in their work. Research could be linked to practice in DIY businesses in the case of designs, product development and innovation.

7. DIY clients are those who like to do things themselves with their furniture and therefore DIY Business should give more things to their customers. Physical presence of customers in shops should be also combined with virtual experience through e-commerce.

Recommendations for academia:

1. To cooperate more with the business sector and contribute to the project ideas mentioned above.
2. Academic research and curricula need to be updated with the most recent labour market and business needs.
3. To set up communication and networks between businesses and academia in order to offer internships and hands on experience to students.

The government should facilitate the communication and linkages between academia and business.

6.4. New Directions for Future Research

The future research should divide every process in at least two analytical levels: research and implementation. Researchers should gather data in the national central Archive by using indexing. Digitalisation of archives could help in this regard.

Research: further more in archives, suggestion is no under the index of Ministry of Industry -No 497 (it was scanned almost all by me) but as well under the Index of “Ministria Boterore” (Foreign Ministry), “Ministria e ekonomise”(Ministry of economy), “Ministria e tregtise”, Keshilli I Ministrave. After 3 months searching in Archive, searching deeply the index Ministry of Industry I found out that all the production standards and trade demands exports and import were attached to the other ministries that I suggested.

Also, whenever coming across with furniture of communism it is important to do four simple acts: shoot a photo, measure the product, If it possible to know the source like, place, add, production time, buying price place note them. It will be highly appreciated if all information gathers in three above points send to: currajerida@yahoo.com.

This study has digitalized much furniture but still are less what are mention and pictured in it. If I – through this doctoral study – opened a door towards the documentation of communist furniture and house layout– I invite other researchers to go continue and build on it.

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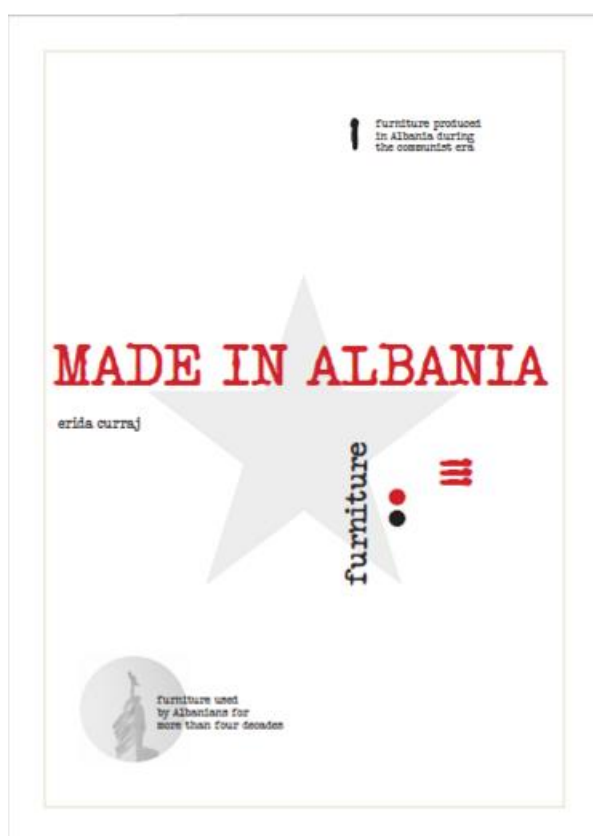
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ANNEXES

Annex I: Furniture Catalogue produced during Centralized Economy in Albania



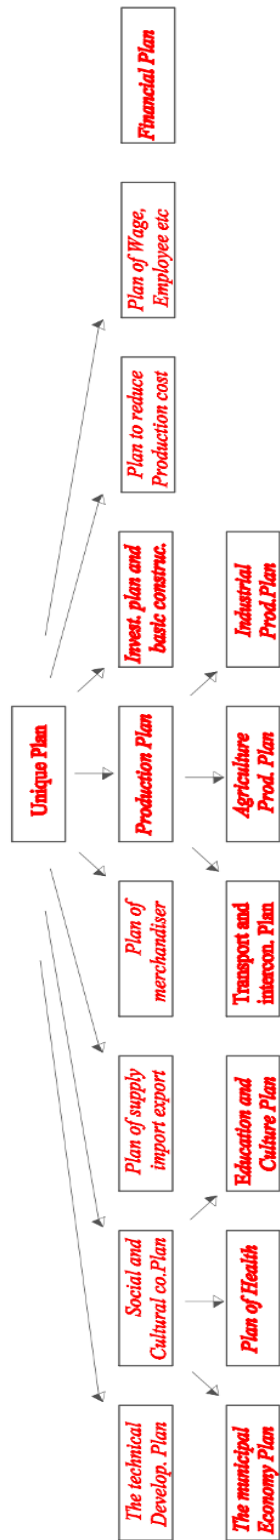
Made by Erida CURRAJ

Annex II : Housing's Stock until 1990 in different countries

	Number in %			
	before 1945	1945-1960	1961-1980	1981-1990
Albania	8	13.25	30.5	22.8
Bulgaria	24.5	28.7	35	9.4
Croatia	22.4	12	43.2	17.4
Czech Rep.	32.2	14.2	41.3	11.1
Estonia	11.6	10.2	39	17.9
Finland	11.6	16.1	40.5	20.7
France	28.9	8.8	28.5	9.3
Germany	29.6	59		3.2
Poland	27.8	12.9	38.9	15
Slovenia	22.6	11.1	40.3	17.8

Source * Author from the review of Annual Bulletin of Housing and building Statistics UNECE 2000,
Albanian Population INSTAT 2004

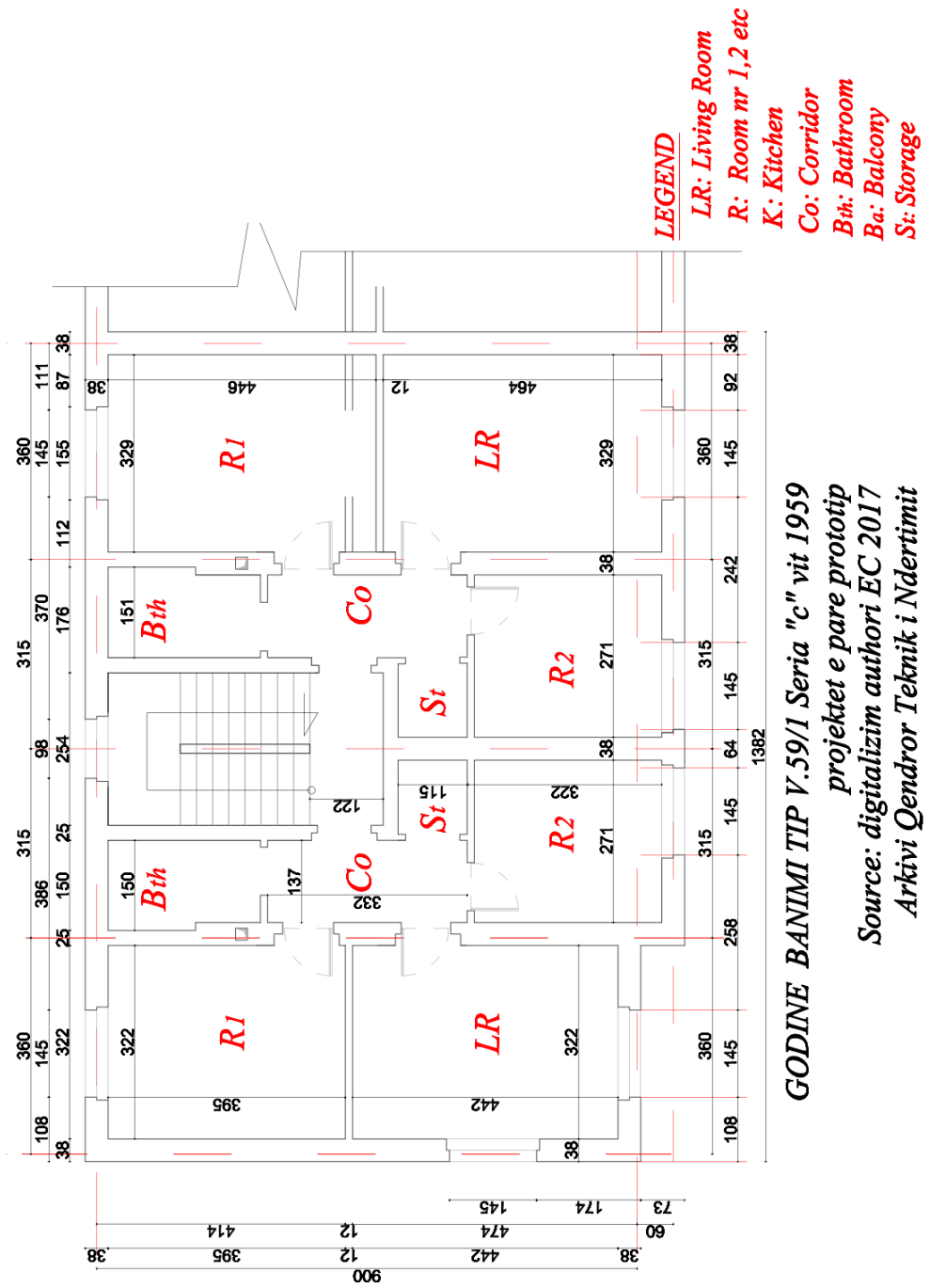
Annex III : Planning's Strainer – The Unique State Plan Check



Scheme of State Planning

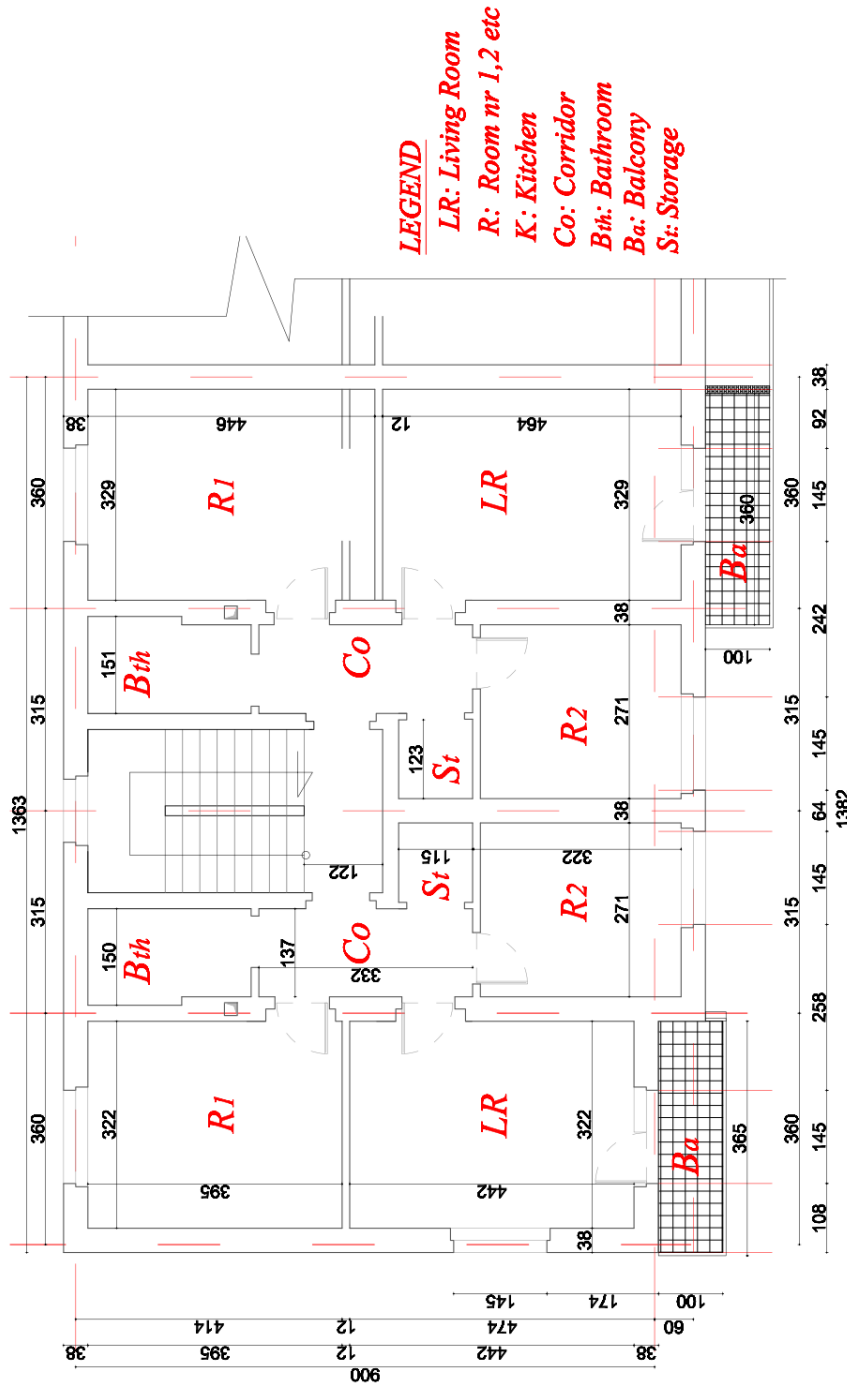
*Source: Author based on literature review

Annex IV :First Prototype V.59/1 seria "c" plane of the residential house year 1959



*Source: Author digitalized plans from AQTN (Centre Technical Construction Archive of Albania)

Annex V: First Prototype V.59/1 seria "c" plane of the residential house year 1959



Prototype variants C comes from main prototype 59/1 but with this changes :

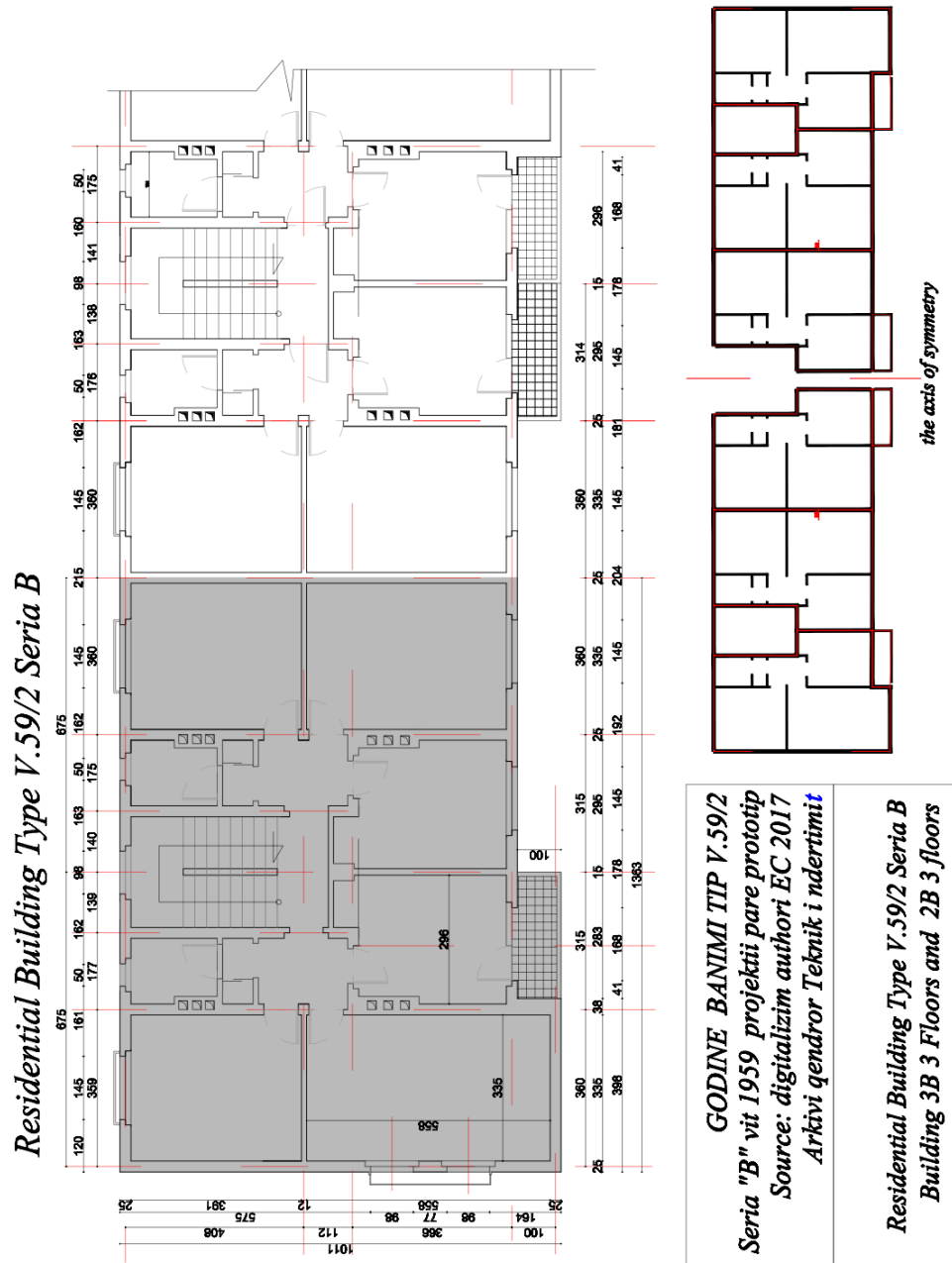
1. No lodges
2. The room's walls are shifted
3. The outer walls of the balcony are treated on facades

GODINE BANIMI TIP V.59/1 Seria "c" vit 1959
 projektet e pare prototip
 Source: digitalizim authori EC 2017
 Arkivi Qendror Teknik i Ndertimit

*Source: Author digitalized plans from AQTN (Centre Technical Construction Archive of Albania)

Annex VI

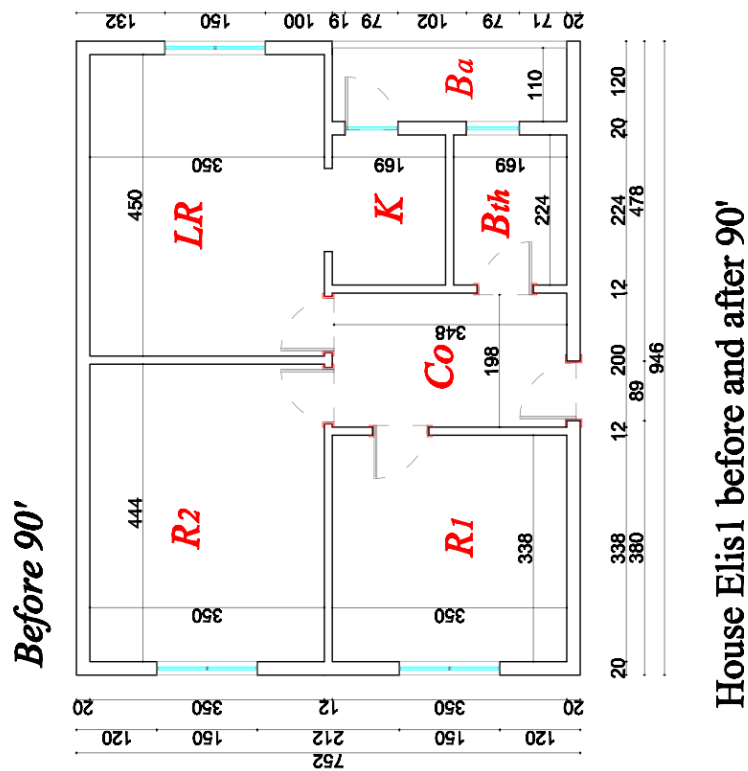
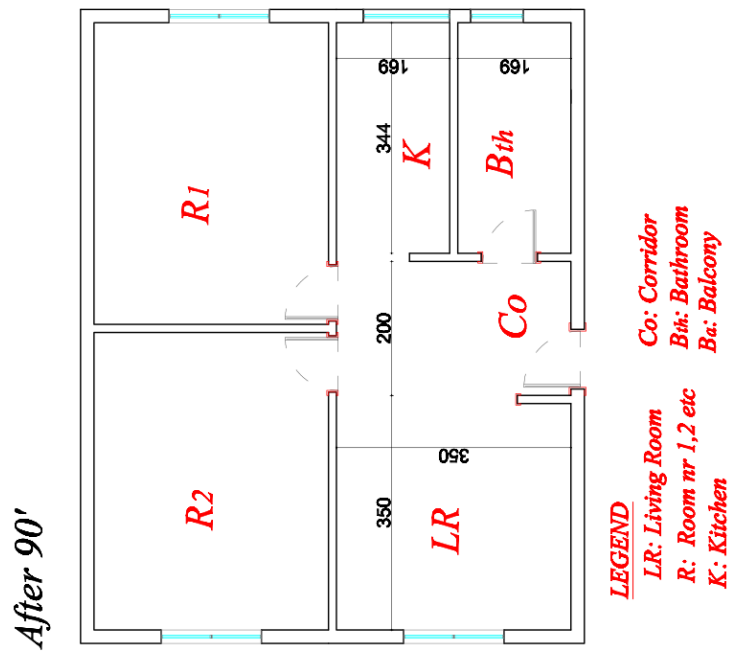
First Prototype V.59/2 serial "b" plane of the residential building year 1959



*Source: Author digitalized plans from AQTN (Centre Technical Construction Archive of Albania)

Annex VII

Changes in the Interior of Prefabricate House, Tirana, Albania



*Source: Author based onsite visits and digitalizing.

Annex VIII: List of Standardized Furniture

The List of furniture File 264 (1975)	
1-	Closet, sink cover 2- 3 model s
2-	Closet , basin cover
3-	Kitchen Shelves , different sizes with different material as glass, meloplast, fibre wood and painted
4-	Kitchen cabinet frame, drawers and shelves
5-	Hanged Book shelves, with many dividers for different use, from children to student use. Should be in different material, partial board, iron. The Size and models different.
6-	Sofa bed- for using as a bed during night and sofa during the day.
7-	Small closet, for bath and kitchen use, with mirror in one side.
8-	Wardrobe used in the entrance or corridor, with multifunction use, shoe case, hooks for clothes. They could be just a whole furniture or the doors replaced from a curtain. The cabinet frame, should be with different floor as well the highest floor.
9-	Wood hooks and curtain bars, in different shapes and different size.
10-	Arm chairs, looks like single coach and similar with the production in Vlora and Gjirokastra.
11-	Coffee table (Tables that stay in the centre) with meloplast material.
12-	Dining table, in meloplast material, in different sizes to be suitable for any kind of Anexes and corners in the residential houses,
13-	Wood hamper, portmanteau and trunk, in the shape of shelves or night stand, for the winter lining or seasonal carpets, or precious clothes, mostly of this items were produce in nice ornaments.
14-	Simple book shelves, not big sizes, hang on the wall in different material, metal and glass as well.
15-	Closet, easy to assemble different times, used I n the corridor, toilet as well for the bedroom. As the tools shelves or other similar accessories.
16-	The cabinet frame have to be designed easy to assemble.
17-	All furniture responding to one room should have the same pattern, bedroom set, all the components in one participle board finishing, ottoman sofa L-shape or curbed shape should have the same fabric cover, and suit the colour of wood with the same of Table or chair finishing colour.
18-	All stools should have the size suitable to enter under table, save the space.
19-	The bunk bed should be produce and sold to the big families in a small apartment.
20-	Sofa bed made with springs aren't produced with a layer of mattress, but as well will have a storage space for the bed lining to be stored during the day.
21-	Increasing the gamma of the models has table ware made in wood and house ware made in wood like the sewing box and necklaces box etc.

**Source: Author based on Archive Research*

