

ICMS XXXIII

33rd International Conference on Multidisciplinary Studies

“Recent Studies and Research”

26-27 May 2023

Amsterdam

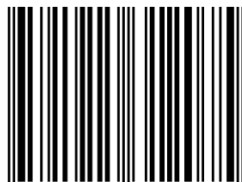
BOOK OF PROCEEDINGS

Editors

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ISBN 978-1-915312-07-5



9 781915 312075



PUBLISHING AND RESEARCH

ISBN

978-1-915312-07-5

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Typeset by Revistia

Printed in Brussels

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Migration Phenomen and the Interpretation of the Main Influencing Factors, the Case of Albania

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Abstract

Albania is one of the most suitable grounds for the study of the phenomenon of migration based on its multidimensional forms, referring to international migration, internal migration, return, etc. Likewise, the Albanian state is a country that most clearly reflects the correlation between development as a whole and migration in particular. It is evident that emigration has been a major element for the country's transition towards a more developed and "modern" economy and society. If we refer to the macro level, immigrants' remittances have made a substantial contribution to the structure of the country's gross domestic product since the beginning of the 1990s, a period that also belongs to the first years of democracy in the country. Meanwhile, at the micro level, they have made a very significant contribution to the survival and progress of many Albanian families for a long time. On the other hand, the migration has been to such a degree that it has brought about a disruption of the balance of the country's population, causing a division between the highly chaotic urbanized edge of the Tirana region and the depopulation of the mountainous and hilly rural areas in north, south and interior of the country. The multiple interactions of several population and migration variables, cause a general concern for Albania's demographic and economic future. All these changes and phenomena related to migration in all its forms are based on several factors (such as historical, economic, political, social, cultural, etc.), which we will consider in this paper in order that we not only identify but also try to deal with some theories that have been tried to interpret these issues.

Keywords: migration, factor, transition, interpretive theory, population

Introduction

Migration is the act undertaken by migrants as they move from one geographic environment to another. The departure happens to seek better conditions, both for them, but also for the family, for the present, but mostly for a better future. With the advancement of telecommunications, transportation and technology in general, people move much faster and easier than before. For this reason, migration, whether

voluntary or forced, is developing at high rates throughout the world. People are moving in greater numbers and at a faster rate than at any other time in history. This process is happening at a time when many countries are unprepared to cope with demographic changes and when policies and attitudes towards population movement and immigration have strengthened significantly.¹ Migration is a phenomenon that has affected the world in a global way and of course we find it manifested in the Albanian state as well. Statistics show that a large part of Albanians want to leave in order to create a better life outside the Albanian territory. Based on this fact, there was also a need to further highlight the factors that push the population of the whole world, especially the Albanians, to migrate. Migration is the process of population movement, whether it is a movement within a country or a movement across the border of a country, or a movement across national or regional borders. Migration is a global phenomenon and today it is very relevant. Migration can be long-term or short-term, internal or international. Migration takes place for various reasons. In most cases, people are forced to move from their communities as a result of the lack of political stability, active conflicts that may be developing in the territory of their state, environmental degradation and natural disasters.²

In this framework, a number of factors that can be classified as favorable, unfavorable or neutral have an influence that cause migration. The factors that generally determine the reasons why a person migrates are related to the residence from which the migration starts, also known as the country of origin, and to the new residence, or where the migration ends completely or temporarily, also known as the place of reception or destination. Both the country of origin and the destination are characterized by factors that support or enable migration, reject or hinder or are neutral, or factors that neither support nor oppose migration. The favorable reasons of a territory are the attractive factors that attract a person, while the unfavorable reasons are the hindering factors that force a person to leave. Typically, the causes are economic, sociopolitical and ecological.³ Attracting and inhibiting factors can coexist simultaneously both in the country of origin and in the host country. First, economic factors are related to the general state of the economy, the labor market of a country and the employment situation. Favorable economic conditions in the destination, the prospect of higher wages, better employment opportunities and capital creation are factors that encourage migration. Meanwhile, the desire to leave also grows as a need to escape from the social, economic and political situation of the country of origin. Unemployed and poor individuals, as a result of the unfavorable situation in the country of origin, will be forced to migrate to find ways for their

¹Skeldon, R. International migration, internal migration, mobility and urbanization: Towards more integrated approaches. International Organization for Migration (2018), pg.3

²Davies, A. A., Basten, A., & Frattini, C. Migration: a social determinant of the health of migrants. *Eurohealth*, (2009)16(1), 10-12

³Dubey, S., & Mallah, V. Migration: causes and effects. *The Business & Management Review*, (2015). 5(4), 228.

survival. So, against the driving factors of unemployment, lack of employment opportunities, poverty, unsustainable living, there are attractive factors that push towards migration, related to employment opportunities, better incomes, prospects for capital creation, industrial and technical innovations, as well as attending specialized education.¹ Second, sociopolitical factors are related to ethnicity, religion, race, culture, family conflicts, the search for independence, the threat of conflict or war. Sociopolitical drivers that can cause migration include political instability, security and defense concerns, conflict or the threat of conflict, infrastructure problems, and inadequate or limited urban services. At the same time, the attractive factors related to the sociopolitical dimension of the destination are related to family unification, independence and freedom, integration and social cohesion, provision of food and other material goods, as well as access and affordability of services (health care, education, public services and transportation).² Third, ecological factors include environmental factors, such as climate change and the availability of natural resources, that cause individuals to migrate in search of more favorable ecological conditions. Climate change (including extreme weather events), failure of the country's production or food shortages are driving factors, compared to the abundance of natural resources, minerals and a favorable climate that are considered attractive factors of better migration,³ prospects for capital formation, industrial and technical innovations, as well as the pursuit of specialized education.⁴ Sociopolitical factors are related to ethnicity, religion, race, culture, family conflicts, the search for independence, the threat of conflict or war. Sociopolitical drivers that can cause migration include political instability, security and defense concerns, conflict or threat of conflict, infrastructure problems, and inadequate or limited urban services. At the same time, the attractive factors related to the sociopolitical dimension of the destination are related to family unification, independence and freedom, integration and social cohesion, provision of food and other material goods, as well as access and affordability of services (health care, education, public services and transportation).⁵ Third, ecological factors include environmental factors, such as climate change and

¹Hagen-Zanker, J. Why do people migrate? A review of the theoretical literature. A Review of the Theoretical Literature (January 2008). Maastricht Graduate School of Governance Working Paper No. Haug, S. (2008). Migration networks and migration decision-making. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 34(4), 585-605.

²Adserà, A., Boix, C., Guzi, M., & Pytliková, M. Political Factors as Drivers of International Migration. (2016).

³Kraal, K., & Vertovec, S. Citizenship in European cities: Immigrants, local politics and integration policies. Routledge, (2017).

⁴Hagen-Zanker, J. Why do people migrate? A review of the theoretical literature. A Review of the Theoretical Literature (January 2008). Maastricht Graduate School of Governance Working Paper No. Haug, S. (2008). Migration networks and migration decision-making. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 34(4), 585-605

⁵Adserà, A., Boix, C., Guzi, M., & Pytliková, M. Political Factors as Drivers of International Migration, (2016).

the availability of natural resources, that cause individuals to migrate in search of more favorable ecological conditions. Climate change (including extreme weather events), failure of the country's production or lack of food are driving factors, against the abundance of natural resources, minerals and favorable climate that are considered attractive factors for migration.¹ This paper modestly aims to provide some recommendations for the creation and modification of policies to prevent illegal migration, and the re-integration into society of returned migrants. This is a primary step towards further analyzing the phenomenon of migration. Each data constitutes a source to be studied and to make a more in-depth and profiled analysis, giving others the opportunity to analyze the phenomenon of migration from other perspectives.

Types of Migration and their Consequences

Theories have drawn up different classifications of migration. The first division is based on the division of political boundaries. Thus, internal migration involves movement between villages, towns and districts. The other type of migration is transnational migration, defined as migration that occurs across country borders.²

Another classification of migration is related to social status, points of travel and periodicity of movement. Stepwise migration is the type where the migration is characterized as hierarchical and starts from a small place to a larger area. Thus the person who leaves the country of origin goes to several subsequent destinations. Circular migration involves cyclical migration experiences between country of origin and destination, characterized by at least one migration and return. Migrants divide their time between two locations, spending long periods of time in the country of origin and migration. Seasonal migration is a very common form of migration, which is characterized by high labor demands in a certain period of time in a certain destination, mainly for agriculture. Return migration refers to the repeated return of migrants to their country of origin, voluntarily or not. Chain migration is the type of migration where individuals from specific destinations follow their relatives to migrate.³ An important classification of migration is based on the decision-making approach. Migration is classified as voluntary or involuntary, taking into account several sociopolitical factors, e.g. fear of ill-treatment attributed to race, religion, political affiliation, nationality, being part of social groups, fleeing war, armed conflict, civil war, natural disasters. But they can be man-made; famine or development factors for example, essential infrastructure projects, including airports, roads, dams, seaports, etc. Voluntary migration is based on a person's wishes, initiatives and free

¹Kraal, K., & Vertovec, S. Citizenship in European cities: Immigrants, local politics and integration policies. Routledge, (2017).

²Dingle, H., & Drake, V. A. What is migration? Bioscience, (2007). 57(2), 113-121.

³King, R. Theories and typologies of migration: an overview and a primer. Sussex Research Center, (2012).

choices to live in a better country and improve financial status, among other factors. Involuntary migration occurs when the individual is forced to leave the country of origin due to unfavorable environmental and political situations and conditions.¹ Migration is a complex phenomenon that has an impact on individuals, families, societies, economies and cultures, both in the country of origin and destination. Migration affects the physical, mental, emotional health and well-being of migrants themselves, people in the country of origin and people in the country of destination². People migrate to improve their well-being and often individuals who migrate for economic reasons move to a country more developed in order to have greater material advantages. However, the effects of migration on psychological and emotional well-being are not very clear. The process of moving from one cultural environment to another can be a very stressful process with potentially negative impacts on mental health. According to the World Health Organization,³ migration usually does not improve social well-being, but often results in the exposure of immigrants to social stress and increased risk of mental disorders.⁴ Migration, even under the best conditions, whether planned or not, involves a series of events that can be very traumatic, with certain levels of stress and that can put people at risk. The process involves moving away, being separated from family and traditional values, and settling into new social and cultural situations. For many immigrants, social integration is difficult and often impossible. Language problems, culturally different behaviors, the presence of prejudices and discriminations increase the degree of difficulty for integration into social life and adaptation to a new environment. Migrants are affected by social inequalities and are likely to go through several experiences during the migration process, such as legal, social, cultural, economic, behavioral and communication barriers, which harm their physical, mental and social well-being. Besides facing poverty and social exclusion, which have negative impacts on health, the health of migrants is also largely determined by the availability, access, acceptability and quality of services in the host environment.⁵ As migration is increasingly becoming part of the lives of many peoples, the health implications of migration and the health of migrants must be recognized as an important issue in health policy making. The social inequalities that exist in any society and between different societies mean that the right to good health is unequally distributed among different population groups. Migrants often find themselves among the individuals

¹Sirkeci, I. Migration from Turkey to Germany: An ethnic approach. *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 29, 189-207, (2003).

²Ates, M. Albanian Demography and Its Relation with Migration. *International Balkan Annual Conference*, (2013, July).

³Stillman, S., McKenzie, D., & Gibson, J. Migration and mental health: Evidence from a natural experiment. *The World Bank* (2007).

⁴Stillman, S., McKenzie, D., & Gibson, J. Migration and mental health: Evidence from a natural experiment. *The World Bank* (2007).

⁵ Faist, T. *The Transnationalized Social Question: Migration and the Politics of Social Inequalities in the Twenty-First Century*. Oxford University Press (2018).

most affected by inequality of services.¹ Individual biological, physical, behavioral and social factors, interventions and access to social and health services determine an individual's health. Migrants are likely to experience specific health-related challenges due to the nature of being a migrant. Social determinants of migrant health relate to factors influencing the migration process, reasons for migration, mode of travel, length of stay and migrants' language skills, race, legal status. These determinants of migrant health are complex and interrelated. Immigrants can come from different backgrounds and different situations, and once they immigrate their status often changes dramatically. Different categories of immigrants can have very different experiences. The determinants of migrants' health are shaped by their experiences and situations in countries of origin, transit and destination. Migration itself adds a particular dimension to the social determinants of health, as being a migrant can make people more vulnerable to negative impacts on their health. Migration is not itself a health risk, but the conditions surrounding the migration process can increase health vulnerability.² This is especially true for those who migrate involuntarily, in an attempt to escape natural or man-made disasters and human rights violations, and those who find themselves in an irregular situation, such as those who migrate through clandestine or end up in exploitative situations by traffickers.³ Many migrant workers who lack proper immigration documentation constitute a large and vulnerable group of the population. Migrant workers, in particular undocumented workers, are often involved in dangerous and degrading work, exposing them to occupational hazards, but have no health insurance. It is contrary to notions of social justice that these migrant groups who are at high risk of abuse, exploitation and discrimination have less access to health and social services.⁴ Health risk factors are often also related to the legal status of migrants, determining the level of access to health and social services. Further contributors include poverty, stigma, discrimination, housing, education, occupational health, social exclusion, gender, language and cultural differences, separation from family and socio-cultural norms.⁵

Theories on Migration

The first set of contemporary theories designed to 'explain' migration are the neoclassical ones. These theories emphasize that the main reasons that push an individual to migrate are socioeconomic factors. Neoclassical theories are based on

¹Carballo, M., & Nerukar, A. Migration, refugees, and health risks. *Emerging infectious diseases*, (2001) 7(3 Suppl), 556.

²Stillman, S., McKenzie, D., & Gibson, J. Migration and mental health: Evidence from a natural experiment. *The World Bank* (2007)

³ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2011

⁴Davies, A. A., Basten, A., & Frattini, C. Migration: a social determinant of the health of migrants. *Eurohealth*, (2009), 16(1), 10-12.

⁵ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2011

wage, employment, labor market demand and supply differences. Neoclassical economic theory presupposes that individuals try to maximize their utility: individuals “search” for the place of residence that maximizes their well-being. This approach to the economics of immigration makes it clear that both, the sending and the receiving country, can have a very large impact on the number and composition of the migratory flow by changing migration policies.¹ Basically, all the theories that explain migration run along the same lines: Migration occurs due to demand-pull factors that drive migrants to industrial countries, supply-push factors that push them out of their countries, and the network of friends and relatives already in industrial societies serving as anchor communities for new arrivals. There are a number of economic and social conditions and circumstances related to fulfilling the category of driving factors to migrate.² Thus the low economic growth combined with a visible inequality in the distribution of income and its administration, overpopulation of some areas, uncontrolled growth of unemployment, great pressure on property and functional division, armed conflicts, abuse of rights of human beings, discrimination and inhuman and degrading treatment, as well as natural disasters and ecological destruction are mentioned in the driving factors of migration. Meanwhile, attractive factors are related to security and economic development in the country/area of destination, with the real possibility of employment, as well as the possibility of institutional integration and adaptation³. But, others authors think otherwise, they explain that with the evolution of the phenomenon of migration, the need for a re-examination of the emotional, psychological and cultural values that accompany moving from one country to another is being noticed more and more. Migrants themselves, in addition to the often positive developments regarding the family or personal economy, are offering in their experiences such feelings as regret, nostalgia, some hesitation and shame. Thanks to the approach of neoclassical theories, migration has been perceived mostly as a complex product of push and pull factors that mainly affect economic units and household incomes, but that paid much less attention to the wider social, cultural and psychological framework, at the national or international level, therefore also welfare in a real plan.⁴ Before the migration process begins, the matter of choosing to move is not a simple act of moving from a previous place of residence to a new one. In itself, the process of migrating involves much more than a physical movement. Migration is often defined as "one of the historical forces that have shaped the world", or as "an integral part of human

¹Kurekova, L. Theories of migration: Conceptual review and empirical testing in the context of the EU East-West flows. In *Interdisciplinary conference on Migration. Economic Change, Social Challenge*, 2011, April (pp. 901-918).

²McAuliffe, M., & Ruhs, M. (2017). *World Migration Report 2018*. Geneva: International Organization for Migration

³Kopliku, B., Dibra, N., & Krymbi, E. (2015). *The Landscape changes of the city of Shkodra as a consequence of Internal Migration*

⁴Kerswill, P. Migration and language. *Sociolinguistics/Soziolinguistik. An international handbook of the science of language and society*, (2006). 3, 1-27

behavior", thus referring to the fact that we are dealing with a social phenomenon, as old as human history itself. Movement, as the essence of migration, has been characterized from time to time by diversity and different colors. This term has often been used to describe movements of various kinds, however nowadays the emphasis is mainly placed on voluntary movement, which limits the range of behaviors that can be called "migratory".¹

Migration and Albania

Most explanations of mass migration emphasize economic factors. Thus, the need for survival during moments of crisis, but also higher wages and greater and more secure employment opportunities, are causes linked to migration and the economy. In their beginnings, most Albanian migrants thought of migration as a temporary solution, to respond to wrong policies and economic collapse. In the initial conception, Albanian migrants moved from the country to work, earn money elsewhere and to return again.² Migration is considered to be the most important factor that constitutes the demographic structure of Albania. Many researchers³ suggest that economic reasons are the first among the factors that cause migration. Although the Albanian economy showed some improvements in recent years, there are often large fluctuations that cause waves of migration. In this case, it is possible to say that migration will continue to be influential in shaping the demographics of the country. This is because migration has been seen and continues to be considered as the best way of coping with the economic conditions of the country⁴. The lack of freedom in all its dimensions has been one of the other reasons for migration. The second motive is related to freedom and personal self-expression. Interviews with immigrants and future immigrants have shown that the country of origin evokes feelings similar to life in prison. Research by Nicola Mai revealed that young Albanians could only 'find themselves' by emigrating; they imagine their future self-realization as attainable only outside Albania. Emigration is seen as a way out of the miserable and boring life in Albania, characterized by the difficulties of working (and, after 1990, finding work), the lack of resources and material goods, the denial of free time, the lack of pleasures and away from control and supervision. In this form, emigration also became a strategy of political resistance against an extremely authoritarian political culture.⁵ The events

¹Ikonomi, L. Human Rights of Irregular Immigrants: A Challenge for the Universality of Human Rights. *Academicus International Scientific Journal*, (2013). 4(08), 89-100.

²Germenji, E., & Swinnen, J. F. Human capital, market imperfections, poverty and migration: evidence from Albania. *Licos Discussion Papers*, (2005). (157).

³Barjaba K. Contemporary patterns in Albanian emigration. *South-East Europe Review* 2000, 3(2): Barjaba, K. Contemporary patterns in Albanian emigration. *SEER-South-East Europe Review for Labour and Social Affairs*, (2000) (02), 57-64. Barjaba, K. *Shqiptarët Këta Ikës të Mëdhenj*. Tirana: Korbi, (2003)

⁴Ates, M. Albanian Demography and Its Relation with Migration. *International Balkan Annual Conference*. (2013, July)

⁵ Mai, N. The Albanian Diaspora-in-the-making: media, migration and social exclusion. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, (2005) 31(3): 543-6

of 1989-1991 in Eastern Europe marked a new phase of migration in Europe. The political transformation of the communist regimes also brought about a transformation in migratory dynamics. The isolated citizens already sought to be free citizens and exercise their right to leave and migrate, especially to Western European countries.¹ Radical changes took place in Albania as well. Social and economic transformation of the country happened rapidly in a short time. The first distinguishing feature is the extreme transformation of the economy and politics, from a centralized economy to a neoliberal economy. The second distinguishing element of the post-communist Albanian transformation is the high rate of migration. Albania and its population have been significantly affected by this phenomenon since the beginning of the 1990s. A dominant trend has been that of Albanian citizens emigrating mainly to rich countries in Europe, but also to North America and Australia. Although, the main recorded waves are in the 1990s and 2000s, emigration from Albania continues today.² Albanian migration flows have been the result of several push and pull factors that operate at the individual, family, community and national level, and have changed over time. Researchers divide the evolution of Albanian migration since 1990 into four periods. The first period, beginning with the fall of the communist government, was from 1990 to 1992. Immigration was officially banned during the communist regime, and the initial political instability, social unrest, and economic decline associated with the fall of the government led to an increase in international migration. Between 1993 and 1996, persistent poverty, unemployment, a declining public sector, poor access to public services, weak infrastructure, wage differentials, and rapid development and economic rates in neighboring countries brought back the wave of migration. At the end of 1996, the collapse of a number of pyramid schemes caused another period of international migration.³ Thus, the estimates of Albanians living abroad in 2001 are in the range of 600,000-700,000 or about one fifth of the resident population. These results are high numbers, for a country where international migration is a relatively recent phenomenon.⁴ Albania's sudden and rapid migration became one of the most dramatic flows in the 'new European migration map' of the 1990s. But this was not the first time in their history that Albanians had emigrated. Historical documents on the demographic movements of the Albanian population before 1945 are not many and should be considered with reservations anyway. Data on this phenomenon are usually obtained from historical books or the diaries of various travelers who have

¹Carletto, C., Davis, B., Stampini, M., & Zezza, A. A country on the move: international migration in post-communist Albania. *International Migration Review*, (2006), 40(4), 767-785

²Vathi, Z., & Zajmi, I. Children and migration in Albania: latest trends and protection measures available. Tirana, Terre des homes (2017)

³Zeza, A., Carletto, G., & Davis, B. Moving away from poverty: a spatial analysis of poverty and migration in Albania. *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans Online*, (2005), 7(2), 175-193

⁴Carletto, C., Davis, B., Stampini, M., & Zezza, A. A country on the move: international migration in post-communist Albania. *International Migration Review*, (2006), 40(4), 767-785

traveled through this territory, which are not always complete and documentary reliability.¹ During the years under the communist regime, Albania took a series of measures to stop migration. Attempts to leave were punished with years in prison and were considered the greatest treason against the motherland. Increasing sentiment of patriotism, use of barbed wire fences, strong surveillance of land and sea border points were other forms of deterring migration).² The propagandist view also emphasized the negative human consequences of Albanian emigration - the tragedy of departure, the uncertainty and discomfort of long journeys, the tragedy of the woman left behind or the difficulties of adapting to strange places. The concept of curves was used strongly, emphasizing the negative connotations it carried, such as separation, tears, suffering, loss and destruction. As a result of all the preventive measures, the restriction of travel, the ban on the practice of external or internal migration, between the years 1950 and 1989 only about 20,000 people managed to leave Albania.³ Albanian emigration represents the largest departure compared to the population of any country that has faced economic transition. According to estimates, on average every family had at least one of its members in emigration. In the Albanian context, emigration is seen not only as a social element, but also as very important economically. According to UNDP, Albania is a country very dependent on remittances, which have been growing and in most cases have exceeded the amount of foreign investments, exports or aid received from international institutions. ⁴The first period of Albanian migration took place in the mid-1990s, when about 5,000 Albanians, frustrated by travel bans abroad, entered some of the Western embassies in Tirana. The chaos of Albania's first democratic elections led to the first exodus to southern Italy in March 1991 where 25,000 migrants were accepted and settled in Italy. The second exodus took place in August, but most of the 20,000 arrivals were repatriated. The Italian authorities argued that while the 'first wave' migrants could be treated as refugees due to the tense political situation, the 'second wave' followed democratic elections and therefore could not be granted refugee status. Meanwhile, a large-scale but unaccounted for exodus took place in Greece, where many young men were crossing the southern mountains to find hope blocked for decades.⁵ Thus during the years 1991-93 it was estimated that 300,000 Albanians left the country, the vast majority to Greece and Italy. Images of overcrowded ships bound for Brindisi and Bari have become part of the iconography of the mass migration of the Albanian people.⁶

¹King, R. Southern Europe in the changing global map of migration. In *Eldorado or Fortress? Migration in Southern Europe* (pp. 3-26). Palgrave Macmillan, London (2000)

²Bërxfholi, A., Doka, D. and Asche, H. (Demographic Atlas of Albania. Tirana: Ilar, (2003)

³Bon, N. G. Movement matters: The case of southern Albania. *Ethnologie française*, (2017), (2), 301-308.

⁴INSTAT, 2002

⁵King R. dhe Vullnetari J. "Migration and Development in Albania" (Migracioni dhe Zhvillimi në Shqipëri) Working Paper C5, Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty, University of Sussex, Brighton, (2003).

⁶Davies, A. A., Basten, A., & Frattini, C. Migration: a social determinant of the health of migrants. *Eurohealth*, (2009). 16(1), 10-12.

Another important moment for migration includes the year 1997, where the collapse of the pyramid system, supported mainly by remittances from immigrants, financially destroyed a large part of Albanian families.¹ In the first months of 1997, the collapse of pyramid schemes where private savings were invested, led to a period of political and economic turmoil, also marked by civil war. This chaos produced another exodus. Initially 10,600 Albanians were accepted by Italy, but then migrations by sea were repelled in tragic circumstances, especially on March 29, 1997, where as a result of a collision between an Italian coastal ship and a boat with Albanian migrants, 87 people, many of them whose women and children lost their lives.

Conclusions

Albania has known since the beginning of the post-socialist transition one of the largest contemporary migratory processes in the world in terms of size (as a percentage of the current population) and intensity of international migration.² Albanian migration continues and in all likelihood will continue even in the future. This conclusion is based on the limited statistics for current flows and which show that the intention to migrate has increased from 44% of the population surveyed in 2007 to 52% in 2018. Consequently, Albania, although at the end of its third decade of international migration, is still far from completing the transition of its migratory and equally far from a situation where the migratory balance may mark the beginning of a transition towards a country with a significant level of immigration. Despite the fact that the two neighboring countries, Greece and Italy, continue to be the main countries where Albanian migration is concentrated, their relative importance in the future will decrease. Germany and the USA are currently the most desired countries for Albanian migration in the future. These changes in the driving factors and geography of Albanian international migration are also reflected in the sociodemographic structure and the quality of its flows. Young people in their late 20s, the most educated and qualified, the employed and those with medium and high incomes are more willing to migrate. While almost a decade ago, young people in their early 20s, with a lower educational and professional level, the unemployed and those with low income wanted to migrate more. Consequently, Albania will be affected even more in the future by the phenomenon of migration of brains and qualified persons, which will have negative consequences. Meanwhile, even returned migrants, whose return curve peaked in the years 2010-2013 (Greek economic crisis) and 2016-2017 (asylum-seekers rejected by Germany), want to migrate more than those who have not been in migration. This, on the one hand, shows that the process of their re-integration has not been successful.³ On the other hand, it shows that the country did

¹ Leka, A. Albanian migration during the postcommunist transition and the European integration in global era. An intercultural reflection. *Academicus International Scientific Journal*, (2013), 4(08), 201-220.

²World Bank (2016a) *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2016*. Washington DC: World Bank.

³ World Bank, *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2016*. Washington DC: World Bank.

not know how to properly use their financial, human and social capitals for the development of the country's economy. If migration continues, efforts should be made to manage it in such a way as to minimize its negative consequences (disorderly departure, brain drain, exploitation), and maximize its positive impacts (productive use of migrants' remittances, modernizing impact of social remittances, ties to homeland, return from migration, brain gain, etc.). Based on the increasing educational profile of potential migrants, opportunities can be seen for agreements between countries regarding the regulated migration of skilled persons, always keeping in mind the risks of brain drain and skills. This policy suggestion is made because skilled migrants (through higher remittance savings, investment, and greater human and social capital) contribute more, when they return, to themselves, the country of origin and the host country (a triple -win situation). Consequently, the prior education and training of potential migrants (taking into account the labor market requirements of the EU countries) can be an alternative, which can also be achieved through a close cooperation with the host country.

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Conflict Management in Organizations Case of Albania

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Abstract

Nowadays, people spent almost one-third or even more of their life at work. During these hours relations with colleagues play an important role in the overall well-being of the employees, leading to job satisfaction and high performance. Sometimes, the workload, the pressure to finish the work on time, to respect deadlines, and even the daily relations with coworkers, etc., can lead to some conflicts between employees. The way employees manage conflicts happening in organizations has a crucial impact on their well-being and the culture of the organization, making conflict management an important element for human adaptability. The aim of this article is to study conflict management styles that employees in different banks in Albania use in their everyday work. Data analyses are based on the interpretation of forty-six semi-structured interviews with employees in five banks in the city of Tirana. So, qualitative design analyses are used. This study shows us that the dominant style to manage conflicts at work according to the sample that participated in this study is the compromising style.

Keywords: Conflict management, conflict management style, organization, bank

Introduction

Due to different styles of communication, cultural backgrounds, work perspectives, and political and religious beliefs, conflicts in the workplace are an inevitable part of human interactions. Conflict, in fact, is a complex process, because it involves the interaction of cognitive, psychological, physiological, and contextual dynamics (Madalina, 2016). The most essential part of the conflict is the employee's perception and their reaction to it.

Employees come from different cultures and bring to work their background, their beliefs, and their attitudes in relation to colleagues and the workplace. They also have different viewpoints and approaches to resolving conflicts.

The way that employees manage these conflicts plays a crucial role and has an important impact on employees' performance, job satisfaction, overall well-being, and the culture of the organization.

Literature Review

Nowadays, people spent almost one-third or even more of their life at work. The quality of the relationships and communication in the workplace has a positive impact on the overall well-being of the employees, leading to job satisfaction and high performance. Sometimes, the workload, the pressure to finish the work on time, to respect deadlines, and even the daily relations with colleagues, etc., can lead to some conflicts between employees. Conflict is an inevitable part of human recourses in organizations (Pembi et al., 2023).

Even though conflicts are seen as a negative part of the competition at work, conflicts have also a lot of benefits, because due to their dynamics, the organization avoids stagnation and uniformity.

According to Riaz and Jamal (2022), conflict is seen as a state of dissonance or disagreement caused by the actual or perceived opposition of needs, values, and interests between people working together.

Conflicts have a cost not only for the relationship but also for the individuals and organization. The answer to resolving or managing conflicts is in the words people use. Words can build bridges or create barriers (McConnon & McConnon, 2008, pg. 16-17).

Conflict management refers to the process of using preferred strategies to handle a conflict with the goals of limiting negative impact and enhancing positive impact (Wang, 2015)

Baro and Robert (1992) explained the typical reactions of employees in dealing with conflict at the workplace and the five modes of management conflict such as fight, avoidance, adaptation, collaboration, and compromise.

When we speak about **the fight** management conflict model, we are speaking about almost zero cooperation and a high level of assertiveness.

When we speak about **avoiding** management conflict model, we are speaking about zero assertiveness and a low and at the same time high level of cooperation.

When we speak about the **adaptation** management conflict model, we are speaking of low assertiveness and high availability for cooperation.

When we are speaking of the **compromise** management conflict model, we are speaking of a moderate level of assertiveness and cooperation.

When we are speaking of the **collaboration** management conflict model, we are speaking of high levels of assertiveness and cooperation (Madalina, 2016).

The way employees manage conflicts happening in organizations has a crucial impact on their well-being and the culture of the organization, making conflict management an important element for human adaptability.

Aim of the study

This article aims to identify the most common management conflict style that is used by employees in the banks of Albania in their everyday life at work.

Research question

What is the most common management conflict style used by employees in banks in Albania?

Research method

To understand the conflict management styles in the bank employees it is used the qualitative design. It is chosen this design because of the difficult previous experience to get the necessary data through the quantitative design with the employees in the banks.

Sample: In this study participated forty-six employees from five banks in the city of Tirana, Albania. It was conducted Semi-structured interviews to understand how they deal with conflicts in the workplace, as an inseparable part of the work, and what management style conflicts they use.

Procedure: First it was obtained permission from the general director of the bank and then it was conducted semi-structured interviews with the target group. The ethical issues of anonymity and sincerity are guaranteed. Then the aim of the study was explained to them. Interviews were conducted in the period February-April 2023. One interview lasted approximately twenty minutes.

Data analysis: Data analysis was carried out based on the interpretative phenomenological approach. It was transcribed all the interviews one by one. Each of them has been analyzed and then two themes were identified.

Results

Using semi-structured interviews, this article tried to identify the conflict management style that bank employees use in their daily work. After analyzing the responses to the interviews two important themes were identified as conflicts among employees are related to stress and compromising style as a dominant style in managing work conflicts.

Conflicts among Employees are Related to Stress

Even though conflicts have a positive side because to some extent they impact the employee's development, they are always related to stress. Taking into consideration the long hours working in the bank, continuous communication with the clients, not

to mention here also conflicts among colleagues - all of these lead to high levels of stress. Below are shown some of the responses of the bank employees who participated in this study.

“I just don’t like conflict, they give me so much stress” (R9. Male, 27 years old).

“When you get involved in a conflict, you should almost have two qualities: Empathy and self-control.....but in any case stress is inevitable” (R32. Female, 28 years old).

“Conflicts make me think about a lot of things,,,,,,I simply get furious....” (R45. Female, 32 years old).

“In general, If a conflict is related to work issues, I try to use the normative acts to find a solution,,,,,,but.... in any case a conflict drains my energy and causes me to lose concentration for work ” (R7. Male 32 years old).

Compromising Style as a Dominant Style in Managing Work Conflicts

When it comes to conflict, employees part of this study use and evaluate a compromising conflict management style. They want the best solution not only for them but also for their colleagues and the organization and that’s why they try to find a middle way to satisfy both needs. In this case, they sometimes make a little sacrifice in order to satisfy colleagues’ needs. This is shown even in their responses below.

“Depending on the conflict,,,,,,yes I can make compromises” (R17. Female, 42 years old)

“Hmmm.... I get a little bit furious when it comes to conflicts,,,, but when I calm down I try to find a win-win solution for both parties or the best solution even though this can make us sacrifice a little bit” (R6. Male, 38 years old)

“.....conflicts at work?? I try to find a solution which is compromising” (R28. Female 34 years old).

“I have a philosophy of give and take, in this way, I believe human relationships work” (R13. Male 39 years old).

“When we find a common solution, things go better” (R21. Female 28 years old)

“In general I am tolerant, but not always...Most of the time I let my colleagues have their way” (R14. Female 24 years old)

“I insist to make a compromise because I work every day with my colleagues and I want to see them satisfied, too” (R 41. Male 36 years old)

“I always try to work and negotiate with others to come up with a solution” (R3. Female 44 years old).

“I am able to find a “common ground” (R 31. Male 29 years old).

Conclusions

In the end, conflicts are an inseparable part of people's lives and the way people react to them plays an important role in their overall well-being and their relationships with others. This study revealed that the most common conflict management style used by the target group of employees selected from five banks in Albania in this study is the compromising style.

Employees, part of this study tried to find out the best way to resolve a conflict at work that suits everyone involved, making them partially win and also partially sacrifice. So, neither of them is fully winner or fully loser because when it comes to managing conflicts at work, the organization's needs are at the top. In this case, the target group of this study revolve somewhere between the middle level of assertiveness and the middle level of cooperation as a manner to manage work conflict. On the one hand, this is a positive way in finding a mutual solution and the best one to satisfy all parties. On the other hand, this may lead to exhaustion of the employees and sometimes to burnout since the work in bank has to deal with and communicate with a lot of clients.

At any time the best way to manage and resolve different conflicts, not only in organizations but also in everyday life is to use effective communication.

Further studies should be done to see how conflict management styles affect the overall performance and job satisfaction of employees in different work sectors.

Limitations

Lack of sincerity in responding. Since the interviewees were contacted through the general director it was a bit difficult to get a real response about the conflicts in the bank.

This data cannot be generalized, due to a low number of participants.

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The Perspective of Supervisory Authorities in Albanian Financial System: Markets Standardization According to the EU Directives

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Abstract

The financial system in Albania is composed of two financial authorities and institutions, which in their missions have the monetary policies, issue of money, consumer protection, economic and financial stability, etc. The Albanian financial system is composed of two main entities such as the Bank of Albania and the Albanian Financial Supervision Authority. Both of these authorities have a fundamental role in the economy of the country, as they are not only the supervisors and regulators of the markets, such as the second level banks which are supervised by the Bank of Albania, as well as of the non-banking markets, such as the insurance markets, the securities markets as well as the markets of voluntary private pension funds, which are supervised by the Financial Supervision Authority. They are fundamental for the economy of the country since without the presence of these entities, the markets would be without a compass and full of complications that could distort free trade and encourage abuses and speculations against individuals, in security of banks activities and private firms. However, these regulators of these banking and financial markets, certainly in their functions of supervision and drafting of legislations, by-laws and regulations of the operation of these markets always refer to the Directives of the EU organizations. This paper will bring the perspectives and cooperation between each other, the functioning of these institutions, as well as the harmonization and implementation of different directives according to the markets, which regulate and turn the directives into legal and by-laws in our country.

Keywords: Bank of Albania, Albania financial supervisory authority, strategies, EU directives

Introduction

For years, the supervisory and regulatory institutions, respectively the Bank of Albania and the Albania Financial Supervision Authority, have been and are the two domes of our financial system, which have under their jurisdiction the second level banking markets and the insurance, securities and funds markets of voluntary private pensions. The main objectives of the two institutions such as the Bank of Albania (BSH), which focuses mainly on the stability of the financial system, also to have public trust in the institutions, markets and financial infrastructure through the regulation, licensing and supervision of banks and other financial institutions. They also regularly identify and analyze market risks and threats to financial stability, and the Financial Supervision Authority (AMF) has as its objective the regulation of the activity of supervised entities, the provision of state supervision over the securities market, the insurance market, voluntary pension schemes and other financial activities that are supervised by it. The role of these authorities is always very important since they are precisely those institutions that continuously focus not only on the supervision of the markets they cover, but they continuously draft rules for each market in our financial system, as well as coherently with market demands, they issue legal and by-law acts, which make it possible to orient the markets. Through these legal and sub-legal acts or the regulations of these markets that they have under their jurisdiction, they are issued and come from the directives of the European organizations for each market. European organizations aim at the unification and standardization of markets as well as their stability. In the focus of the two main entities, the aim is definitely to protect consumers, individuals and companies and business firms. The research questions on which this work will be based are related to: What will be the main challenges and perspectives of these regulatory entities in the future? Second, how quickly do these institutions respond to the demands of the markets they supervise through the drafting of legal and by-laws? Do they have a unified approach in their medium and long-term strategies so that our local markets have no barriers and are more dynamic? How quickly are these directives of the EU organizations for each market, absorbed and harmonized by regulating legal and sub-legal acts? This study will try to answer all these questions as effectively and rationally as possible in order to finally have the clearest conclusions on the dynamics of the markets in Albania.

Literature Review

Different authors such as (DEWATRIPONT & TIROLE, 2012) have analyzed how banking regulation starts from a model according to the optimal capital structure of firms. This model shows how the relationship of managers is endangered by the holders of the capital holders with those of the debt holders where they are the worst in relation to their clients as far as the exercise of control is concerned. As far as the banks are concerned, all debt holders (depositors) in most cases are not able to exercise control, so it is called the "hypothesis of representation". Another argument

is addressed for "equity provision", a term suggested by (Kashyap, 2008). Also, we can say (Dewatripont & Tirole, 1994) suggest another form of automatic stabilizers, namely procyclical deposit insurance premiums. There may be a small effect of policy rate and uncertainty on the probability of a financial crisis due to tighter policies (Svensson & Wagner, , 2015) only since monetary policy may have a limited power to influence supply. of credit (Romer, 1990) and these lower policy rates may actually reduce asset price bubbles, rather than creating them. Macro policies are emerging and are necessary for financial stability. These can provide the use of new financial levers that can increase the dangerous credit boom and excessive risk taking by finance. By reviewing the literature on the integration of regulatory capital and liquidity intermediaries' instruments (Paries, 2015); (Freixas & Xavier , 2015). These robust policies available to the authorities at all times include targeted increases in capital requirements, as well as counter-cyclical capital requirements, as well as liquidity and capital reserve requirements, as well as all requirements and measures affecting loan eligibility. A loan ceiling and ratio to value for mortgages.

Bank portfolios are complicated and often difficult to value, so transparency would reduce asymmetric market information by promoting effective market discipline (Atif, 2012), (Petrella & Resti, 2013). Increased risk awareness by all parties (eg banks, supervisors and potential market investors) has also been argued to reduce risk exposure (Bischof & Daske, 2012). Always a higher transparency of them makes it possible for supervisors to carry out deeper analysis from the outside, thus increasing their accountability (Tarullo, 2014). Financial stability refers to the situation in which transactions in the financial market can be affected by prices set normally according to demand and supply, as well as financial instability when large fluctuations in the prices of financial assets are recorded. Similarly, the author Mishkin argues that financial stability always exists when we have a diversification of savings that meets the possibility of investment (Mishkin, 1992). (Akram, 2006) has argued how the role of central banks maintains financial stability, which definitely requires a deeper analysis of possible threats to stability, as well as forecasts in risk management. Also, the role of central banks is in financial stability, which is their main focus.

Meanwhile, Martin Čihák argues that there are always reasons why central banks should definitely pay attention to stability and sustainability in the financial sector, (Čihák, 2006). He also argues that the development of the Financial Stability Report by the central banks of each country plays a role in ensuring financial stability and increases awareness of the risks to financial intermediaries in the economic environment; also alert financial institutions and all market actors for a possible collective impact that may be affected by their individual actions; which is a kind of way to establish a financial stability and an improvement of the financial infrastructure and this makes possible the role of the central banks to protect the financial system.

Challenges and Perspectives of Regulatory Authorities

The Bank of Albania

The Bank of Albania is the largest supervisory financial institution in our banking system and its main objective is to achieve and maintain price stability. The Bank of Albania is autonomous and independent and does not depend on any other institution in our country to achieve its main objective.

The Bank of Albania is a bank that has all state capital and reports only to the Assembly of the Republic of Albania. In its structure, there is a Supervisory Council, which is led by the Governor of the Bank, who also acts as its General Executive Director.

The Bank of Albania, through its main objective of achieving and maintaining price stability, helps and influences the sustainable and long-term growth of the country's economy, as well as helps the stability and development of the financial system. Of course, this objective is realized through the implementation of monetary policy in an independent manner.

Since the Bank of Albania is the institution that issues the national currency, it contributes to the normal functioning of the payment system with the aim of: ensuring a safe, fast circulation of it, at a low cost, with the aim of reducing risks and to maintain the stability of financial institutions and markets.

The Bank of Albania is a regulator that regulates the banking market, licenses and supervises banks and other financial institutions in order to eliminate risks and create confidence in citizens against threats to financial stability.

What are the functions of the Bank of Albania?

Being the supervisory monetary authority in the country, the Bank of Albania has several functions to achieve its objectives:

- **Financial stability.** The Bank of Albania must guarantee that the banking and financial system as a whole has stability and performs efficiently.
- **Monetary policy.** In order to achieve its objectives, the Bank of Albania drafts, approves and implements the country's monetary policy.
- **Supervision.** The Bank of Albania is the entity that licenses or may revoke the license for second level banks,
- **Issuance of money.** The Bank of Albania has the exclusive right to issue banknotes and the national currency and supplies the country's economy.
- **Currency exchange.** The Bank of Albania is the entity that designs, approves and implements the foreign exchange regime, as well as the policy maker of the exchange rate in our country.
- **Foreign exchange reserves.** The Bank of Albania reserves and manages foreign exchange reserves in the Republic of Albania.

- **Fiscal agent and government advisor.** The Bank of Albania is an agent entity that acts in the capacity of a banker, is a fiscal agent advisor for the Government of the Republic of Albania.
- **Payment systems.** The Bank of Albania has a main task of promoting and guaranteeing the normal functioning of the national payment system.

Albanian Financial Supervisory Authority

The financial supervision authority is the second largest regulator in the financial system in our country. Under his jurisdiction are 3 markets that are supervised and regulated by him, as below;

1. Insurance market
2. Securities market
3. The market of voluntary private pension funds.

So, to fulfill its main objectives, which are as follows;

1. To regulate the activity of supervised entities,
2. To ensure the supervision of the securities market, the insurance market, as well as the voluntary pension market and other supervised financial activities, which are regulated and operate in accordance with the laws in force,

AMF exercises its first two functions:

- Regulatory Function;
- Supervisory function.

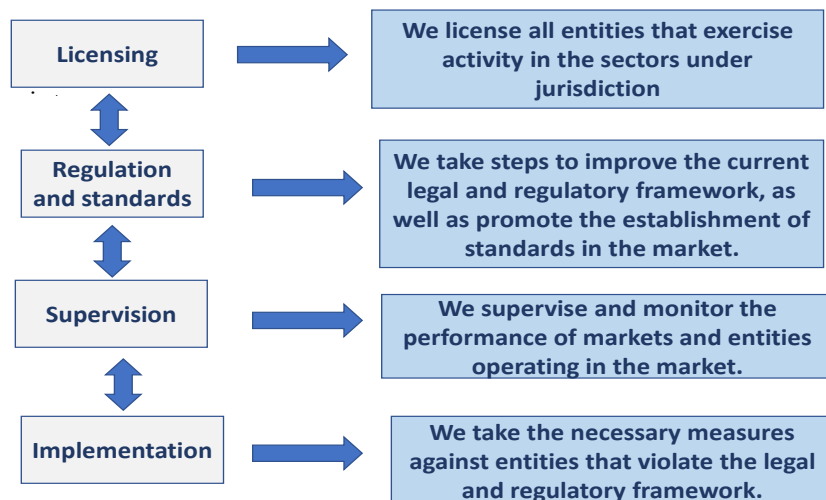
The activity of the Financial Supervision Authority regulates the improvement of the legal and regulatory framework, in the manner and function of creating a stable market and protecting the safety of consumers.

The activity of the Financial Supervision Authority is implemented through offside and on-site controls of the activities included in the visible license. The purpose of this activity is to protect the interests of investors and their security.

There are 4 main aspects of the AMF in exercising the functions and powers given by the law.

The aspects regulate the relationship of the regulatory body with the markets and their subjects:

Figure 1: The four aspects of the Financial Supervision Authority



Source: Albanian Financial Supervisory Authority

Cooperation with International Organizations

The rapid pace of development of the financial markets, as well as the unification of regulatory and supervisory standards, as well as the commitment of the regulators of other countries for their implementation, make cooperation with the counterpart institutions necessary. The goal is the exchange of experiences, as well as the involvement in international organizations and this is a primary task to bring a foreign expertise. At any time, international cooperation becomes necessary due to the need to harmonize the EU Directives and the implementation of the Stabilization-Association Agreement.

Membership of the International Association of Insurance Regulators (IAIS)

The Financial Supervision Authority of Albania (AFSA) is part of IAIS since 2001. IAIS was founded in 1994 and a representative from AFSA is a member of the executive committee. IAIS has 100 observers worldwide and represents the interests of regulators in about 130 countries around the world, or 97% of global premiums.

Membership in the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO)

IAIS has been a member of IOSCO since 1998. It is currently included in the European Regional Committee and a member of the Developing Markets Committee.

Membership of the International Organization of Pension Regulators (IOPS)

IOPS is an international organization that represents the interests of regulators in the field of private pensions. Since December 2006, AFSA is a member of IOPS.

Table 1: Cooperation of International Organizations

Memberships in International Organizations of Regulators	Year	Institution
IOSCO (International Organization of Securities Commissions)	1998	KLV (today ASFA)
IAIS (International Association of Insurance Regulators)	2001	AMS (today ASFA)
IOPS (International Organization of Pension Regulators)	2006	ASFA

Source: Albanian Financial Supervisory Authority

Alignment of legislation with European Directives

The supervisory and regulatory institutions of our country, in terms of harmonization with European Directives, has made progress in the approximation of legislation, especially in the field of banks, in the field of investment funds, in the field of private pension funds, in the field of the securities market and in the field of the insurance market. Our authorities will complete the necessary base of by-laws, in implementation of the new laws for second-tier banks, capital markets and financial markets based on distributed ledger technology, always relying on directives and practices European best. As far as the voluntary pension market is concerned, the draft law "On private pension funds" has been drawn up with a high level of alignment with European directives, in particular with Directive 2016/2341/EC "On the activity and supervision of Occupational Pension Institutions" (IORP II). Now it is expected to draw up the regulatory framework based on the law and get approval in the Albanian parliament. As far as the market of investment funds is concerned, AFSA is expected to adopt by-laws which will bring the EU countries closer in this field. Of course, these regulatory acts are for: 1) the procedures, rules and information necessary for the recognition of administrative companies, with a public offer licensed in the EU, which will market for sale in our country; and 2) the regulatory framework for the registration of legal entities that will market and sell SIK quotas with a public offer, which are licensed in EU member states.

In the insurance market, the Solvency II regime will bring fundamental changes in the culture and way of risk management by insurance companies and the preparation of the new project "On the Activity of Insurance and Reinsurance", which will bring the law in force closer to European directives in the field of insurance and basic international principles of insurance.

For Capital Markets and the approval of regulations Which, in the function of regulating and strengthening supervision in the field of capital markets, is a priority for AFSA.

This whole set of draft regulations drawn up with foreign technical assistance has significantly approached the regulations and directives of the European Union,

establishing European standards in the practice of regulation and supervision. The drafting of a legislation is always important not only at the European level within the EU agenda for a united capital market, but also at the national level in function of the creation of new financial instruments and the development of the local capital market.

As for financial markets with distributed ledger technology, AFSA should be in the direction of aligning Albanian legislation with the EU acquis, with the latest European regulation for crypto-assets markets "Markets in Crypto-assets (MiCA)"

All the laws and regulations of these markets have obviously been approved by the European Commission, where they aim to improve the competitiveness of the FinTech sector in Europe, making it possible to simultaneously address risks and financial stability issues in the EU economies.

Discussion

Many studies have focused on the topics of challenges or policy making of Regulators in general. For other researchers, how can this study be further expanded? I think about the case of Albania compared to the region, is that our country accedes to the European Union and this will definitely aim for our financial system from a horizontal financial system to have an orientation of a vertical direction through the application of directives. It will make it even more possible to approach and remove barriers to the movement of capital and financial markets as a whole with the EU countries. It will make it possible to have a regulator that will make it easier to monitor the markets, it will be easier to protect the interests of investors, consumers, individuals and businesses. I think it will remove the barriers of market regulation, licensing procedures and the eloquence of actors who will participate in these markets. For the Albanian reality, this is a new study in this field and is more related to the perspective of the future and therefore does not find specific compatibility with other literatures.

Conclusion

EU market organizations were still in a formative phase in terms of financial regulation years ago, as they began to try to build an integrated internal financial system, eliminating and reducing costs by introducing control mechanisms. for reducing risk and protecting financial stability. Among the factors that explained the limited influence that the EU had during that period (after the 2008 crisis), are the differences between Member States' financial markets and regulatory policies. This led to the lack of comprehensive mechanisms to speed up the development of EU financial rules. It was a stronger legislative and regulatory process which would impact other countries that were still outside the EU, such as Albania.

Regulators are known to have 'regular and formalized regulatory rules and programs that allow market participants to test new financial services or business models with their direct customers, while implementing ongoing consumer protections and

market oversight that they cover the regulators of Albania present a change which is based on the approach based on principles which have been adopted often in the past.

Another, through this study, we can say that for example innovation causes legal uncertainty and doubts about the application of pre-existing rules for new business models and how it can face these issues that increase engagement with stakeholders, thus always increasing supervisory capacity and subsequently drawing up regulations for innovations or new technological changes in the markets.

Institutions and regulatory entities are always faced with the challenges and dynamics brought by the markets, not only technology how the markets evolve, how through technology the markets begin to find space to create other financial products and necessarily the main role of the regulators is to respond in time and professionalize this dynamic of markets with the drafting and implementation of legal and bylaw acts and their respective regulations.

Of course, the contributions of the Bank of Albania and the AFSA in terms of the approach and alignment of the legal framework with those of the directives of the EU bodies, have also been emphasized in the Progress Reports of the European Commission. The Bank of Albania and the Authority will continue the work for the further harmonization of the internal legislation of financial services, keeping in mind the recommendations of the EC Report. Standardization and advancement of legislation towards European standards creates new opportunities for development and modernization of banking and non-banking financial markets.

The inter-institutional cooperation of the Bank of Albania and the Financial Supervision Authority will always be a guarantee to build a synergy and a stable platform of coordinated activities with the aim of raising the awareness of individuals, citizens, businesses, consumers and the wider scope of financial culture. in place. Also, increasing financial inclusion in banking and non-banking financial markets can be supported through the creation of new products that suit the needs of consumers and potential investors, facilitating access to financial services through digitalization, etc. Both of these entities aim for a wider public access to financial products. The Bank and the Authority will always focus on financial education activities, improving the complaints system for consumers and investors, as well as improving the respective official web pages with ample information dedicated to the public.

I think that this study can help other researchers to expand and further the main issues related to the Financial Authority in our country and what is the approach of the directives or their harmonization with the Albanian laws. Other studies may have space and advance studies on how quickly the effectiveness of the harmonization of directives respond to the demands and dynamism of the markets in their efficiency.

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The Rights of Children with Disabilities - Access to a Quality Inclusive Education for Them

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Abstract

The Convention "On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" provides for the right of persons with disabilities to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing and housing, as well as the right to continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties have the obligation to take appropriate steps to protect and improve the realization of this right without discrimination, due to disability, to ensure the access of persons with disabilities and their families, who live in conditions of poverty, in the assistance provided by the State to cover expenses related to disability, etc¹. In particular, States Parties to the Convention must guarantee the health services that persons with disabilities need because of their disability, including early identification and intervention as appropriate, as well as tailored services to minimize and prevent the worsening of disabilities, including children². Creating a safe and healthy environment for children is also one of the main objectives of sustainable development of the UN (Agenda 2030 of SDG-es). This paper deals with the right of children with disabilities to benefit from health, social, educational services, as well as any other services, according to the needs determined by the responsible disability assessment structures.

Keywords: children with disabilities, children's rights, Convention for Persons with Disabilities, integrated child protection system

Introduction

The Convention "On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities"³ provides for the right of persons with disabilities to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing and housing, as well as the right to continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties have the obligation

¹ Article 28 of UN Convention "On Children's Rights"

² Article 25 of CRC Convention

³ Albania ratified the UNCRPD in 2012 and became a state party^[1] to the Convention in 2013

to take appropriate steps to protect and improve the realization of this right without discrimination, due to disability, to ensure the access of persons with disabilities and their families, who live in conditions of poverty, in the assistance provided by the State to cover expenses related to disability, etc.¹ In particular, States Parties to the Convention must guarantee the health services that persons with disabilities need because of their disability, including early identification and intervention as appropriate, as well as tailored services to minimize and prevent the worsening of disabilities, including children².

Creating a safe and healthy environment for children is also one of the main objectives of sustainable development of the UN (Agenda 2030 of SDG).

Likewise, our legislation clearly defines that the best interest of the child means the right of the child to have a healthy physical, mental, moral, spiritual and social development, as well as to enjoy a family and social life suitable for the child³. In the implementation of this principle, the child's needs for physical and psychological development, education and health, safety and stability, as well as growth/belonging in a family, the ability of parents or persons who care for the child's well-being are evaluated and must be taken into account to respond to the child's needs.

This paper deals with the right of children with disabilities to benefit from health, social, educational services, especially the right to a quality inclusive education as well as any other services, according to the needs determined by the responsible disability assessment structures⁴.

1. Legal Framework and Children with Disabilities

The right to education, which is one of the basic human rights, is sanctioned in the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, as well as in separate laws. But, despite the legal provisions and the achievements so far, the right to education has not been provided to meet the needs and abilities of every pupil or student with disabilities.

Our Constitution⁵ sanctions the equal right of all citizens to be educated and, in article 59, the right to specialized education and social integration of persons with disabilities. The process of inclusiveness of children with disabilities in regular schools is challenged on its way by a series of barriers.

Also, the law on pre-university education of 2012 provides that "...the education of children with disabilities in special schools is temporary and their integration in

¹ The article 28 of UN Convention "On Children's Rights"

² The article 25 of CRC Convention

³ The Article 6 of the law no.18/2017 "On Children Rights and protection"

⁴ The Article 32 of law no.18/2017 "On Children Rights and protection" makes specific provision for children's right to receive services, determined by the responsible structures for the assessment of disability.

⁵ CRA, article 57

general education should be a priority. Likewise, this law has provided that every child with disabilities must have assistant teachers and rehabilitative services, according to their needs..."¹.

Likewise, one of the strategic objectives of the 2016 National Disability Rights Action Plan is access to quality and inclusive education for children with disabilities. The Albanian National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2016–2020 (NAPPD) references significant deficits in the provisions of education, social care, and health-care services, and participation and engagement in public life, for children and for the adult population with disabilities. The action plan proposes a set of eight strategic goals, one of which explicitly references children².

The children with disabilities has the right to benefit from health, social, educational services, as well as any other services, according to the needs determined by the responsible disability assessment structures³.

The responsible authorities take the necessary measures, so that these services are offered as close to the child as possible and for free, whenever possible and, taking into account the economic situation of the parent or guardian⁴. The parent or guardian has the obligation to follow the mandatory procedures according to this law, in order to provide the child with access to all services, from which he benefits according to the legislation in force. For this purpose, the parent or guardian is assisted by child protection structures, as needed.

2. Definition of the Concept “Disabilities” Based on the National Legislation

Defining disability has proven to be complex, dynamic, multidimensional, and contested. The bio psychosocial model applied by the International Classification of Functioning Disability and Health (ICF) suggests that “...disability is the umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions, referring to the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual (with a health

¹ Law no.69/2012 “On pre-university education in Republic of Albania”, amended.

² Decision no.483, dated on 29 June 2016, of the Council of Ministers “On the Approval of the National Action Plan for People with Disabilities, 2016-2020”.

³ Based on the provision of the article 32 of the law no.18/2017, the child with disabilities shall have the right to a standard of living adequate to the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. Every child shall have access to early childhood development programs, including access to nurseries, kindergartens and other development programs, and the right to food during participation in these programs according to standards foreseen in sub-legal acts. Local government authorities, the ministry responsible for education along with the responsible subordinate institutions shall take the necessary measures to support parents or the legal guardian to exercise these rights in case they need material assistance or support programs.

⁴ The article 20 of the law no.18/2017

condition) and that individual's contextual factors (environmental and personal factors)...."¹.

The bio psychosocial model of disability is currently accepted as the preferred conceptual model of disablement because it simultaneously recognizes three components of disability: the biologic component (the physical and mental aspects of an individual's health condition), the psychological component (personal and psychological factors that are having an impact on the individual's functioning), and the social component (contextual and environmental factors that may also have an impact on functioning) in each particular case².

UNCRPD notes that persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

The definition of disability in the Law on Inclusion of and Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities is aligned with the definition given by the Convention, but not all legislation is similarly aligned³.

3. The Current Situation in Albania of Children with Limited Abilities - the Guarantee and Exercise of Rights. the Access to the Right of Quality Inclusive Education

In Albania, guaranteeing the right to education of children with disabilities⁴ is still a big challenge, although there are serious efforts towards including these children in regular schools.

Likewise, a number of problems are observed, related to respecting and guaranteeing the rights of children with disabilities, such is the non-payment of social contributions for the status of personal assistant approved by the Decision of the Medical Appointment Commission of Disability (DMACD), as a result of the child's disability.

¹ World Health Organization, [International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health \(ICF\)](#) - Geneva 2001

² The special Report of the UNICEF, "We all matter - Situation Analysis of Children with Disabilities in Albania "

³ The law no.69/2012 "On pre-university education in Republic of Albania", for example, defines in explicitly way that **"...a student with disability is a person having long-term physical, mental, sensory, attitude-related deficiency, or a combination thereof, which, in concert, may prevent them from fully and equally participating in education and social life..."**.

⁴ Concerning the Report drafted by UNICEF "We all matter - Situation Analysis of Children with Disabilities in Albania ", in our country the number of children with disabilities is 2.5% - 4%. According to this Report, administrative data suggest that there has been an increase in the number of children with disabilities accessing services, from 3% in 2015, to 8% in 2017.

Regarding the protection and guarantee of the rights of children with disabilities, including the access to the right quality inclusive education, a number of problems have been identified, related to the implementation of the legislation for the protection of children's rights, for the real budgeting necessary, starting from the perspective of children's rights, the establishment of new services in pursuit of the dynamics of the needs of children with disabilities, as well as the drafting of comprehensive social policies at the local level, based on an accurate database on the number of children with disabilities¹.

From the inspections carried out by National Human Rights Institution² in educational institutions for children with disabilities and the Child Protection Unit³ (case management structures at the municipalities), the following have been found:

- i. The lack of capacities (human resources) and,
- ii. The limited financial opportunities that make the local government unable to respond to the requests for the establishment of new services in pursuit of the dynamics of children's needs⁴. Based on article 49 of the law no.18/2017, "...The municipality child protection unit is established and shall function as a special unit within the structure responsible for social services at municipality level and is tasked, specifically, with the prevention, identification, assessment, protection and follow up of cases of children at risk and/or in need of protection...".

The evaluations made for the implementation of inclusive education in Albania evidence positive steps in the direction of increasing the number of children with disabilities included in ordinary schools, but also changes in teaching practices, through changes in curricula, staff training pedagogical and preparation of didactic materials. For example, concerning the Report of UNICEF for children with disabilities in Albania⁵, education sector data on children with disabilities have different

¹ Regarding the *database* in the Special Report of the UNICEF, 57.6%, 5.839 children (6-17 yrs. with disabilities) receiving disability allowances and education, were also recorded by the State Social Services as being in education.

² The People's Advocate Institution based on the article 34/7 of the law no.8454, dated 4.2.1999 "On the People's Advocate Institution", amended has the right to oversee and to monitor the work of the responsible state mechanisms, part of the integrated protection system for guaranteeing the children's rights.

³ Law No.18/2017 "On the Children rights and protection"

⁴ Based on the definition gave in the article 3 of the law no.18/2017 "On the Children Rights and protection", "Integrated protection system" is the entire set of legal acts, political acts and necessary services, in all fields, particularly those of social welfare, education, health, security and justice, in order to prevent and respond to risks posed during their enforcement. The responsible institutions take concrete measures aiming at cooperation, division of responsibilities and coordination among all the governmental agencies, local government bodies, public and non-public service providers, community groups, including the case referral system, as components of the child protection system.

⁵ The Report drafted by UNICEF "We all matter - Situation Analysis of Children with Disabilities in Albania"

descriptors from those of State Social Services. Thus, it is not possible to compare prevalence data and access to service data.

Our legislation guarantees the right to comprehensive education, but what is noticeable is the lack of implementation of these laws in practice, as well as the lack of real budgeting, dedicated to supporting these children with assistant teachers. Concerning the database of the Ministry of Education and Sport, only 4,378 children with disabilities enrolled in education in the 2017–2018 school year (43.2% of children receiving disability allowances of age 6–17 years)¹.

The main deficiencies found in guaranteeing inclusive education for children with disabilities are:

- i. The lack of assistant teachers and due to this fact non-inclusion of children with disabilities in compulsory education.
- ii. The lack of material base, lack of physical access and facilities in schools, as well as discrimination and prejudice against them.
- iii. The lack of continuous training for teachers of ordinary schools, who work with children with disabilities.

Challenges and Recommendations

Concerning the challenges that responsible state administration institutions at central and local level facing during their administrative activity for taking measures immediately are related to the process of drafting by-laws in implementation of the law on the pre-university education system, to guarantee the right quality inclusive education for children with disabilities.

Also, concerning the recommendations the state authorities should:

- i. Taking measures to implement in practice by all regional educational directorates, of the establishment of the multidisciplinary structure, for the assessment of children's disabilities and the design of the Individualized Educational Plan of the specific objectives of the child's level of development.
- ii. Taking measures to enable the addition of assistant teachers due to the diagnoses and the need for supplementary services that these children present.
- iii. Taking measures to make assistant teachers available in some schools of the country, in order to carry out the activities provided for in the Individualized Educational Plan by the multidisciplinary structure, with the completion of lessons, specifically with the development of full lessons.
- iv. Taking measures strengthening the monitoring and evaluation system for assistant teachers.

¹ The same Report as above

- v. Taking measures for the evaluation of children who go to special schools by commissions composed of doctors, psychologists, teachers and specialists for children with disabilities, set up near all local educational units, in implementation of the article 64/3, of the law no.69/2012 "On the pre-university education system in the Republic of Albania", as amended and their registration in public schools of the city.
- vi. Taking measures, by the Ministry of Education and Sport and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, for the drafting of by-laws in implementation of article 64/paragraphs 1 and 6, of law no.69/2012 "On the pre-university education system in the Republic of Albania", amended.
- vii. Taking measures to determine the disability assessment criteria by the multidisciplinary commission of local educational units, in accordance with the ICF assessment standards "International Classification of Disabilities", drawn up by the World Health Organization (WHO) to guarantee the inclusion and integration of children with disabilities in the public schools of the local units where they live.
- viii. Taking measures to implement the principles of education for children with disabilities, based on article 63 of law no.69/2012 "On the pre-university education system in the Republic of Albania", as well as continuing the work for the training of continuous staff, to ensure quality education, as well as for exchange of experiences for teachers of ordinary schools, who work with children with disabilities.
- ix. Taking measures for continuous training in schools to ensure quality education as well as for exchange of experiences for teachers of ordinary schools who work with children with disabilities.

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Geographical Indications - A Marketing Strategy Tool for Small Farms in Albania

Manuela Mece

Abstract

GIs offer a unique marketing tool for producers, differentiating their products from generic counterparts, and can enhance the market position of producers by capitalizing on the reputation and distinctiveness associated with a specific geographic region. Geographical Indication (GI) can be used as a strategy for marketing the product and the territory. It creates synergy with the preservation of cultural heritage; with consumers' value attributed to the specific qualities of that product; with the economic development and the livelihoods of rural communities. Balkan Countries are making serious efforts for creating their competitive advantage whereas Albania is still in the initial steps. One product that is expected to create synergy with the Tourism industry as a potential GI in Albania is the Winery sector.

Keywords: Geographical Indications, Marketing Strategy Tools, Small Farms

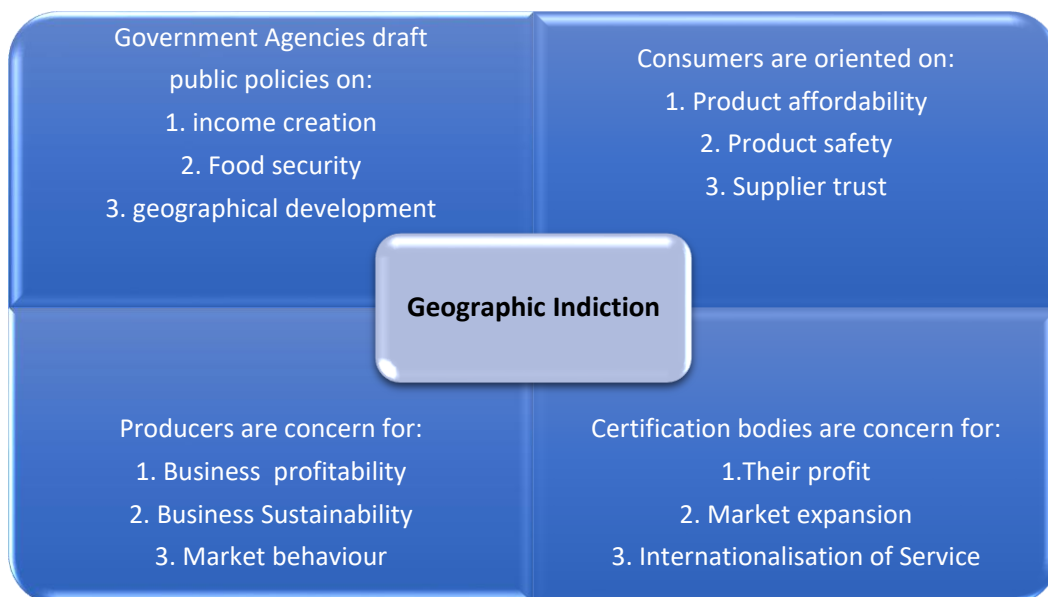
Introduction

Consumers demand for traditional food is becoming a trend under some mottos like buy locally; eats natural: Support local farmers. Most authors define GIs as certification schemes which designate foodstuff with distinctive characteristics, reputation and geographical origin (Marie-Vivien, Biénabe, 2017; Albuquerque et al., 2018; Härtel, Zhong L. 2018). In the era of globalisation GIs emerged as tool for certification of foodstuff with special quality and place of production (Belmin et al., 2018; Grujic-Vuckovski, Kovacevic, 2020).

The focus for this research lies in GIs importance for remote rural areas with limited farmland. A relevant number of studies indicate significant GIs role in the rural communities prosperity (Barjolle, 2010; Arfini et al. 2019; Paraušić, Roljević-Nikolić, 2020).

GIs represent real opportunities for small rural households to create added value through certified agriculture products and to improve their economic position. Standardization and certification of these products is contributing towards development of the food supply chains (Schmitt et al., 2017; Popović, Paraušić, 2016; Bérard, Marchenay, 2006). GIs foodstuff implementation in Western Balkan lagging significantly behind EU (Janković et al., 2018). According to Barjolle et al. 2010 one reason is low consumption of GIs products in Western Balkans countries due to the

barriers such as high price and uncertainty with respect to the true GIs product characteristics. Founding significant importance of GIs Fabris & Pejović 2012 recommended new policy in Montenegro such as orientation on traditional production as a tool for improving farmers profitability.



Due to the fact that all Western Balkans countries are in European Union (EU) approximation process, EU' common acquis in the area of the GIS is analysed. Traditional foodstuff are important part of European culture and heritage (Milosević et al, 2012; Giraud et al., 2013). In the EU three main foodstuff quality schemes are established: Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) and Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG). Protected Designations of Origin (PDO) are names used to designate a product with special characteristics, which are also originating from a certain territory. For PDO the raw material production as well as processing should be produced in the designated geographical area (SWG, 2020). PGI are label referring to foodstuff processed under certain production specification with distinct characteristic, but differenced from PDO as raw material is not mandated to be produced in designated territory (SWG, 2020). TSG label refers to the traditional receipt product (EU Commission, 2021) Other EU' quality schemes include: Mountain product and product from my farm. Mountain product referred to the high-quality product produced in mountain regions with difficult natural conditions, while Mark from my farm referee to the high-quality products produced locally for local consumption (EU Commission, 2021).

GIs foodstuff regulation in EU is based on the type of products: agricultural and foodstuffs, wines and spirits.

EU' GIs legal framework including:

- Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 on the quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs; • Regulation (EC) No 1308/2013 on the protection of geographical indications for wine;
- Regulation (EC) No 251/2014 on the protection of geographical indications for aromatized wine;
- Regulation (EC) No 787/2019 on the protection of geographical indications for spirit drinks.

There is significant number of registered GIs products within EU. In total, on the 18th January 2021 there were 3753 designated products.

GIs in Balkans and in Albania

Western Balkan countries have a long-standing tradition and numerous high quality famous traditional products. The promotion of traditional foodstuff is promising vehicle for increasing regional agricultural sector competitiveness (Giraud et. al,2013; SWG, 2020). Three Western Balkans countries – Serbia, BIH and Montenegro have established GIs certification schemes.

Although there is a possibility of registering GIs products from non-EU countries, no product from the countries of Western Balkan is registered in the EU. The registration of products in the EU would have a significant importance for regional producers:

- The “visibility of the GIs product” would be increased, as numerous national labels would be replaced by EU labels (Figure 1), which are unique and recognizable nationally and throughout the EU;
- The costs of product registration, as well as certification and recertification for producers would not change in relation to the costs in national GIs schemes, while the effect would be significantly increased;
- Registration in the EU after national registration would be an excellent check and significant experience for national institutions responsible for geographical indications schemes;
- Product protection at the EU level provides full worldwide product protection (Hazel, 2017).

There are just a few examples of the many products that are recognized as GIs in Albania. The GI recognition helps to protect the reputation and quality of these products and promotes their unique characteristics, which can contribute to the development of local economies and tourism.

Tushemisht Trout - Tushemisht Trout is a type of freshwater trout that is produced in the Tushemisht area of southeastern Albania. The trout is known for its delicate flavor and tender texture and is a popular ingredient in local cuisine.

Korca Beer - Korca Beer is a traditional beer that is brewed in the city of Korca in southeastern Albania. The beer is made using a special blend of hops, malt, and yeast, and has a distinct flavor and aroma.

Permet Grappa - Permet Grappa is a type of brandy that is produced in the city of Permet in southern Albania. The brandy is made using locally grown grapes and is aged in oak barrels to develop a smooth, complex flavor.

Shkoder Carp - Shkoder Carp is a type of freshwater carp that is caught in Lake Shkoder, which is located on the border between Albania and Montenegro. The carp is known for its tender, flavorful meat and is a popular ingredient in local cuisine.

Berat Tomatoes - Berat Tomatoes are a type of tomato that is grown in the Berat region of central Albania. The tomatoes are known for their rich, sweet flavor and are often used in salads, sauces, and other dishes.

There are several other products that are recognized as Geographical Indications (GIs) in Albania. The Albanian government has implemented several measures to support the development and promotion of Geographical Indications (GIs) in the country.

Legal Framework: Albania has established a legal framework for GIs, which is designed to protect the names and reputations of traditional products that are linked to specific regions. The legal framework includes laws and regulations that govern the registration, use, and protection of GIs in Albania.

GI Registry: Albania has established a registry of GIs, which is managed by the General Directorate of Industrial Property (GDIP). The registry provides information on the registered GIs in Albania, including their names, descriptions, and geographical locations.

Certification: The Albanian government has established a certification system for GIs, which is designed to ensure that only products that meet specific quality and origin requirements can use the GI name. The certification process involves an evaluation of the product's quality, origin, and traditional production methods.

Promotion and Marketing: The Albanian government has supported the promotion and marketing of GIs through various initiatives, including participation in international trade fairs and exhibitions, and the development of promotional materials, such as brochures, websites, and social media campaigns.

Financial Support: The Albanian government provides financial support to producers of GIs, including grants and subsidies for product development, quality improvement, and marketing activities.

Overall, the Albanian government's measures to support GIs are aimed at promoting the unique products and traditions of specific regions, while also contributing to the development of local economies and tourism

Methodology

Extensive literature review is conducted. Method of comparative analyses was implemented. EU Commission DOOR Database is used as a source of information on designated GIs in EU.

Under the general preconditions are considered: flexible conditions for registration of small traditional processing capacities, system of producer organizations, visibility (recognizability by consumers of geographical indications) and systematic long-term support measures to the GIs.

The Sector using IG as a Strategy of Marketing

One sector that is expected to create synergy with the tourism is the Albanian Wine production and marketing.

Albanian wine has a long history dating back to ancient times. It is made from indigenous grape varieties and has a unique flavor profile. Albanian wine has been gaining popularity in recent years and has won several international awards.

Albanian wine has a long history dating back to ancient times when the Illyrians, the ancestors of modern Albanians, used to cultivate grapevines and produce wine. Today, Albania is home to several wine regions, each with its own unique microclimate and indigenous grape varieties.

Albanian wine is known for its unique flavor profile, which is a result of the country's diverse geography, climate, and soil. The country has over 22,000 hectares of vineyards, and over 60 indigenous grape varieties, many of which are not found anywhere else in the world. Some of the most popular grape varieties used in Albanian wine production include Shesh i Bardhë (White Shesh), Shesh i Zi (Black Shesh), Kallmet, Debina, and Vlosh.

In recent years, Albanian wine has been gaining popularity internationally and has won several awards. The country's winemakers have been investing in modernizing their production techniques while still preserving traditional methods to produce high-quality wines that appeal to both local and international consumers.

Some of the most popular Albanian wineries include Kallmeti Winery, Çobo Winery, and Nurellari Winery. These wineries produce a wide range of wines, including red, white, rose, and sparkling wines, that are sold both domestically and internationally.

Overall, Albanian wine has a rich history and unique flavor profile that is gaining recognition among wine enthusiasts worldwide. With its diverse grape varieties and

modernized production techniques, Albanian wine has the potential to become a significant player in the global wine market.

Albanian wine exports have been growing steadily in recent years, although the volume is still relatively small compared to other wine-producing countries. According to data from the Albanian Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Albanian wine exports increased by 5.5% in 2020, with a total of 208,793 liters of wine exported. The main export markets for Albanian wine are Italy, the United States, Germany, Switzerland, and Canada.

Albanian winemakers are actively working to increase their export volume by improving the quality of their wines, diversifying their product range, and implementing marketing strategies to promote their wines internationally. The Albanian government has also been supportive of the country's wine industry, providing incentives for winemakers to modernize their production techniques and improve the quality of their wines.

Overall, while the volume of Albanian wine exports is still relatively small compared to other wine-producing countries, the industry is growing, and there is potential for Albanian wines to gain wider recognition and market share internationally.

Kallmet wine is a Geographical Indication (GI) in Albania. A Geographical Indication is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities, reputation, or other characteristics that are attributable to that origin. In the case of Kallmet wine, the GI indicates that the wine is produced in a specific geographical area in Albania and possesses unique characteristics that are a result of the local terroir and winemaking traditions.

The Kallmet wine region is located in the central part of Albania, around the town of Lezha. The region is known for producing high-quality red wines made from the Kallmet grape variety, which is indigenous to the area. Kallmet wine has a unique flavor profile, characterized by its deep color, high tannins, and aromas of dark fruits, spices, and earthy notes.

In 2017, the Albanian government recognized the Kallmet wine region as a GI, providing legal protection for the name and ensuring that only wines produced in the designated area can use the Kallmet name. This recognition is expected to promote the quality and reputation of Kallmet wine, as well as support local winemakers and the regional economy.

Kallmet wine region is one of the smallest wine regions in Albania, with only a few wineries producing Kallmet wine.

Since Kallmet wine is a Geographical Indication (GI) in Albania, the production volume is likely to be relatively small compared to other non-GI wines produced in the country. However, the exact volume of Kallmet wine production would depend on

several factors, including the size of the vineyards, the yield per hectare, and the winemaking techniques used by each individual winery.

Overall, Kallmet wine is considered a niche product in Albania, and its production volume is likely to be relatively small. However, the wine has gained a reputation for its unique flavor profile and has won several awards in international wine competitions, which could help increase its popularity and production volume in the future.

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Analyzing the Partnership Between the U.S. and Albania: Bilateral Agreements and Cooperation for 101 Years

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Abstract

This paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the 101-year relationship between the United States and Albania, with a particular focus on bilateral agreements and cooperation. The study begins by examining the historical background of the two countries and their initial interactions, and then proceeds to explore the political and diplomatic relations between the two nations. The main hypothesis of this paper is that the partnership and cooperation between the United States and Albania have been shaped by several factors, including the geopolitical context of the region, the ideological orientations of the two nations, and the institutional frameworks that have been established to facilitate their collaborative efforts. The research question that this paper seeks to answer is: How has the relationship between the United States and Albania evolved over the years, and what are the main factors that have influenced its development? To achieve this objective, the paper adopts a mixed-methods research design that combines a systematic review of existing literature on the topic, with a qualitative analysis of primary sources such as government reports and official documents. The main findings of this paper indicate that the partnership and cooperation between the United States and Albania have been characterized by a number of bilateral agreements and initiatives in areas such as security and defense, energy, and education. While these agreements have helped to strengthen the relationship between the two nations, they have also faced a number of challenges, including corruption, organized crime, and political instability. Despite these challenges, the partnership and cooperation between the United States and Albania remain vital to promoting regional stability and advancing common interests in areas such as security, economic development, and democratic governance. As such, continued engagement and cooperation between the two nations should be a priority in the years to come.

Keywords: United States, Albania, bilateral agreements, cooperation

Introduction

The partnership and cooperation between the United States and Albania have undergone significant developments and transformations over the past century. This paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the 101-year relationship between the two countries, with a particular focus on bilateral agreements and cooperation. The study explores the historical background, political dynamics, and key factors that have shaped the relationship, shedding light on its evolution and examining the drivers behind its development.

Since the early 1990s, there have been clear indications that Albania's foreign policy has increasingly leaned towards the United States. The United States played a pivotal role in supporting Albania's democratization process, earning strong sympathy from the Albanian population. However, this pro-American stance of the right-wing has faced criticism from political opponents who argue for a more balanced foreign policy, emphasizing closer ties with Western Europe.

To understand the perspective of Albanian-American relations in the 21st century, it is essential to consider the historical context and examine the relationship between the two countries over the past century. Albania underwent a democratic transition in the early 1990s, following decades of communist rule. The United States provided significant support, both politically and economically, to Albania's democratic aspirations and reforms, strengthening the bilateral relationship. This support fostered a positive perception of the United States among the Albanian population, establishing a foundation for close ties between the two nations.

However, concerns have been raised regarding Albania's perceived overreliance on the United States, potentially overshadowing its relations with Western Europe. Critics argue for a more balanced foreign policy approach that prioritizes closer engagement with European partners. These contrasting views highlight the complexities and challenges inherent in the Albanian-American relationship.

The aim of this paper is to analyze the evolution of the relationship between the United States and Albania and identify the main drivers that have influenced its development. By examining historical records, government reports, official documents, and scholarly literature, this study seeks to answer the research question: How has the relationship between the United States and Albania evolved over the years, and what are the main factors that have shaped its development?

The findings of this paper indicate that the partnership and cooperation between the United States and Albania have been characterized by a number of bilateral agreements and initiatives in areas such as security and defense, energy, and education. While these agreements have contributed to strengthening the relationship, challenges such as corruption, organized crime, and political instability have also posed significant obstacles.

Nevertheless, the partnership and cooperation between the United States and Albania remain crucial for promoting regional stability and advancing common interests in security, economic development, and democratic governance. As such, continued engagement and cooperation between the two nations should be prioritized in the years to come.

By gaining a deeper understanding of the past and present dynamics, this analysis contributes to the broader discourse on international relations and emphasizes the importance of continued collaboration between the United States and Albania.

Literature Review

The literature on the diplomatic relations between Albania and the United States is relatively extensive and covers a period that spans nearly a century. One of the earliest sources on the topic is a report from the U.S. legation in Tirana to the Department of State, which is cited in Paska Milo's book "Politika e Jashtme e Shqipërisë" (2013)¹. The report sheds light on the US government's interest in Albania and its efforts to prevent the reoccupation of Albania through foreign interventions.

Another notable source on the topic is the article by Zaho Golemi and Alma Golemi, "Marrëdhëniet me amerikanët në fokus historik njëshekullor" (2013), which provides a historical overview of Albania-US relations over the course of a century. The article highlights the strategic importance of Albania for the US during the Cold War and its subsequent efforts to promote democratic and market-oriented reforms in the country.

Beqir Meta's books "Tensioni Greko-Shqiptar, 1939-1949" (2002) and "Shqipëria dhe Greqia 1949-1990, Paqja e vështirë" (2004) offer a more detailed analysis of the bilateral relations between Albania and Greece, which have been marked by territorial disputes and political tensions. The books shed light on the diplomatic efforts made by the US to mediate the conflicts and promote regional stability.

In the post-communist era, Albania's relations with the US have been characterized by a strong pro-Western orientation, as reflected in the country's membership in NATO and its aspirations for EU integration. Ermelinda Meksi's article "Dimensioni Shqiptar i Integritimit" (2003) discusses the challenges and opportunities of Albania's integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures, highlighting the role of the US in supporting the country's democratic and economic reforms.

More recently, the media coverage of Albania-US relations has focused on issues such as the fight against terrorism and organized crime, as well as the support for

¹ T. Kodding, "For the Secretary of State, August 30, 1924" cited in Paskal Milo. (2013), *Politika e Jashtme e Shqipërisë, Vëllimi i Parë (1918-1939)* [Foreign Policy of Albania, Volume I (1918-1939)], Tirana: Botimet Toena, p. 623.

democracy and human rights. For instance, Nathan Thrall's article "Albania, the Muslim World's Most Pro-American State, America's 51st State" (2009) argues that Albania's pro-US stance has been largely driven by its cultural and historical ties with the US, as well as its aspirations for modernization and democratization.

The agreements between Albania and the US, which are documented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will be presented in this paper to provide a comprehensive analysis of the evolving nature of their partnership. These agreements serve as a testament to the challenges and opportunities that have shaped their relationship over the years, reflecting the mutual interests and priorities of both nations. From 1991 to the present day, these agreements have played a significant role in shaping the cooperative framework between the two nations, fostering economic development, enhancing security cooperation, promoting educational exchanges, and fostering cultural understanding. The analysis of these agreements will provide valuable insights into the dynamic and multifaceted nature of the Albania-US partnership.

Methodology

To achieve the objective of comprehensively analyzing the evolution of the relationship between Albania and the United States, a mixed-methods research approach is employed in this study. This methodology combines a systematic review of existing literature with a qualitative analysis of primary sources, such as government reports and official documents. By integrating these two research methods, a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the factors influencing the development of the partnership can be obtained.

The systematic review of existing literature on the topic provides a foundation for identifying key themes, trends, and theoretical frameworks related to the Albania-US relationship. Scholarly works, academic articles, and relevant publications are examined to gather insights into the historical context, political dynamics, and socio-economic factors that have shaped the bilateral ties between the two nations. This review helps in identifying gaps in the existing knowledge and informs the subsequent analysis.

Additionally, primary sources play a vital role in this study. Government reports, official documents, and archived materials sourced from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as other relevant institutions, are analyzed to gather empirical evidence and firsthand accounts of the diplomatic interactions and agreements between Albania and the United States. These primary sources offer valuable insights into the intentions, actions, and outcomes of both nations throughout the course of their relationship.

The qualitative analysis of primary sources involves a rigorous examination of the historical records, official correspondence, and policy documents to identify patterns, trends, and significant events that have influenced the partnership. By triangulating

the information obtained from different sources and cross-referencing with scholarly literature, a comprehensive understanding of the drivers behind the transformation of the Albania-US relationship is achieved.

The findings derived from the systematic literature review and qualitative analysis of primary sources are synthesized and analyzed to answer the research question: How has the relationship between the United States and Albania evolved over the years, and what are the main factors that have shaped its development? By employing this mixed-methods approach, this study aims to provide a robust analysis of the Albania-US relationship, shedding light on its historical trajectory and highlighting the underlying factors that have influenced its transformation.

It is important to note that due to the nature of this research methodology, limitations such as availability and reliability of primary sources, as well as the potential for bias in published literature, will be taken into consideration. However, efforts have been made to ensure the validity and credibility of the data sources utilized, allowing for a comprehensive and insightful examination of the Albania-US relationship.

Historical Analysis of Albania-US Relations

After Albania declared its independence in 1912 and received recognition from the Great Powers at the Conference of Ambassadors in London, the presidency of Thomas Woodrow Wilson played a crucial role in shaping Albania's status as a recognized subject of international law. President Wilson's support, evident in his veto and the implementation of his 14-point plan, provided Albania with a significant opportunity to establish itself as a fully recognized entity in the international arena. In fact, his pivotal contribution against the reoccupation of Albania by external forces has earned him the admiration and gratitude of the Albanian people, as stated in a report from the U.S. legation in Tirana to the Department of State (Milo, 2013, p. 623).

The establishment of diplomatic relations between Albania and the United States in July 1922 marked a significant milestone in their bilateral relations (Golemi, Z. & Golemi, A., 2013). During this period, Ambassador Child, serving in Rome, underscored the profound moral influence that American recognition carried among the Albanian-American community. In his report to the Secretary of State, Ambassador Child emphasized that thousands of Albanian-Americans held deep affection for America, considering it as cherished as their homeland (Milo, 2013, p. 544).

Between the years 1922 and 1939, Albania and the United States signed several agreements spanning various domains. These agreements, as documented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate of Treaties and International Law (1922-1939, p. 64-65), included the Arbitration Treaty, signed on October 22, 1928, and enforced from February 12, 1929, along with the Reconciliation Treaty, also signed on the same date and coming into effect on February 12, 1929. Additionally, the Extradition Treaty

between the Kingdom of Albania and the United States of America, signed on March 1, 1933, entered into force on November 14, 1935. Furthermore, the Convention on the Exchange of Motion Picture Orders, signed on July 18, 1932, took effect on October 1, 1932.

The Interruption of Relations: The diplomatic relations between Albania and the United States came to a halt in late 1939 due to the Italian occupation of Albania from 1939 to 1943. Consequently, the American embassy was closed, and H. Grant, the American ambassador at that time, departed on September 27, 1939 (Golemi, Z. & Golemi, A., 2013). Beqir Meta (2002: p. 98-99) highlights in his work "Tensioni Greko-Shqiptar, 1939-1949" that the stance of the United States towards Albania faced a critical test during World War II when Greece pursued territorial revisions with Albania. Greece sought diplomatic support from both the United States and Great Britain. While Great Britain indicated in its declaration on December 17, 1942, that the issue of Albania's borders would be a topic for discussion at the Peace Conference, the United States unequivocally expressed its support for the complete restoration of Albania's independence.

Post-World War II Era: After World War II, particularly in 1945, the United States, through a group of experts under the Department of State, conducted a study on the situation in Albania (Meta, B. 2002: p. 98-99). The conclusions drawn from this study played a significant role in shaping American foreign policy towards the Albanian state. Apart from categorically rejecting Greek claims regarding Northern Epirus, the study highlighted the pronounced and consolidated Western orientation of the Albanian nation, with a prominent influence exerted by the United States.

During the 45 years of totalitarian rule in Albania, diplomatic relations between the two countries remained largely "frozen." However, even during this period, at certain historical moments, the United States had a notable impact on Albania's relations with regional countries. One example is the American influence to prevent possible military interventions by Greece or Yugoslavia in Albania (Meta, B. 2004: p. 24).

Restoration of Relations: Following a significant period of political transition, diplomatic relations between the United States and Albania experienced a renewal in 1991. This marked a significant milestone after several decades of limited engagement between the two countries. The reestablishment of diplomatic ties on March 15, 1991, symbolized a fresh chapter in the bilateral relationship, characterized by a shared commitment to democracy, cooperation, and mutual understanding.

During this transformative period, the visit of former Secretary of State James Baker to Albania on July 31, 1991, held particular significance. It served as a notable demonstration of the Albanian people's support for the United States. The arrival of Baker was met with remarkable enthusiasm, as approximately 500,000 Albanians (Sina, B. 2013, January 26). warmly embraced the Secretary of State and expressed

their appreciation for the United States' role in safeguarding Albania's national interests.

This pivotal moment reflected a departure from the previous era of communist propaganda that sought to portray the United States as an adversary of the Albanian nation. Instead, the United States came to be regarded as an embodiment of the Albanians' aspirations for democratic governance, prosperity, and stability within a region undergoing significant changes.

Consequently, the opening of the American embassy on October 1, 1991, after an extended period of diplomatic absence, signified Albania's reintegration into the regional and international arena. Edward William Rayerson, serving as the first American ambassador to Albania in over half a century, played a crucial role (Arvizu, A. A. 2011, October 6) in supporting the emerging opposition movement that would ultimately assume power on March 31, 1991. His contributions were instrumental in fostering a stronger bilateral relationship between the United States and Albania, rooted in shared values and strategic cooperation.

In light of the conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia in 1993, as well as in the interests of the United States and other Western powers, it was crucial to prevent any armed nationalist uprising among the Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia. Within this framework, with the aim of maintaining the status quo of Albania in the Balkans and beyond, the United States provided Albania with economic and political support. Furthermore, a distinct relationship developed between the two countries in the field of security, which led to the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on Military Relations with the United States in October 1993 (Meksi, E. 2003, p. 21), the first of its kind with a former communist country.

Albania-US Relations in the early 21st Century: In order to analyze the relationship between the two parties in the late 20th century, let us shift our focus to the beginning of the 21st century, particularly the period following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, which led to a shift in the priorities of American foreign policy, now centered around the "War on Terror." During this time, while Europe remained divided regarding its stance on military intervention in Iraq, Albania was among the eight European countries that declared their support against Saddam Hussein's regime. Following the approval by the Parliament on March 13, 2003, the deployment of troops to Iraq was authorized. It is worth considering the significant contribution of Albania, particularly given that the majority of its population adheres to the Muslim faith.

Another significant historical moment between the two countries is related to the Adriatic Charter, a promotional initiative designed by the United States for the countries that were not invited to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) from the "Vilnius Ten" group. Out of the ten countries involved in this initiative, only seven of them received invitations for membership: Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia,

Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia, while Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia were left out. However, the United States demonstrated a particular interest and dedication to assisting these countries in achieving their main goal of full integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. In this context, on May 2, 2003, the Foreign Minister of Albania, I. Meta, the Foreign Minister of Macedonia, I. Mitreva, the Foreign Minister of Croatia, T. Pikula, and Secretary of State Colin Powell signed the Adriatic Charter or A3 document in Tirana (U.S. Department of State. 2003, May 3). This document symbolized a military partnership agreement and, at the same time, a clear indication of American support for these countries, aligning with NATO's open-door policy. Albania's accession to this organization can be considered one of the significant achievements of these years.

It suffices to recall the time when President George W. Bush visited Albania in 2007 and the statement made by then-Prime Minister Sali Berisha, according to which he should be considered the "greatest and most distinguished friend we have ever had in all times." (Berisha, S. cited in Thrall, N. 2009). This perspective deserves consideration, particularly when taking into account that President W. Bush is a political figure who has generated more anti-Americanism in Europe than anyone else. His administration and policies have faced the most criticism in Western Europe. However, in Albania, the impact has been quite the opposite, as it marked the end of Cold War isolation, the ethnic cleansing of Kosovar Albanians by Serbian forces, and the declaration of Kosovo's imminent independence during his visit to Albania, along with Albania's NATO membership. Consequently, he gained sympathy and admiration, not only from the Albanian political class but, even more so, from the Albanian people. Therefore, America can rightfully be considered the historical friend of the Albanian nation.

A similar stance is encountered in the opposite political camp, where the leader of the Socialist Party, E. Rama, has expressed that Albania is undoubtedly the most pro-American country in Europe, if not in the world. In his capacity as the current Prime Minister of Albania, he stated:

"Our government attaches special importance to the strategic partnership with the United States. The embodiment of this partnership on the NATO front, from the accounts of Iraq and Afghanistan to the effort to disarm the murderous regime in Syria without war, is not only an unshakable obligation but also a source of pride for us Albanians. We will never forget, for any reason, that thanks to this partnership and thanks to the United States as the greatest friend and ally of Albanians, Albanians today are better off than ever before, wherever they reside in our region." (Rama, E. cited in Mejdini, F. 2013, November 12).

Secretary of State Visits in Albania: Strengthening the Strategic Partnership

The visits of United States Secretaries of State to Albania have played a significant role in shaping Albania's democratic transformation and its efforts towards Euro-Atlantic

integration. This part of the study examines the visits of James Baker, Madeleine Albright, Colin Powell, Hillary Clinton, John Kerry to Albania (U.S. Department of State Archive Websites, 1991-2021), exploring their impact on Albania's political, economic, and security landscape. By analyzing the statements, objectives, and outcomes of these visits, we intend to highlight the significant impact of United States Secretaries of State on Albania's democratic transformation and Euro-Atlantic integration.

James Baker (1991):

James Baker's visit to Albania on June 22, 1991, marked an important milestone in the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and Albania after decades of isolation. His visit focused on expressing support for Albania's transition to democracy and its pursuit of closer ties with the international community. Baker's encouragement of economic reforms and emphasis on political stability provided guidance for Albania's development in the post-communist era (U.S. Department of State, 1991).

Madeleine Albright (2000):

The visit of US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to Albania on February 19, 2000, holds significance in the diplomatic relations between the United States and Albania. This particular date marks her first visit to Albania after the bombing of Serbian forces in Kosovo in June 1999. During her visit, Secretary Albright recognized the vital role played by the Albanians during the Kosovo crisis, particularly their efforts in hosting and providing assistance to the influx of Kosovo refugees seeking refuge in Albania. The visit served as an opportunity to emphasize the importance of Albania's humanitarian contributions and to strengthen the solidarity between the two nations during a critical period of regional instability.

Colin Powell (2003):

The initial milestone in strengthening the relationship between Albania and the United States was marked by the signing of the Adriatic Charter. On May 2, 2003, the US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, along with the Foreign Ministers of Macedonia and Croatia, visited Tirana to participate in this significant event. It was a crucial step towards closer cooperation and regional integration. (U.S. Department of State, 2003).

Hillary Clinton (2012):

Hillary Clinton visited Albania on November 1, 2012. She acknowledged Albania's progress in democratic reforms and expressed support for its Euro-Atlantic integration. Clinton emphasized the importance of rule of law, combating corruption, and protecting human rights as crucial elements of Albania's democratic development. Her visit also recognized Albania's contributions to regional security

and stability. Clinton's visit served to strengthen the bilateral relationship between the United States and Albania and provided guidance for further progress in key areas of mutual interest. (U.S. Department of State, 2012).

John Kerry (2016):

John Kerry, the United States Secretary of State at the time, visited Albania on February 14, 2016. The purpose of his visit was to reaffirm the strong partnership between the United States and Albania and to express support for Albania's continued progress in various areas. Kerry also emphasized the importance of economic development and job creation as key factors for Albania's future success. He encouraged increased foreign investment and trade opportunities between the United States and Albania. The visit of John Kerry to Albania served as a platform to strengthen the strategic partnership between the two countries (U.S. Department of State, 2016).

The visits of James Baker, Madeleine Albright, Colin Powell, Hillary Clinton and John Kerry, to Albania have played a crucial role in shaping Albania's democratic transformation and its integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions. These visits have provided guidance, support, and acknowledgment of Albania's progress in various areas, including democracy, rule of law and regional cooperation.

Albanian-US Bilateral Agreements since 1992

In terms of bilateral agreements signed and ratified between Albania and the United States since 1992, the Directorate of Treaties and International Law at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs¹ of our country reports the following:

Agreement on economic and technical assistance, signed on June 10, 1992, entered into force on the date of signing.

Bilateral economic agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the United States of America, signed on June 10, 1992, entered into force on the date of signing.

Note exchange agreement on the employment of family members of government officials between Albania and the United States of America, signed on August 30 and September 30, 1993, entered into force on September 30, 1993.

Agreement on cooperation and exchange of data on topographic, nautical, and aeronautical charts, geodetic and geophysical digital data related to maps, and geodetic materials, signed on March 25, 1994, entered into force on March 25, 1994.

¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, Directorate of Treaties and International Law. "Bilateral Agreements with All Countries." Pages 64-65.

Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of diplomatic relations, signed on March 15, 1995, entered into force on the date of signing.

Note exchange agreement on some amendments to the "Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the United States of America on the settlement of certain claims," signed on March 10, 1995, entered into force on April 18, 1995. Its amendment was signed on November 18, 2005, for the U.S., and on April 27, 2006, for our party.

Treaty between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the United States of America on the encouragement and reciprocal protection of investment, signed on January 11, 1995, entered into force on January 4, 1998.

Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the United States of America for the U.S. Peace Corps program in Albania, signed on July 22, 2003, entered into force on October 9, 2003.

Agreement on the implementation of the law between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the United States of America, signed on January 10, 2002.

Adriatic Charter between Albania, Macedonia, Croatia, and the United States, signed on May 2, 2003, entered into force on the date of signing.

Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the United States of America on the surrender of persons to the International Criminal Court, signed on May 2, 2003. Law No. 9081, dated June 19, 2003, entered into force on July 7, 2003.

Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the United States of America on cooperation in the field of preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and enhancing military and defense relations, signed on May 12, 2003, entered into force on the date of signing.

Supplemental Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the United States of America regarding the "Agreement among the States Parties to the North Atlantic Treaty and the other States participating in the Partnership for Peace regarding the status of their forces" on the status of United States forces in the Republic of Albania, signed on March 31, 2004, entered into force on August 19, 2004.

Air Transport Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the United States of America, signed on September 24, 2003, entered into force on April 5, 2004.

Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the United States of America for the protection and preservation of certain cultural properties, signed on July 12, 2004.

Agreement between the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Albania and the Department of Defense of the United States of America for the safe, risk-free, and environmentally sound destruction of chemical weapons, signed on December 30, 2004, entered into force on the date of signing.

Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the American Corporation "Lockheed Martin" for the construction of the Integrated Maritime Surveillance System, signed on March 15, 2005, ratified by Law No. 9384, dated May 4, 2005.

Strategic Objective Grant Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the United States of America to combat corruption, within the framework of the initial millennium challenge assessment program, signed on April 3, 2006, ratified by Law No. 9549, dated June 1, 2006.

Strategic Objective Grant Agreement Phase II between the Republic of Albania and the United States of America to combat corruption, signed on September 29, 2008, ratified by Law No. 10026, dated December 11, 2008 (USAID).

Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the United States of America, signed on June 26, 2009, entered into force on the date of signing.

Assistance Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the United States of America for just and democratic governance; investing in people and economic growth, signed on September 30, 2010.

Amendment Document Number One to the Assistance Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the United States of America for just and democratic governance, investing in people and economic growth, signed on September 16, 2011, for the U.S. government, and on September 19, 2011, for the government of the Republic of Albania.

Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Albanian-American Development Foundation for development, signed on June 7, 2011, entered into force on the date of signing.

Amendment Document Number Two to the Assistance Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the United States of America for just and democratic governance, investing in people and economic growth, signed on April 4, 2012, approved by Council of Ministers Decision No. 789, dated November 14, 2012.

Agreement on Development Objectives Assistance between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the United States of America for strengthening the rule of law, good governance, and creating conditions for broad, sustainable, and inclusive economic growth, signed on September 30, 2013.

Grant Agreement for Development Objectives between the U.S. Government, acting through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Albanian Government "For strengthening the rule of law and good governance and creating conditions for broad, sustainable, and inclusive economic growth."

Amendment number four to the "Agreement on Development Objectives Assistance between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the United States of America for strengthening the rule of law, good governance, and creating conditions for broad, sustainable, and inclusive economic growth," signed on December 29, 2014.

Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement, with annexes, signed at Tirana and Patch Barracks on August 26 and September 23, 2015, entered into force on September 23, 2015. (United States Department of State, 2020, p. 3-4).

Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Albania for the Exchange of Terrorism Screening Information, signed at Tirana on April 14, 2016, entered into force on September 14, 2016. (ibid).

Memorandum of Understanding between the United States of America and Albania on Cultural Exchanges, Property, and Cooperation Import Restrictions, signed at Washington on August 23, 2021, entered into force on February 28, 2022 (United States Department of State 2021-2022, p.1)

Discussion

The literature on Albania-US relations spans several decades and offers valuable insights into the historical, political, and strategic dimensions of this bilateral relationship. Early sources, provides a comprehensive historical overview of the century-long relationship between Albania and the US. It emphasizes the strategic importance of Albania for the US during the Cold War and highlights the US's role in supporting democratic and market-oriented reforms in the post-communist era.

The analysis of Beqir Meta's books (2002, 2004) sheds light on the complex and at times tense relations between Albania and Greece, including territorial disputes and political tensions. These works underscore the efforts made by the US to mediate conflicts and promote regional stability in the Balkans.

In the contemporary era, Albania's strong pro-Western orientation, exemplified by its NATO membership and aspirations for EU integration, has been a defining feature of its relationship with the US. Ermelinda Meksi's article (2003) discusses the challenges

and opportunities of Albania's integration into Euro-Atlantic structures, with the US playing a significant role in supporting democratic and economic reforms.

Recent media coverage has highlighted key areas of cooperation between Albania and the US, such as countering terrorism and organized crime, as well as supporting democracy and human rights. Nathan Thrall's article (2009) argues that Albania's pro-US stance is rooted in cultural and historical ties, as well as its aspirations for modernization and democratization.

The analysis of bilateral agreements between Albania and the US further illuminates the evolving nature of their partnership. These agreements, documented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, have played a vital role in fostering economic development, enhancing security cooperation, promoting educational exchanges, and fostering cultural understanding. They reflect the mutual interests and priorities of both nations, providing a cooperative framework that has shaped their relationship over the years.

Overall, the findings of this study underscore the depth and complexity of the diplomatic relations between Albania and the United States. They demonstrate that the historical, political, and strategic factors have influenced and continue to shape this bilateral partnership. The strong pro-American sentiment in Albania, combined with US support for democratic reforms and regional stability, has contributed to the enduring nature of their relationship.

However, it is important to acknowledge that challenges and potential areas for further study exist. Future research could explore the economic dimensions of Albania-US relations, the impact of cultural and educational exchanges, and the role of public diplomacy in shaping public perceptions and attitudes towards each other.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of literature and bilateral agreements provides valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of the Albania-US partnership. The historical, political, and strategic factors, along with mutual interests and priorities, have contributed to the strong and enduring diplomatic relations between these two countries.

In light of the prevailing circumstances, it becomes evident that the United States has duly recognized and capitalized upon the proverbial pro-American sentiment among the Albanian populace, thereby solidifying its position as a strategic partner. By actively contributing to the democratization process and bolstering the capacity of Albanian institutions, particularly those pertaining to law enforcement, the United States has successfully fostered a sense of security within Albania under its protective purview, especially concerning matters of foreign policy vis-à-vis regional counterparts. Presently, U.S. support is concentrated on elevating professional standards in combating international and organized crime, countering terrorism,

curbing arms and human trafficking, as well as enhancing Albanian military and intelligence capabilities.

When appraising the prospects of the bilateral relationship between the two nations through the lens of various theoretical perspectives in international politics, it becomes apparent that the anticipated outcome remains consistent. Specifically, by eschewing an ideologically driven approach to the analysis of this relationship, predictability can be readily discerned. Based on the firm belief that Albania will not deviate towards a totalitarian or authoritarian regime in the distant future, it is reasonable to conclude that the relationship between the two countries will endure unabated.

Adopting a behavioralist paradigm, wherein the course of the relationship is contingent upon the behavior, actions, and decisions of political leaders seeking to acquire and maintain power, it is reaffirmed that the trajectory of the bilateral ties will remain unaltered. Albanian political actors continue to perceive the United States as the principal benefactor in their pursuit of political ascendancy.

Should these relations be contextualized within a potential reconfiguration of the international system, it follows that as long as the system remains immutable and under the stewardship of the United States, the bilateral relationship between Albania and the United States will remain impervious to change. The United States will persist in viewing Albania as the most ardently pro-American nation within the region, while Albania, in turn, will regard the United States as the preeminent superpower providing guarantees against conceivable regional threats.

Adopting an institutionalist perspective, the defining element of these relations emanates from the concurrent participation of both nations in numerous international organizations, such as the United Nations, the Partnership for Peace Council, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, and notably, their shared membership within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

In summation, drawing upon the aforementioned analytical frameworks, it can be reasonably concluded that the trajectory of the Albania-USA relationship will persist with an unwavering spirit of cooperation in the foreseeable future, remaining unswayed by external circumstances. The prevailing political climate will continue to regard Albania and its people as among the staunchest proponents of the American cause. As eloquently stated by the eminent Fan S. Noli, "We cannot repay America for the deeds it has undertaken and continues to undertake for the Albanian nation. However, if we remain steadfast in our commitment to the causes of civilization and humanism, then America, in its magnanimous tradition, will absolve us of the debt we owe, thus relieving us of an arduous and inescapable moral burden toward our American counterparts." (Cited in Klosi, F. 2011)

Recommendations

To further our understanding of this relationship, future studies should focus on the following areas:

- Economic Cooperation, analyzing trade patterns, investment opportunities, and technology transfer between Albania and the United States;
- Cultural and Educational Exchanges: Assessing the impact of cultural and educational programs on fostering cross-cultural understanding and academic collaboration;
- Development Assistance Programs: Evaluating the effectiveness of U.S. development assistance in areas such as governance, infrastructure, and social welfare;
- Regional Dynamics: Examining the role of the United States in regional initiatives and its contributions to stability and security in the Western Balkans;
- Public Perceptions: Investigating public attitudes towards the United States in Albania and understanding the factors influencing these perceptions.

By conducting research in these areas, policymakers and scholars can contribute to the ongoing development of the Albania-USA relationship and inform evidence-based policies that strengthen this strategic partnership.

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Factors Influencing Teachers to Stay in the Profession: Case of Albania

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Abstract

Researchers show that exist many factors that influence teachers to remain in the profession. Legal changes happening in Albania during these years have brought some difficulties in the profession of a teacher, raising their workload and a lot of documents to fulfill that in some cases drain the teacher's energy and limit their time to work with children. This article comes as a result of a previous study on searching for factors that influence teachers to choose their profession. The aim of this article is to study why teachers in Albania stay in their profession using semi-structured interviews with 68 (sixty-eight) teachers at different levels. The methodology used in this study consists of a qualitative design. This study highlighted some factors that influence teachers in Albania to stay in their profession such as internal factors (motivation, love for students, job satisfaction, working with children, etc.) and less external factors (sustainability in salary, financial stability, etc.).

Keywords: Teacher, profession, internal factors, external factors

Introduction

The evolution of a society is based on the available skilled human resources. This is ensured through the education of the whole population (Polat, 2022). Teachers play a crucial role in this process because all professions are taught by the teachers. Therefore, the necessity to have well-qualified teachers is fundamental for the future of the society.

Nowadays we are living in a dynamic, global, and constantly changing and developing world. The progress in the education system has an important impact on the industry and of course developments in the industry force changes in education (Aslan Efe & Hanas, 2022).

Due to legal changes in Albania, the road to becoming a teacher requires more years of studies and training. Thus, to become a teacher, which is a regulated profession, for lower and upper secondary education, students have to finish a master's study program with 120 credits. After the university, they should perform professional practice and then it is obligatory to pass the state exam in order to start a job as a

teacher. (Initial education for teachers working in early childhood and school education | Eurydice: europa.eu).

Reasons to choose teaching as a profession differ from and are related to internal and external factors. Internal factors include the willingness to work with children and to give a contribution to their development, perceiving teaching abilities such as having the qualities of a good teacher, etc., and external factors include job stability, economic reasons, etc. But what motivates teachers to stay in the profession?

In fact, when choosing a profession is done according to personal traits, the likelihood to stay in that profession is greater.

A Plethora of studies shows the motives that drive teachers to enter the profession and while these motives play an important role in the decision to become a teacher, according to Skalvik and Skalvik (2011) occupational well-being is decisive for staying in the profession. And when we talk about occupational well-being, according to Aldrup et al., (2018) it is a result of the interplay between the presence of positive experiences and the absence of negative ones (Lucksnat, et., al., 2022).

Literature review

During the last three decades, a lot of studies have been done on teacher mobility and their intention to leave the job (Ghoulbzouri, 2022). Teachers, which are members of a profession as old as human history (Uslu & Uzgun, 2022) play a crucial role in the successful fulfillment of educational activities in the school (Hoy & Miskel, 2010, as cited in Erturk, 2023), and their dedication to work plays an important role in the whole educational system (Beare, 2001, as cited in Erturk, 2023). During these times, the duties and responsibilities of teachers are increasing very fast. (Turali, 2014 as cited in Celik & Ergin, 2022). A profession is part of the individual identity and every teacher has a teaching identity, that is different from the other teachers this professional identity is formed throughout life since they observe their teachers from childhood till the end of the teacher's time in the profession (Rubio, 2023). The challenges that face the teaching profession nowadays are enormous, and staying in the teaching profession requires an altruistic heart and also a high level of motivation (Medina-Carls, 2020). In fact, the attractiveness of the teaching profession has a high impact on the decision-making stage and is directly connected to career choice motivation (Luchenko & Yurchenko, 2023).

Prather – Jones (2011a & 2011b) as cited in Bacsá-Ban (2021) made a survey among teachers and found 8 elements among factors that contribute to staying in the profession and he divided these factors into two groups. The first one is the group of individual characteristics and the second one is linked with the grants arriving from the institution.

But as cited in Bacsá-Ban (2021), several researchers have highlighted additional factors for staying in a teaching career such as:

- Satisfaction and mental health (Berry, 2012);
- Support received at the beginning of the career (Parker-Ndoye-Imig, 2009);
- Relationship with colleagues, and administrative support;
- Role of helping associated professions (school psychologists) (Gallant, 2009).
- These aspects are related to the characteristics of the institution, such as:
 - Workload;
 - Size of class and group;
 - Type of the director of the institution;
 - Location of the institution;
 - The school atmosphere;
 - Role of collegiality;
 - Characteristics of the composition of students, etc.

(Paksi et al, 2015, as cited in Bacsa-Ban 2021).

A lot of studies show the existence of intrinsic motivations as the key factors in staying in the profession and in the decision to choose the career. Also, studies revealed that career choices were based on 5 factors such as appropriate skills; shaping the future of children/adolescents; the importance of working with them, and also the internal value of the career and the previous teaching/learning experience that has shaped their career choices (Paksi et al, 2015a & 2015b as cited in Bacsa-Ban, 2021).

According to Day (2002) the core elements that make the teachers' professional identity and affect their retention are motivation and commitment, beliefs, personal and professional values, efficacy, and job satisfaction (Saks, et., al., 2021).

In general, early career teachers have altruistic motivations; they have a lot of satisfaction in working with children, helping them to learn new ideas, and have a great desire to teach. (Watt et al, 2012, as cited in Whipp & Salin, 2018). Although the teaching profession may be very stressful and demanding, there are a lot of factors that lead to satisfaction and quality of work-life. And the main reasons that keep teachers in their profession are "general satisfaction", "Professional interaction" and of course "students" (Whipp & Salin, 2018).

Aim of the study

This study aims to examine the reasons why teachers in Albania stay in their profession, despite all the legal changes that have happened over the past years.

Research question

What motivates teachers in Albania to stay in the teaching profession?

Research method

The methodology design used in this study was qualitative design. According to Denzin (1994), qualitative research helps researchers study things in their natural

state, trying to give them meaning or to interpret the phenomenon according to the opinion of the people who bring it.

Sample: In this study participated sixty-eight teachers from elementary, middle, and high schools in the city of Tirana. Of them sixty-nine were females and nine were males. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups were conducted to understand their reasons for staying in the teaching profession.

Procedure: After taking permission from the directorate of six schools in Tirana, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with forty-two teachers and two focus groups with sixteen teachers. In the beginning, it is explained the aim of the study and is guaranteed anonymity. Interviews and focus groups are conducted in the period March-April 2023. One interview lasted approximately fifteen minutes and a focus group lasted approximately twenty-five minutes.

Data analysis: Data analysis was carried out based on the interpretative phenomenological approach. Forty-two interviews were transcribed one by one, as also discussions from focus groups. Each of them has been analyzed and then four themes were identified.

Data analyses

After the analysis of the semi-structured interviews, this study revealed some factors that contribute to staying in the teaching profession in Albania, and four important themes are identified: teaching is a mission, deep interest in the teaching profession and the values it holds, perceiving teaching abilities, and salary is low but gives financial stability.

A part of the interviewees believed that internal factors such as the passion to work with children/adolescents, the willingness to contribute to the forming of the children's personalities, and the internal desire to be with children and help them in difficult situations are strong factors that motivate and give them a high level of job satisfaction. Some of them, even though the teacher salary in Albania is low, believed that this profession gives them somehow financial stability and sustainability, and this is the reason why they stay in this profession even from time to time they thought to change it during their career span.

As mentioned above, this study pointed out four important themes, namely:

Teaching is a mission

Most of the teachers who participated in this study believed that their profession is not exactly a profession. It is more of a mission. We can see this in the transcripts below:

“Teacher is at the top of all professions because teaching in itself is a mission” (T.16, tenure 14 years)

“My mission and my contribution as a teacher are to prepare young generations with the necessary skills to serve my country”. (T.34, tenure 32 years)

“I choose this profession with all of my heart, and I do believe that this mission is entrusted to me to give my contribution to the young generation”. (T.41, tenure 28 years)

“.....We teach all other professionals, so... all the society....” (T.62, tenure 12 years)

Deep interest in the teaching profession and the values it holds

Some of the teachers, even though they have a lot of years in this profession and are all aware of the difficulties with the workload and filling out all the documents that sometimes drain their time and energy, again express a strong interest in the teaching profession.

“There are a lot of factors that make me stay in my teaching profession, but I would like to highlight the fact that this profession is the only one that gives me pleasure and job satisfaction” (T.6, tenure 18 years)

“...In fact, since I was a child, I wanted to become a teacher. I like very much to help children in their way to build their personality. Children are the future of our country and if we want a better future, we must work very hard with our children” (T.19, tenure 28 years)

“What I like most from this profession is that teaching offers the opportunity to contribute to shaping the children’s personality, and at the same time you get great pleasure when you see how children’s mind work and function”. (T.53, tenure 21 years)

“A teacher should work almost all the time with children...” (T.12, tenure 18 years)

“What makes me stay in this profession is related to motivation, I feel I am able to fuel the personality development of the children” (T.64, tenure 16 years)

“I have never thought to change profession, even though I know that recently the teaching profession has become very demanding and there are a lot of documents there to be filled out” (T.37, tenure 22 years)

“I love to transmit to children the love for books and reading books because this is the only way they can be powerful”. (T.9, tenure 15 years)

Perceiving teaching abilities

Teachers who participated in this study believed that they have all the necessary skills to be good teachers and to contribute to the future of the children. Working with children gives them positive vibes.

“What makes me stay in this profession is related to motivation, I feel I am able to fuel the personality development of the children” (T.64, tenure 16 years)

“Managing the class and communicating with adolescents is one of my favourite tasks as a teacher” (T.18, tenure 19 years)

“Hmmm.... what makes me stay in this profession.... No doubt is my energy when I work with children, despite the difficulties in our society nowadays” (T.57, tenure 24 years)

“When I work with children, I feel like I can freely breathe. I know all the difficulties already present today but I can’t do any other job. I am exactly where I should be” (T.36, tenure 29 years)

“Children give me a lot of positive energy. I can’t even imagine my profession without them. I think we are in sync with each other...I can understand them” (T.11, tenure 10 years)

“The best teacher teaches from the heart and not from the books” (T.48, tenure 17 years)

Low salary but gives somehow financial stability

Teachers, the subject of this study, are aware of the low salary but they also are aware of the reality, and even though the teaching profession is demanding they think that this job somehow gives them financial security.

“.....The salary isn’t rewarding, but... I am glad for my personal motivation in working with children” (T.27, tenure 11 years)

“The government should have appreciated more teachers, but having regard to the reality, the teacher salary gives a sense of stability and a feeling of financial security.....” (T.47, tenure 19 years)

“.....but, hmmm....the salary of a teacher should be more motivated....” (T.15, tenure 8 years)

Conclusions

This study highlighted some factors that influence teachers in Albania to stay in their profession such as internal factors (motivation, love for students, job satisfaction, working with children, etc.) and less external factors (sustainability in salary, financial stability, etc.). On the one hand, the passion to work with children/adolescents, the willingness to contribute to the forming of the children’s personalities, and the internal desire to be with children and help them in difficult situations are strong factors that motivate teachers in Albania to stay in the profession and give them a high level of job satisfaction. They, fortunately, believe in their

capability and willingness to work with children because the best compensation for them is a bright future for the new generation and for our country.

On the other hand, even though this profession is very demanding, and the salary is low, this profession gives them somehow financial stability and sustainability in salary, and this is the reason why they stay in this profession even from time to time they thought about changing it during their career span.

Limitations of the study

Lack of sincerity in responding.

Sixty-eight teachers do not generalize all the teachers in Albania.

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The Relationship Between Investment Portfolio and Financial Performance in Albanian Insurance Companies

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Abstract

The insurance sector plays an important role in the Albanian financial system. This industry represents a key and advanced position of the non-banking financial sector due to the features and dynamics that characterize it. In Albania, it is guided and standardized according to the Directives of the European Union Organizations and supervised by the Financial Supervisory Authority. The objective of this study is to determine the relationship that exists between investment portfolio and financial performance for the entire insurance sector in Albania. The study used secondary data provided by the annual reports of insurance companies and the official reports published by the Financial Supervisory Authority in Albania. The main analysis of the paper is based on the descriptive interpretation of secondary data for the period 2017-2022. The representative parameters of the investment portfolio of insurance companies used in the analysis are: the ratio of Government Securities to total assets; the ratio of Bank Deposits to total assets; the ratio of Land and Buildings to total assets and the ratio of Investments in Subordinated Undertakings to total assets. The representative variables of financial performance are ROA and ROE. In order to have a comparative analysis between companies, the study internally investigates the structure of investments in the portfolio of Life and Non-Life insurance companies.

Keywords: insurance companies, investment portfolio, financial performance, government securities, bank deposits

Introduction

Investments constitute a very important dimension of the existence and longevity of various companies and institutions. Measuring the performance of an investment portfolio is a key aspect for all stakeholders in an economic entity, especially nowadays where financial markets represent the headline of developments all over

the world. As for any industry, also for the insurance industry investments represent a very important and delicate element of the financial performance of the companies that operate within it.

Insurance plays a large and very important role in developed and modern economies. Everywhere in every economy in the world, the insurance sector is essential to ensure a stable economy as its presence contributes to economic growth in one aspect but also in taking risks that can potentially lead to financial ruin (Geneva, 2009).

The insurance industry is important for the stability of the financial system because of the important role they play in three main aspects: first, because they are large institutional investors in the financial markets; secondly, they provide risk protection through insurance for market actor such as households and businesses; thirdly, the increased connections they have with banks and other financial institutions cause their problems to spread to other sectors as well (Financial Stability Review, 2009).

Due to the nature of the activity that insurance companies carry out, the sources of funding are relatively stable and therefore their liquidity risk is lower than for banking activity, giving them more space for investing these funds. Carrying out a very specific activity in the financial system and not being involved in complex activities as banks do, the insurance sector is not considered an important source that can damage the stability of the financial system. But in the current trend of interaction that markets and institutions have with each other, a problem or uncertainty of this market can be transmitted to other markets with a greater systemic importance, undermining the stability of the entire financial system.

Insurance companies raise funds through the collection of insurance policies they offer to their customers. In order to guarantee financial stability, an important aspect is related to the investment of these free funds which would enable their value to increase, thus facilitating the payment at the time of maturity in the future. For this reason, a delicate aspect is related to the investment decision of these funds. According to (Omarkhanova, Amerzhanova, Mardenova, Zayakina, & Sartova, 2019), insurers collect funds from their policyholders and invest mainly in financial institutions such as banking and in alternatives that capital markets offer.

One of the most developed and largest insurance markets is located in the European Union where insurance companies as the largest institutional investors contribute to the growth and financial stability of these countries (Focarelli, 2017).

Regarding the insurance industry in Albania, this market has evolved relatively late, after the 90s, therefore its history is limited. Currently, 12 insurance companies operate, which hold 2% of the financial system and 23% of the non-banking sector in Albania. (Stability Report of Bank of Albania , 2022).

The insurance market in Albania throughout the beginning of 2023 is focused on Non-Life insurance, maintaining the traditional trend over the years, accumulating 91.88%

of the total volume of premiums from the entire sector, while life insurance brought 8.09% and reinsurance 0.028% of premiums . Meanwhile, according to the type of insurance, for voluntary insurance the gross written premiums hold 46.58% and for mandatory insurance they hold 53.42% of the total market. (Statistical Report, January-March 2023)

This study investigates the investment portfolios of insurance companies for the entire market in Albania, to identify if there is a relationship between the forms of investment and their financial performance. More specifically, how does their investment decision-making appear against the financial performance of these institutions. In more detail, the study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- To identify the type of investments held in the investment portfolios of insurance companies in Albania;
- To analyze ROA and ROE profitability indicators of insurance companies;
- To interpret statistical data on the weight that investments have on total assets for the entire aggregate insurance market in Albania;
- To compare the weight that specific categories of investments hold to the total assets for Life insurance companies and for Non-Life insurance companies;
- To identify the nature of the relationship that exists between investment representative indicators and profitability indicators ROA and ROE through the correlation coefficients analysis.

Literature Review

Throughout 2021, the main assets of insurance companies are mainly invested in traditional forms of investment, mainly bonds. Rising inflation caused interest rates to rise, causing losses on some bonds. In 27 out of 43 jurisdictions, life insurers invest directly in bonds. The first place is held by Life insurers in Mexico with 95%. While Non-Life insurance companies have 50% of their assets in bills and bonds, less than life insurers (57%). The first place among non-life insurers that invest more in bonds is occupied by Hungary (82%), in government bonds. (OECD, 2023)

It is noted that there are other forms of instruments and vehicles in the investment portfolios of Non-life insurers. Throughout 2021, in the investment portfolios of non-life insurers in Switzerland, the weight of participations is almost 29% of assets, in land and buildings with 5% and 10% in loans in 2021. (FINMA, 2022)

According to (Erel, Rose, & Michael, 2012) insurance companies especially in difficult financial conditions orient their investment portfolio towards safer assets, even more so during the financial crisis. In some studies regarding the risk assumed by insurance companies, it has been proven that this is related to high-risk investments, such as in the capital markets. The potential role played mainly by life insurance companies and pension funds, especially as large institutional investors, has become a central topic of discussion in many studies in recent years (Gal, 2016).

Studies related to financial performance and its influencing factors in the insurance industry have generated different results, influenced by the economic context, the study period, the number of companies in the study, the selected variables, the structure of the investment portfolio taken into analysis. etc. The selected factors can serve the macroeconomic context and specific factors related to the internal activity of the companies.

In their study, Akitoye & Felix (2008) they concluded that the investment decision-making of companies has a positive relationship with profitability ratios.

Majali (2012) carried out a study related to the investigation of the factors that most affect the financial performance of insurance companies in Jordan. The study included 25 insurance companies during the period 2002-2007 and the representative performance indicator was ROA. The paper concluded that the increase in the company's assets would lead to a good financial performance.

Kripa & Ajasllari (2016) in their study of the insurance market in Albania during the period 2008-2013, concluded that the growth rate is positively associated with profitability ROA. While fixed assets, liabilities and liquidity are negatively correlated.

Moro & Anderloni (2014) in their study they analyzed 198 European insurance companies for the period 2004-2012. The results showed that reserves dimension and asset turnover affect positively profitability ROA, while diversification and asset size affect it negatively.

Abera & Abede (2019) studied the determinants of financial performance in Ethiopian insurance companies during the period 2010 - 2015. The findings showed that liquidity, size, loss, leverage and capital adequacy were the main determinants of financial performance ROA and ROE.

Data and Methodology

The study used official secondary data extracted from the annual reports of insurance companies, the annual and statistical reports published by the Financial Supervisory Authority. The information is collected from the official websites of the companies and the Financial Supervisory Authority. The target group of the population under study were all Life and Non-Life insurance companies operating in Albania. The study applies a descriptive research design. The main analysis of this study is based on the qualitative interpretation of secondary data for the period 2017-2022.

Table 1 presents the research variables measurements of the study:

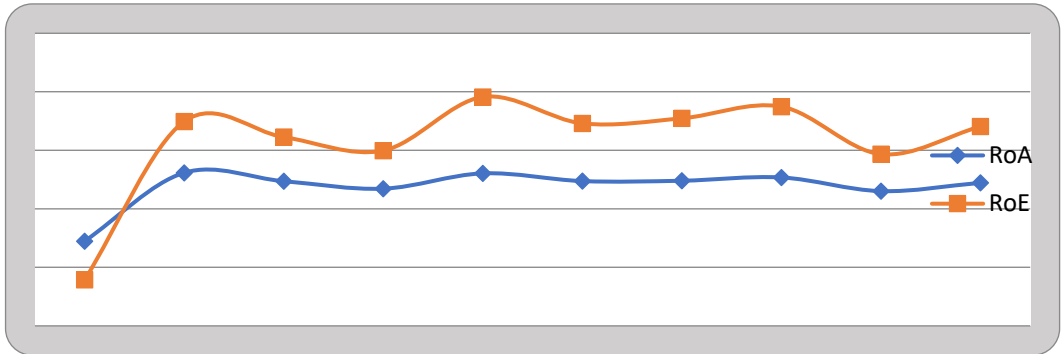
Table 2: Research variables measurement

Variable	Symbol	Measurements
Return on assets	ROA	Net income/ Total Assets
Return on Equity	ROE	Net income / Total Equity
Government Securities Ratio	GSR	Government securities/Total Asset
Bank Deposits Ratio	BDR	Bank Deposits/Total Asset
Real Estate Ratio	RER	Land and buildings/Total Asset
Investments in Subordinated undertakings Ratio	ISR	Investments in subordinated undertakings/Total Asset

Results

To see the trend that the indicators of the financial performance of insurance companies in Albania have had over the years, figure 1 is presented. As can be seen, the performance of the indicators is similar, despite the fact that the dominance in value is provided by the ROE indicator. A delicate moment where both indicators showed a negative level is the year 2013, when ROE again had the lowest value. In the last decade, it can be seen that the financial performance has been positive, with more pronounced decreases or increases in the return on equity. After the dark period of 2013, the lowest value for both indicators during this decade was in 2021 with 4.67% for ROE and 1.51% for ROA. The effect of the Covid-19 pandemic has also negatively affected the insurance industry, shrinking the profitability of these companies. The decline began gradually from the moment of the spread of Covid-19 in Albania in March 2020 and subsequently culminated in 2021.

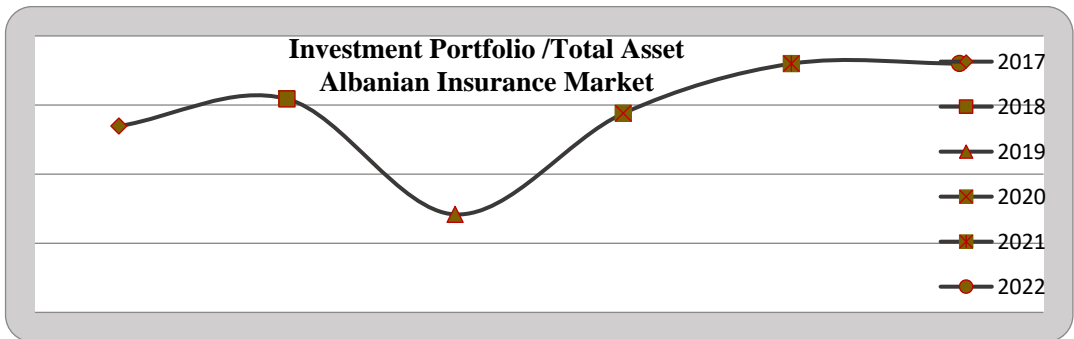
Figure 2: ROA and ROE (Albanian Insurance Market)



Source: Financial Supervisory Authority

Figure 2 presents the weight that the investment portfolio has to the total asset for the entire aggregate insurance market. We see that investments in Government securities, Real Estate, Bank deposits and Investments in subordinated undertaking occupy a dominant weight in the total assets of this sector, where the average values fluctuate between 64%-68%. Except for the year 2019 where was recorded the lowest level of 57.09%. This proves the high importance that decision-making in these investments has for the insurance activity.

Figure 3: Investment Portfolio/ Total Asset (Albanian Insurance Market)

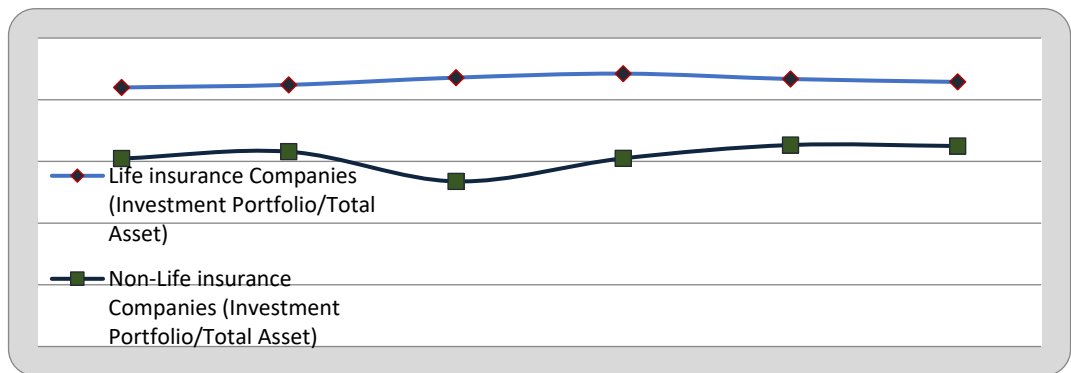


Source: Author's calculation (Financial Supervisory Authority data)

To analyze in more detail the share of investment portfolio to the total assets of Life and Non-Life insurance companies, is presented figure 3. Given that Life insurance companies have more stable funds than Non-life insurance companies, this is also reflected in a higher weight that investments occupy in their total assets. As shown, the investment portfolio appears stable for life insurers with values fluctuating between 83.98% in 2017 and 85.78% in 2022. The highest value was recorded in 2020 with 88.46%.

While for non-life insurers, the weight of the investment portfolio has a minimum value of 53.53% in 2019, a maximum value of 65.31% in 2021 and 65% in 2022. It is noted that the progress of the investment portfolio for non-insurers over the years matches the progress that the portfolio of investments had for the entire aggregate insurance market in Albania. This is justified by the high weight that the assets of non-life insurers have to the total assets of the entire insurance market in Albania, with about 87.61%. While life insurance with about 12.39%.

Figure 4: Investment Portfolio/ Total Asset (Life and Non-Life Insurance Companies)



Source: Author's calculation (Financial Supervisory Authority data)

Figures 4 and 5 present the weights that different types of investment had to total assets for Life and Non-Life Insurance Companies. In both types of companies, is noticeable the dominance that Bank Deposits have in the respective investment portfolios. The highest weight is evident in life insurers compared to non-life insurers, where the maximum value was reached in 2020 with 58%. In life insurers, in second place are investments in government securities, the weight of which peaked in 2017 with 45% and the minimum in 2020 with 19%. The uncertainty of the Covid-19 period was reflected in the reduction of investment exposure to public securities and the orientation towards safer assets, such as real estate. Investments in real estate and in subordinated undertaking are at low values. While for non-life insurers, in second place are investments in real estate with about 16.1% in 2022, which also marks the highest value. While investments in government securities and subordinated undertaking hold an almost similar weight to the total assets of these companies.

Figure 5: Types of Investment/Total Assets
(Life Insurance Companies)

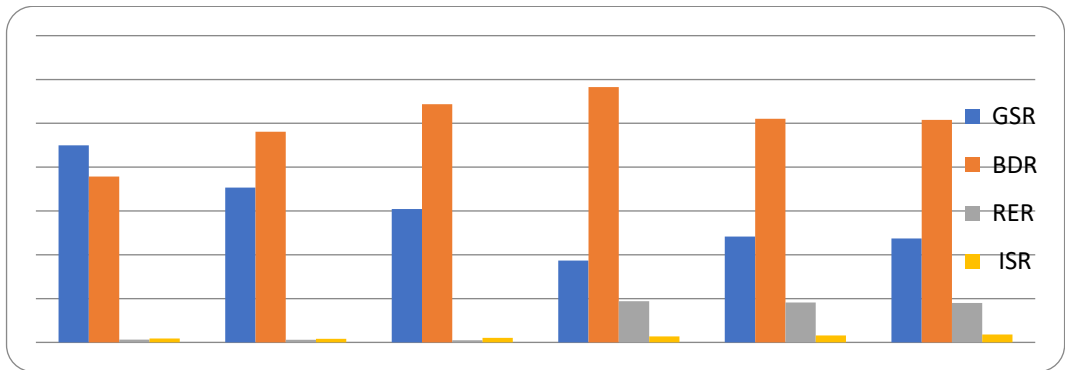
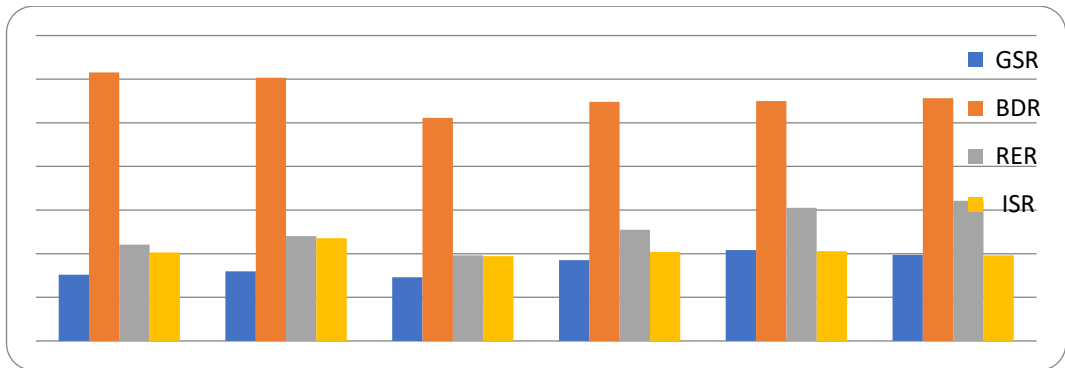


Figure 6: Type of Investment/Total Assets
(Non-Life Insurance Companies)



Source: Author's calculation

In order to evaluate the degree of correlation between the indicators selected in a study, is presented table 2. According to (Pallant, 2011), the analysis of the correlation between the variables is very important to evaluate the strength and direction of the connection that the variables have with each other.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix

	GSR	BDR	RER	ISR	ROA	ROE
GSR	1					
BDR	0.442196	1				
RER	0.622476	0.172828	1			
ISR	-0.10707	0.525829	-0.27181	1		
ROA	-0.34737	0.293928	-0.61851	-0.02223	1	

ROE	-0.3898	0.240223	-0.60616	-0.08339	0.995921	1
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Source: Author's calculation

The correlation coefficient indicates the bi-variable relationship between two variables. According to the results presented in table 2, it is observed that between the two profitability indicators ROA and ROE the relationship is strong positive with a coefficient of 0.9959, which was expected. So both indicators move in the same direction. ROA and ROE present a negative relationship with Government Securities Ratio (GSR), Real Estate Ratio (RER) and Investments in Subordinated undertakings Ratio (ISR). The only indicator that has a slight positive relationship is the Bank Deposits Ratio (BDR) with a coefficient of 0.2939 for ROA and 0.2402 for ROE.

Based on the analysis of the relationship strength of the variables, we see that the strongest negative relationship between ROA and ROE is with the Real Estate Ratio (RER). The relationship appears with coefficients of -0.6185 and -0.6061 for ROA and ROE respectively. So the investments that insurance companies make in Land and Buildings turns out to have a negative relationship with profitability indicators. As discussed above, for the type of activity they perform, insurance companies have more stable funds to invest in longer durations than banks. The contribution that these investments give in the short term is negative, since they bring positive returns for longer periods of time. This is the main reason for this negative relationship between RER and performance indicators. A negative relationship is also observed between the Government Securities Ratio (GSR) and ROA and ROE profitability indicators, with coefficients of -0.3473 and -0.3898, respectively. The portfolio of financial investments in government securities is dominated by long-term investments in government bonds and less in treasury bonds. Throughout the period under consideration, the contribution of investments in government securities has been negative in the performance of insurance companies.

Discussion

Studies related to financial performance and its influencing factors in the insurance industry have generated different results, influenced by the economic context, the study period, the number of companies in the study, the selected variables, the structure of the investment portfolio taken into analysis. etc.

The first part was focused on the descriptive analysis of the weight that the investments have to the total assets both for the entire insurance market in Albania and for each of the types of insurance companies, Life and Non-life.

While the second part was focused on the investment portfolio structure analysis of insurance companies in Albania. Different investment categories within the portfolio of Life and Non-life insurance companies served as the main variables to study their relationship with profitability indicators ROA and ROE. The results showed that the indicator that exhibited the strongest relationship with the financial performance of

insurance companies was the real estate ratio (RER), with a negative nature. Meanwhile, other variables show slightly weaker relationships.

Referring to the literature review, we can say that the results are contradictory in different studies, since the selected variables are different. We can say that in the study conducted by (Kripa & Ajasllari), the findings are similar regarding the relationship between fixed assets and profitability.

Conclusions

This study investigated the investment portfolios of insurance companies for the entire market in Albania, to see if there is a relationship between the forms of investment and their financial performance. The study applies a descriptive research design. The target group of the population under study were all Life and Non-Life insurance companies operating in Albania. The main analysis of this study is based on the qualitative interpretation of secondary data for the period 2017-2022.

In the last decade, it was seen that the financial performance of insurance companies has been positive, with more pronounced decreases or increases in the return on capital. The effect of the Covid-19 pandemic had also its negative effects on the insurance industry, shrinking the profitability of these companies. The decline began gradually from the moment Covid-19 spread during March 2020 in Albania and subsequently culminated in 2021, with the lowest values at 4.67% for ROE and 1.51% for ROA.

Investments in Government securities, Real Estate, Bank deposits and Investments in subordinated undertaking occupy a dominant weight in the total assets of this sector, where the average values fluctuate between 64%-68%. Except for the year 2019 where was recorded the lowest level of 57.09%. This proves the high importance that decision-making in these investments has for the insurance activity.

The high weight that the assets of non-life insurers have to the total assets of the entire insurance market in Albania is about 87.61%, while life insurance about 12.39%. The investment portfolio for life insurers has values that fluctuate between 83.98% in 2017 and 85.78% in 2022. The highest value was recorded in 2020 with 88.46%. While for non-life insurers, the weight of the investment portfolio has a minimum value of 53.53% in 2019, a maximum value of 65.31% in 2021 and 65% in 2022.

In both types of companies, is noticeable the dominance that Bank Deposits have in the respective investment portfolios. The highest weight is evident in life insurers compared to non-life insurers, where the maximum value was reached in 2020 with 58%.

ROA and ROE present a negative relationship with Government Securities Ratio (GSR), Real Estate Ratio (RER) and Investments in Subordinated undertakings Ratio

(ISR). The only indicator that has a slight positive relationship is the Bank Deposits Ratio (BDR) with a coefficient of 0.2939 for ROA and 0.2402 for ROE.

The study has a mainly descriptive analysis, focusing only on the representative factors of the investment portfolio. It is suggested that in the future studies of this field, to be included more representative variables and to be compiled on an econometric model. The selected variables are suggested to be both of the internal environment of the insurance companies' activity and representative of the external macroeconomic environment.

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Clinical, Gross Pathological and Microscopic Findings of Canine Parvovirus Type 2 in a Shelter of Strays in Rahovec, Kosovo

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Abstract

In the frame of a mini-project applying shelter medicine, in a shelter of Rahovec, Kosovo, collecting strays in the communities of Gjakova, Rahovec, Kamenica and Peja, it were studied 44 puppies with clinical diagnosis of parvoviral enteritis. All were tested with immunochromatographic rapid test kits for CPV-2 antigen. Of a total of 44 puppies, one was diagnosed with clostridial enteritis and for another one it was not found the cause of enteritis. Of the total of 42 puppies having parvoviral enteritis, 12 (28.5%) of them died. Out of 36 puppies with confirmed parvoviral enteritis, treated with pharmacological supportive therapy, 11 (30.5%) of them died while 25 (69.4%) survived. Out of the total of 42 puppies with parvoviral enteritis, 6 puppies were treated only with a diet made up of homemade yogurt from cow's milk 50% and water 50%, mixed together. Of this group, that was treated strictly with the diet, only one puppy died. A necropsy was performed in 14 puppies died from hemorrhagic enteritis, suspected of CPV-2. Following the onset of clinical signs of gastroenteritis in the shelter, a rapid test for CPV-2 antigen detection was carried out as a routine. Out of 14 puppies, 12 tested positive for CPV-2, one was identified with clostridial infection and one resulted negative for CPV-2. The most lesion-pronounced organs affected by CPV-2 were the small intestine and duodenum. In most cases, the small intestine was congested containing hemorrhagic liquids. The serosal surface of the small intestine in majority of CPV-2 positive puppies had a granular appearance seen often during acute CPV-2 enteritis and the mucosal surface was congested, hemorrhagic and covered by exudate. At the histopathological examination of intestine sections the most prominent features observed were severe necrosis of epithelial cells, intestinal villi atrophy, dilated capillary vessels and desquamation of the epithelium. Anatomohistopathologic

diagnosis was a tool that complemented and supported best the diagnosis of CPV-2 enteritis.

Keywords: Gross pathology, histopathologic examination, CPV-2, dog necropsy, shelter medicine

Introduction

Shelter medicine is a new concept for Albania and Kosovo as well. In that respect, we took the advantage to practice it in a shelter of strays in Rahovec of Kosovo and try to establish a routine investigation and control of CPV-2 within the shelter. Nearly four decades ago, almost simultaneously worldwide, as the causative of syndromes of an previously unknown disease in dogs, it was isolated canine parvovirus type 2 (CPV-2, canine parvovirus type 2) (EUGSTER et al., 1978; APPEL et al., 1978; BURTONBOY et al., 1979; GANON and POVEY, 1979; JOHNSON and SPRADBROW, 1979; MCCANDLISH et al., 1979). This virus for many countries of the world and Europe today continues to be one of the most troubling health problems of dogs (MCCAW et al., 1998; POLLOCK and CARMICHAEL, 1990). In the first two years of its appearance, CPV-2 as a new virus spread to every corner of the globe in a panzootic form infecting almost every populations of domestic and wild dogs examined (PARRISH, 1990). The disease first appeared with two syndromes; a non suppurative myocarditis associated with heart failure in dogs 4-8 weeks (JEZYK et al., 1979; HAYES et al., 1979; CARPENTER et al., 1980) and a severe enteritis accompanied by vomiting, diarrhea and death in puppies and adult dogs (APPEL et al., 1978; APPEL et al., 1979a; OSTERHAUS et al., 1980). With the introduction of regular mass vaccination at the beginning with live modified virus or inactivated feline panleukopenia virus (FPV) (APPEL et al., 1979b; GORDON and ROGERS, 1982) and later with modified live canine parvovirus type 2 produced in cell lines (CARMICHAEL et al., 1981), the situation began to gradually improve. However, thanks to its high contagious properties and sustainability of the virus to environmental factors (GORDON and ANGRICK, 1986) even today, especially parvoviral enteritis, is a concern of the first hand to the importance of viral diseases in dogs.

To date, in Europe and wider there are identified 3 serotypes of CPV-2 (CPV-2a, 2b and recently the 2c) (DECARO et al, 2007).

Materials and methods

In the frame of a mini-project applying shelter medicine, in a shelter of Rahovec collecting strays in the communities of Gjakova, Rahovec, Kamenica and Peja, an in-practice test for CPV-2 was conducted in the stools of 44 unvaccinated puppies belonging to the age-group from 1.5 - 9 months.

For the 44 puppies having diarrheal enteritis which were tested for CPV-2, it was taken note of history, the most prominent clinical signs, treatment and outcome after treatment of animals.

In six puppies diagnosed with CPV-2, there were carried out no supportive treatment but it was introduced a diet with homemade yogurt from cow's milk 50% and water 50%, mixed together and given orally 4-6 times a day. In other remaining puppies with confirmed parvoviral enteritis a standard supportive treatment was applied (POLLOCK et al., 1993).

A necropsy was performed in 14 puppies died from hemorrhagic enteritis, suspected of CPV-2.

The dogs belonged to the age group 2-6 months, 8 of them were male and 6 female, all mixed breed.

The necropsy was performed by routine techniques, focusing more on the study of the digestive organs.

During the necropsy, intestinal contents and/or feces were tested immediately for CPV-2 antigen and based upon the quick result for CPV-2 antigen, positive intestinal samples (duodenum, ileum, jejunum) were taken and preserved in 10% formalin solution for histopathological studies. Samples for CPV-2 antigen were tested by means of a quick immunochromatographic test, Canine Parvovirus AG test - Quicking Biotech Co., Ltd., China. As a dog resulted negative for CPV-2 antigen and at the same time typical macroscopic signs of CPV-2 lacked, it was tested for the presence of bacterial infection at the Institute for Food Safety and Veterinary, Tirana.

Also, all histological samples were processed at the Institute for Food Safety and Veterinary, Tirana, Albania. Intestinal specimens after being fixed by immersion in formalin 10% were then processed with molten paraffin. Following processing, sections were cut on a microtome at a thickness of 4 μm ensuring that only a single layer of cells made up the section. Sections were then floated out on the surface of warm water in a flotation bath to flatten them and then picked up onto microscope slides. In the end, the specimens were stained with 10% hematoxylin and 0.5% eosin (H&E), covered with a glass coverslip and then examined under a light microscope.

Results and Discussion

Dogs submitted to this study had all clinical symptoms of diarrhea and/or vomiting lasting longer than 2 days. Depending on the onset of clinical signs, at the beginning, dogs were usually slightly hyperthermic with a rectal temperature varying from 39.3 to 39.9 °C being hypothermic as the symptoms progressed with a rectal temperature varying from 36.6 to 37.4 °C. The more frequent clinical symptoms noticed were depression, anorexia, watery and/or bloody diarrhea, vomiting, tachycardia and severe dehydration (Fig 1).



Fig. 1. A puppy with confirmed parvoviral enteritis on day 4 after the onset of clinical signs. It is obvious the curved back with the stiff abdomen due to pain and dehydration. The puppy had a melancholic appearance, characteristic of CPV-2. He survived.

It were studied 44 puppies with clinical diagnosis of parvoviral enteritis. All were tested with immunochromatographic rapid test kits for CPV-2 antigen. Of a total of 44 puppies, one was diagnosed with clostridial enteritis (Fig. 8) and for another one it was not found the cause of enteritis. Of the total of 42 puppies having confirmed parvoviral enteritis, 12 (28.5%) of them died (Tab. 1 and Fig. 2). Out of 36 puppies with confirmed parvoviral enteritis, treated with pharmacological supportive therapy, 11 (30.5%) of them died while 25 (69.4%) survived. Out of the total of 42 puppies with confirmed parvoviral enteritis, 6 puppies were treated only with a diet consisting of 50% yoghurt of homemade cow milk mixed with 50% water, given *per os* 4-5 times daily. Of 6 puppies that received the yoghurt, 5 survived (83.3%) and only one died (16.6%). Right after taking the yoghurt the puppies increased the appetite and in 2 to 4 days after the onset of the symptoms the clinical signs almost vanished and the puppies survived. Although the number of puppies receiving the yoghurt was a few, making the data at the anecdotal level, in our experience, we could note a surprising rate of survival (83.3%) of puppies having CPV-2 enteritis.

Tab. 1. Mortality of puppies having confirmed CPV-2 enteritis related to the age group.

Age group	No. of puppies having confirmed CPV-2 enteritis (%)	Mortality according to age group (%)
0 - 2 months old	14 (33.3)	7 (50)
> 2-6 months old	27 (64.2)	5 (18.5)
> 6 months old	1 (2.3)	0
Total (%)	42 (100)	12 (28.5)

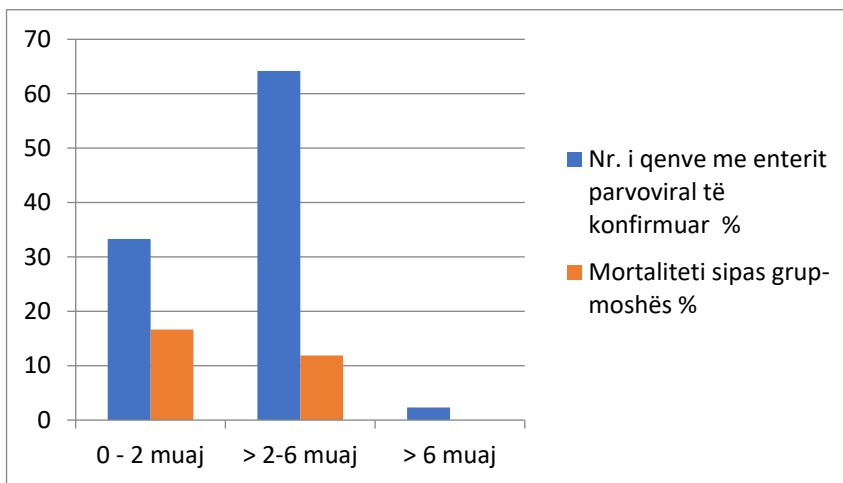


Fig. 2. Relationship between the age group and the mortality rate in CPV-2 confirmed puppies.

Such a high mortality figure of 28.5% (Tab. 1) it is not surprising finding because KUSI in 2004, in a similar study, found a similar mortality rate in young owned puppies. Such a finding can also be dedicated to the inappropriate conditions of hospitalization in shelter and sometimes because of the untimely starting treatment. All dogs with confirmed parvoviral enteritis belonged to the age from 1.5 to 9 months, i.e., that age group where the mitotic activity of enterocytes is higher (the younger the age, the higher the mitotic activity of enterocytes) and a decline in inherited maternal antibodies and thus making them more susceptible to CPV-2 activity. However, higher mortality was recorded in dogs of the age group from 0-2 months by 50%, despite supportive treatment. Such a finding confirmed the very high susceptibility of this age group being associated with high mortality (POLLOCK and CARMICHAEL, 1982). Some previous studies also point to the fact that parvoviral enteritis is a disease of young dogs and adult dogs are already immune (MASON et al., 1987; POLLOCK et al., 1993).

Among 14 dogs having hemorrhagic enteritis suspected of CPV-2, based on a rapid test kit for capturing antigen of CPV-2, 12 tested positive for CPV-2, one was identified with clostridial infection (Fig. 10) and the remaining one resulted CPV-2 negative.

Gross pathologic and microscopic lesions of 12 dogs died from parvoviral enteritis are shown below in a summarized form.

All puppies at necropsy were cachectic and dehydrated. The abdominal organs having more pronounced lesions were small intestine and duodenum. In most cases, the small intestine was congested containing aqueous hemorrhagic contents. In 4 puppies, ascarides in intestines were accompanying enteritis caused by CPV-2 (Fig. 6 and 9).

The serosal surface of the small intestine in 12 positive dogs for CPV-2 had a typical granular appearance (Fig. 3), seen often during acute enteritis due to CPV-2 (COOPER et al., 1979; MEUNIER et al., 1981) and in one case (Fig. 6), we noted serosal hemorrhages and hyperemic mesenteric vessels. While the intestinal mucosa was congested, haemorrhagic, covered by exudate (Fig. 4, 5 and 6).

At the histopathological examination, in all CPV-2 positive puppies were seen lesions typical for hemorrhagic enteritis (COOPER et al., 1979; MEUNIER et al., 1981; MASON et al., 1987). Microscopic examination of the ileum (Fig. 11) and jejunum (Fig. 12) showed severe destruction of the villi and mucosal layers including severe necrosis and loss of surface epithelium and also distention of crypts lumen. Shortened and blunting of villi as well as inflammatory and hemorrhagic infiltration into the lamina propria, were seen especially in the jejunum. No such significant microscopic lesions were found in the duodenum (Fig. 13).



Fig. 3. A puppy confirmed with parvoviral enteritis. The duodenum is dilated and the distal two-thirds of the small intestine show patchy congestion. The serosal surface had a granular appearance often seen at post mortem in acute CPV-2 enteritis.



Fig. 4. Serosal surface of the intestine had a granular appearance and mucosa appeared congested, haemorrhagic, covered by exudate.



Fig. 5. Serosal surface of the intestine had a granular appearance and mucosa appeared congested, haemorrhagic, covered by exudate.



Fig. 6. Serosal surface of the intestine had a granular appearance, petechial hemorrhagic on the mucosa and ascarides in a 8-week old female puppy died of CPV-2.



Fig. 7. Content of hemorrhagic secretions in the stomach accompanied by a congested and hemorrhagic mucosa.



Fig. 8. Serosal hemorrhages and hyperemic mesenteric vessels in a 11 - week old female, mixed breed puppy died of CPV-2.



Fig. 9. Ascarides in the intestines were accompanying enteritis caused by the CPV-2 in this 2 months old, mixed breed puppy.

In a case of a puppy aged about 3 months old, which also presented with hemorrhagic enteritis, CPV-2 rapid test proved negative. Also macroscopic appearance of the small intestine had a pronounced hemorrhagic congestion different from that seen during CPV-2 (Fig. 8, below). For that reason, it was taken intestinal content as well as a fecal

specimen from colon and was sent in to the Institute for Food Safety and Veterinary, Tirana. From the bacterial culture it was isolated *Clostridium perfringens* type A (Fig. 8). Such cases should be included in the differential diagnosis by being focused not only on the presence of hemorrhagic enteritis as an almost certain sign of CPV-2.

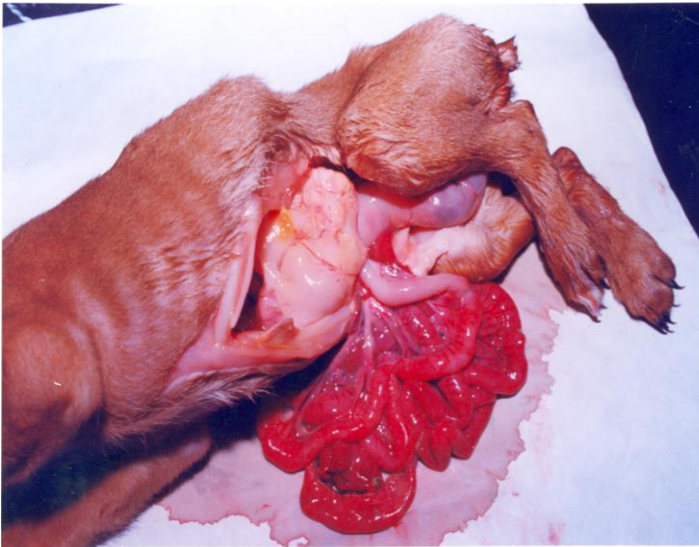
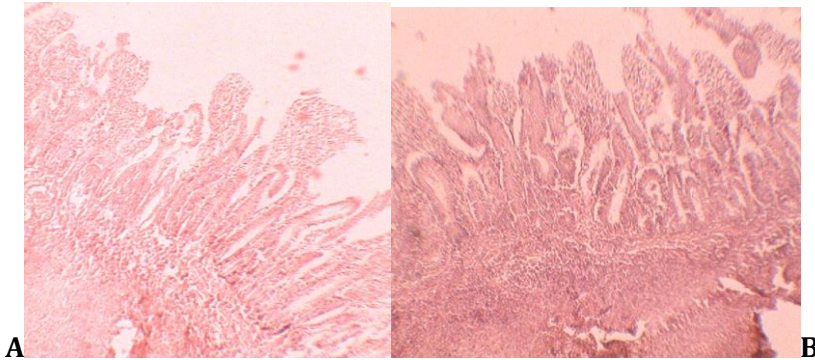


Fig. 10. Pronounced hemorrhagic congestion of small intestinals due to *Clostridium perfringens* type A.



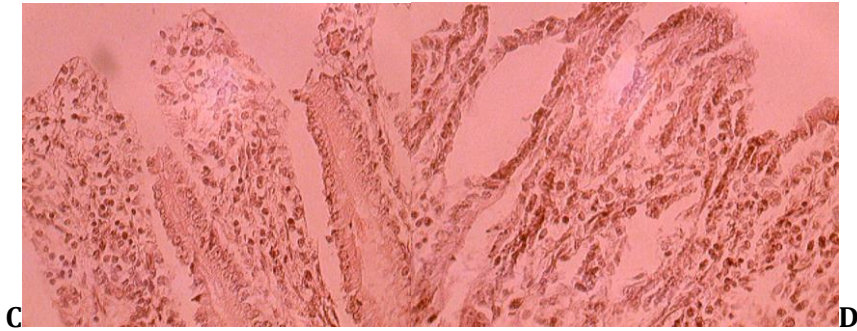
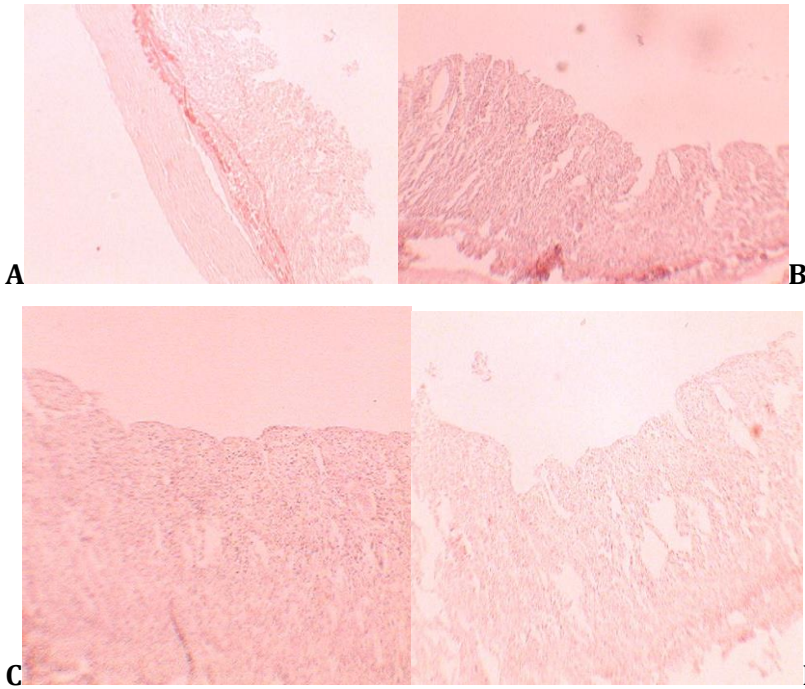


Fig. 11. *Ileum*, microphotography. Severe destruction of the villi and mucosal layers, necrosis and loss of surface epithelium, inflammatory cell infiltration into the lamina propria. **A, B** (X10 H&E), **C, D** (X40 H&E).



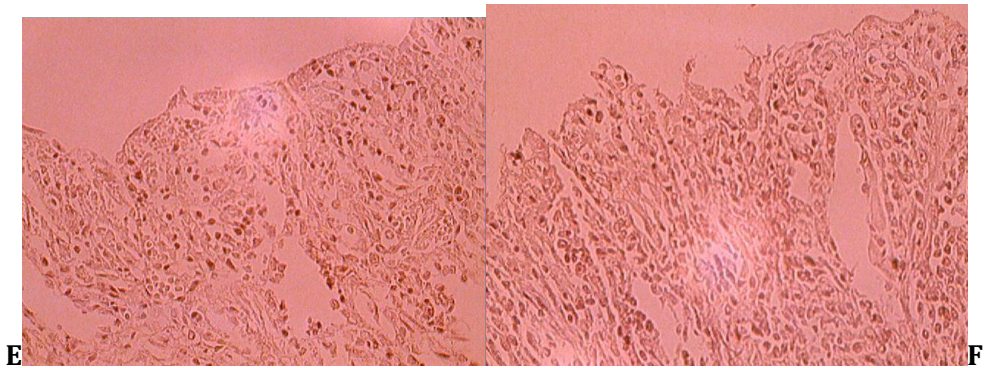


Fig. 12. *Jejunum*, microphotography. Loss of surface epithelium, shortened and blunting of villi, collapsed lamina propria followed by inflammatory and hemorrhagic cell infiltration and regeneration. **A, B, C, D** (X10 H&E), **E, F** (X40 H&E).

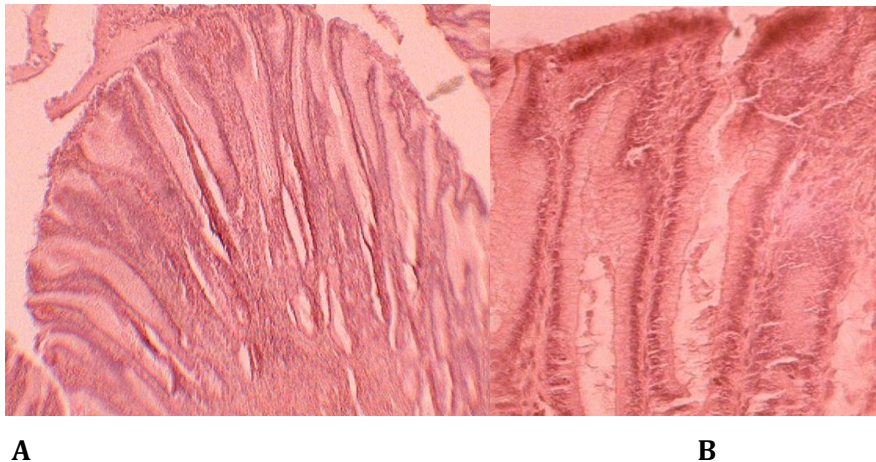


Fig. 13. *Duodenum*, microphotography. Dilated crypts only. **A** (X10 H&E), **B** (X40 H&E).

Conclusion

For the first time it was confirmed by laboratory the presence of CPV-2 in Kosovo.

Morbidity and mortality were higher in the age group 0-6 months, as a result of an interaction between high mitotic activity of enterocytes increasing thus the susceptibility to CPV-2 and a decline in maternally derived antibodies that assure passive protection.

The data provided in this study points as a priority issue the regular vaccination against CPV-2 starting at 6-8 weeks of age, when the puppies begin to be emptying

from maternally derived antibodies, in order to create a sustainable immunity that usually coincides with the age 12-16 week.

Although controlling CPV-2 with a shelter of strays is a tough challenge, by applying the so called shelter medicine it was established a routine of quick testing and a system of control of the infection by specific and non-specific prophylaxis. In that respect, diagnosis based on gross pathologic and microscopic changes is a tool that complements and supports best the diagnosis of CPV-2. Concerning 14 dogs submitted to necropsy, suspected of CPV-2, besides the macroscopic and microscopic changes, there were feces or intestinal content of those who underwent a laboratory diagnosis and according to the case they either helped to make a diagnosis or ruled out the disease caused by CPV-2.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to specially thank Dr. Blendi Bejdani of the “ProVet” Veterinary Practice as well as the Shelter of strays in Nagavac, Rahovec, Kosovo. Without their strong help and support the mini-project could never be realized.

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Relationship Between Syntactic and Semantic Elements in German and Albanian Sentences

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Abstract

In the German language, the *genus verbi* is recognized as a separate grammatical category. Its active and passive components enable the speaker to view the same subject from different perspectives and to express it using different grammatical means. This grammatical category allows the speaker to view "players in a situation" from different perspectives in certain situations and see them as "actors of action" or "tolerators of an action" either in the foreground or in the background, or not at all represent. As a result, the event itself is presented as agent-related or not agent-related. These possibilities for representing one and the same fact are closely linked to the elements of the semantic (agent and patient) and the syntactic level (subject, object). This relationship between the elements of the semantic and syntactic level is called *diathesis* (gr. *διάθεσις* 'representation'). In this presentation I will present this relationship between the semantic and syntactic elements in both languages, showing the similarities and differences. Appropriate examples will accompany and explain the theoretical approaches.

Keywords: Syntax, Semantics, German, Albanian, Grammar

Archaeometrical Investigation of Early Neolithic Ceramics from Podgoria

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Abstract

The study of the composition of the materials which the products of human activity were made of, the testing of hypotheses about the origin of objects or the detailed study of the technological skills of past communities, undoubtedly constitute a necessary extension of the study of human behavior and social organization in prehistoric and historical periods. What characterizes the culture of the settlement of Podgoria as representative of the Early Neolithic period in Albania and at the same time determines its internal cultural development is undoubtedly ceramics. The main characteristic of this culture is the high quality of the workmanship of its ceramics and the predominance of ceramics with fine and medium textures against those with coarse textures. Using a series of archaeometric methods such as EDXRF, micro-XRF, XRD and Optical Microscopy (OM) it is intended to shed light on the elemental and structural characterization of ceramic samples from this site. This paper presents the results obtained from the analysis of the fabrication texture, inclusions, decorative materials and elemental compositions of the ceramic samples belonging to the Podgoria site.

Keywords: Neolithic ceramics, EDXRF, micro-XRF, XRD, optical microscopy

Values in Action - A Framework for Inclusive Practices in Education

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Abstract

Values constitute the foundation of human life, the alpha and omega of existence, the Archimedean point of every Being-in-the-world (In-der Welt-sein). Defined as desirable trans-situational objectives - which orient the way in which social actors select actions, evaluate people, objects, and events - values reflect the ethos and motivate action: they are configured as determinants and predictors of perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours. Values affect individuals' level of cooperation, selective perception, and the ability to interpret information; play an important role when choosing between alternatives, making judgments, and resolving conflicts (Russel, 2001 p.1). In this sense, values are also implicated in the teaching and learning process because they condition every choice made by the teacher. In this sense, it is important to train preservice teachers in awareness of their personal value priorities. The Flipped Inclusion model, tested at the University of Salerno since 2014, whose research data from 1822 students with a simple random sampling of 911 people corroborate the transformative impact of the Flipped Inclusion model on cognitive and attribution styles, could be configured as functional for this purpose (Corona, De Giuseppe & Ianniello, 2021).

Keyword: Values, Flipped Inclusion, Inclusive Education, Pedagogy

Over the Water: Glimpses into a Timescape

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Extended Abstract

Above the waters wanders the spirit of the times, blowing the whirling bustle of modern life into being and drifting across the water's surface, a wavelet of modernity. The mirror of the lake ripples. The sky is reflected in the water, and the water reflects the sky. At the point where sky and water touch lies the looking-glass of the planes of time. In it are days past, present and yet to come, layered into a cultural fabric, an entwined garland of moments. A photograph – a light picture – is a window into a timescape. A word picture is an attempt to interpret the view of existence that opens up from that window. An attempt that needs a pictorial language, as well as a language picture. A metaphor is also an essential verbal tool. The investigative gaze should reach into the core of being. It is not enough just to see the outer shell. Intuition and poetry go hand in hand. They paint a flawless picture of the object being observed, which is a prerequisite for interpreting and understanding. It also means a glimpse from home, a look out from the home. Attachment to hearth and home clarifies the homeward glimpse, how we look into that home. The tourist's eye is incapable of that, not going beyond the surface. The home-glimpsed Varkaus is a multifaceted place. Glimpsed by a visitor, Varkaus is a mere backdrop, a one-dimensional existential prop. Across the waters, you can hear the humming throb of the factory. It means the hubbub of modern times. It is that buzz of existence that this expedition is seeking – and in the process of finding.¹

Keywords: Water, Glimpse, Timescape

¹ English translation by Glyn Hughes

Analytical characterization of raw materials and manufacturing processes in Vashtemia ceramics, site of the Early Neolithic period in Albania

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Abstract

In this paper, not only the traditional approaches of the human sciences for the archaeological research of the field but also the scientific analyzes of the ceramic objects and their contexts selected from the site of the Early Neolithic period in Albania called Vashtemi have been combined. The main categories of ceramic objects selected for study from the Vashtemia site are monochrome red pottery and painted pottery, which occupy the main place, followed by monochrome dark gray pottery, which has more limited use. The study of the elemental composition by means of the X-Ray Fluorescence method, the categorization of the main types of minerals observed in the samples analyzed by means of μ -XRF spectrometry, their petrographic analysis and the investigation of the mineral phases by the X-ray Diffraction method X are some of the archaeometric techniques used in this paper. The results will help us understand more about the origin of materials, their processing based on the technological ability of past communities and undoubtedly a necessary expansion of knowledge on human behavior and social organization in prehistoric and historical periods.

Keywords: raw materials, manufacturing processes, Early Neolithic, Vashtemia, spectrometry