POLIS

(RE)REFORMING EDUCATION

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EDITORIAL

Reforming Education ——————————

—————— **Prof. As. Dr. Belina BUDINI** ——————————

This issue of Polis focuses on Education in Albania further exploring its potential for reforms. The authors that have contributed to the topics related to education, endeavor to map out challenges and opportunities ahead for the educational system at different levels of education, both nationally and locally. Their arguments build on policy analysis, but also empirical research and data analysis as well as critical discourse analysis and legal frameworks.

The first article focuses on the curriculum reforms in the pre-university education in Albania. Through the evaluation of the previous curriculum reforms, professor Papajani argues that they failed to develop a competency-based curriculum as aimed; and did not follow the same philosophy at different levels of education which affected the coherence of the changes. This is complemented in the Strategy for the Development of Pre-University Education 2014-2020 that envisages a broader and competency-based conception of the curriculum with defining criteria for accurate assessment of the quality of education offered at national or local level.

Regarding the teaching methodology, the article of Tomi Treska at al. focuses on the factor of homeroom teacher and its traditional role in the education system in Albania. The authors attempt to evaluate the quality of performance of HTs in "New York High School" and the results support their hypothesis that HTs implement a good and very good performance of their roles, responsibilities, and functions.

The focus is again on education in the section of critical essays that encompass various analysis tools and techniques from the use of learning styles in the article of Blegina Hasko and Majlinda Hala, to the evaluation of the importance of physical education in primary school in the article of Bora Sulka, Borjan Isufaj and Marjo Shabanaj, to the casus for increasing the inclusiveness of social need children in the pre-school and primary education system in the article of Albana Xhemali and Elona Hasko,, as well as the mapping of needs for social services at home for the elderly in the article by Brunilda Dervishaj and Dorina Xhani, and finally the discussion of leadership and its impact on the challenges of higher education in the article by Malvina Kosova and Elena Simonofski.

Within the idea of reforming education, Irena Myzeqari, brings the need to science communication, as a mean to improve the quality of research in higher   education,

while the colleagues Etleva Haxhhyseni, Briseida Andoni and Gerti Metani, emphasize the need for a better career orientation, as mean to guarantee professional success. In his paper on the dark social capital as an effective way in getting things done in Albania, Gerti Sqapi tries to explain the dark sides of social capital applied in the context of Albania. The article of Erisela Marko and Kamin Gounaili focuses on interpersonal communication among students, taking case from Eastern Mediterrarean University through the analysis of eye contacts.

In his article "Public or private corruption?", Dr. Kajsiu focuses on the ideological dimension of anti-corruption discourses in Albania, Colombia and Ecuador. The methodology of the study is the comparative discourse analysis. His paper shows that despite the similar levels and perceptions of corruption, the official discourses of prime-Minister Edi Rama in Albania, that of president, Juan Manuel Santos in Colombia and of president, Rafael Correa in Ecuador are articulated differently due to their distinct ideological positions. Therefore, Rama and Santos from within a neoliberal perspective define corruption mainly as abuse of public office and locate it mainly in the public sector, whereas Correa from within a 21st century socialism stance, defines corruption primarily as a problem of the private sector that captures and distorts the public sector.

In his article on "The Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms According to International Laws and Domestic Laws in North Macedonia ", PhD Candidate, Nail Isufi focuses on comparative aspects. Through this paper, he elaborates the legal overview of the protection of the human rights and freedoms, as well as the international and domestic protection of these rights within state institutions of North Macedonia, for which are adopted various legal acts. Isufi furthermore argues that the international organizations and the states are those who should always ensure the legal protection of the human rights and freedoms, but this is not always applicable and depends on their ability.

In her article on the communication of science, Irena Myzeqari argues that there is an increasing need for more communication from the scientific communities in Albania. Based on a theoretical approach, she brings the latest debates focusing on science communication, trying to open a new path of discussion and research in the higher education system in Albania.

In their article on career guidance and its impact on graduate employability, authors Haxhihyseni, Andoni and Metani inspect the features of an effective career guidance practice, including the emerging necessity for schools to start introducing and encouraging student vocation at an earlier age combined with the essential role of exposure to the working realm. The results of their study show inefficiency in career guidance provided and a need to plan alternative applicable strategies.

Finally, the articles of this issue confirm overall the never-stopping need for reforming education in Albania. Taking a rather internationalized perspective, most authors argue in favor of changes, be it in the educational system, in the institutional practices or in the initiatives and instruments as well as developing more research capacities, in reference to European policies for the Western Balkans and Albania as an aspiring country to join EU.

Curriculum reform in pre-university education in Albania

Prof. Dr. Adrian PAPAJANI

Abstract

The study aims to provide a concise overview of the progress of the process of curriculum reform in pre-university education in general, the achievements and problems identified after 1991.After some initial corrections, the pre-university education curriculum changed but they did not follow the same philosophy at different levels of education, which affected the coherence of the changes. In the early 2000s, experts identified the main challenges related to improving the situation in this system. They were:

a. national curriculum reform; and
b. creating a stable and efficient structure for the professional development of teachers working in pre-university education.

The new curricular framework would indicate the directions in which the country's education system needed to be developed to meet its intended educational policies. But the curricular reform of upper secondary education in 2010 did not follow the same curricular philosophy and approach as the curricular reform of basic education in 2004. Although this reform aimed at aligning with new trends in competency-based curriculum development, it did not managed to realize a curriculum that reflected the development of competencies in all aspects. The basic education curriculum reform in 2013 tried to offer a new curriculum, but despite the efforts made, it failed to develop a competency-based curriculum. The Strategy for the Development of Pre-University Education 2014-2020 envisages a broad and competency-based conception of the curriculum. This important development complemented a shortcoming identified in the process of reforming Pre-University Education until 2013. Defining key

competencies, expressed through learning outcomes, as well as defining criteria for assessing outcomes provide the conditions for opportunities to equal education for all students, for accurate assessment of the quality of education offered at national or local level, for fair assessment of the level of student achievement, etc.

Keywords: *Curriculum framework, curriculum, key competencies, educational reform, curricular areas, subject standards, pre-university education strategy.*

Introduction

The curriculum is the most important element of educational reform, which coherently reflects the goals and objectives of the content of the educational process. The constant changes of social relations, new relations in the labor market, technological innovations, etc., condition the internal developments in the education system of a country, including the pre-university one. In these conditions, the need for curricular changes never disappears and is the core of educational reforms.

The beginning of the 90s of the last century was characterized by a series of gradual but important changes of the pre-university education system which would deepen more and more, completely changing it both in form and content.

The pre-university education system underwent a cycle of reform changes, at the system level and in teaching practice, going through 3 main phases:

- The phase of correction of the interior of education (until 1995).
- The phase of preparations for change, based on law no. 7952, dated 21.06.1995, "On the Pre-University Education System (1995-2010).
- Phase of further reform, based on law 69/2012, dated 21.06.2012 "On the pre-university education system in the Republic of Albania" (2012 onwards).[1]

In the first phase, these changes consisted of some emergency improvements, mainly of the content and revision of the curriculum load, introduction of a new subject, etc. They were the first steps in the long road of the reform process regarding the reconceptualization of content and the transition to curricular planning. For subjects, especially those of a social nature, including history, de-ideologisation and de-politicization were the first steps on the long path of the reform process related to content reconceptualization, and the main studies initially focused on reviewing the learning load of students in the 8th grade

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[1] "Reform of the Pre-University Education System". Preliminary Report (2014), p.5.

high school and then in setting new national objectives of education in Albania, reforming subject curricula, drafting subject standards, etc.

Efforts to determine the main directions of compulsory education reform were initially accompanied by the diagnosis of elements of school content, the assessment of student achievement in various subjects on the basis of tests performed and the problems encountered in the teacher qualification process , school infrastructure etc.

In the first phase, these changes consisted of some emergency improvements, mainly of the content and revision of the curriculum load, introduction of a new subject, etc. They were the first steps in the long road of the reform process regarding the reconceptualization of content and the transition to curricular planning.

Experts began to analyze existing plans and programs at this level by determining the main directions of change in this regard. At the end of this process they concluded that:

"*The existing curriculum was outdated and did not respond to the overall changes, especially the social and economic ones that were happening rapidly in Albanian society. As a result, there was a lack of harmonization between education cycles, curricular areas and special curricula, many necessary elements of curriculum design were missing, in many areas scientific and methodological reforms were needed, there were overloads which hindered the formation of technical and practical skills of students with towards everyday life, the binding and centralizing character of the current curriculum, etc*.[2]

Based on international experience, the experts suggested that the curriculum of compulsory education in the future should provide:

✓ *Equipping students with general culture.*

In this regard there were shortcomings in the lower cycle of 8-year education, while in the upper cycle scientific knowledge was not given gradually;

✓ *Equipping students with the necessary skills and knowledge.*

This required first increasing the volume of drawing, music and physical education classes in the primary cycle and a reconceptualization of them enabling subject integration for the first two;

✓ *Students' initial orientation for life.*

The current curricula did not provide for any subject-oriented subjects for students.The lack of subjects or even extra classes for students with special needs did not encourage the latter to develop their maximum tendencies or interests;

✓ *Development of special tendencies of students.*
✓ *Optimal weekly and annual load.*

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[2] Mato, E. (2002) "Curricular framework to help improve the national curriculum". Pedagogical Journal (1), p.7

The current plan was characterized by an overload of learning in and out of the classroom.[3]

Among the main weaknesses that characterized the subject programs in this period were:

a) In most cases their elements such as learning goals, goals for students, basis teaching, etc., were either superficial or vague;
b) The standardization of subject contents in accordance with the levels of education left much to be desired. It was seen by the authors as the only and absolute standard, regardless of the potential, opportunities and age characteristics of the students;
c) Setting the final subject goals was treated superficially while in some programs was absent.

In this way the concrete objectives could not be measurable and standardized according to age;

d) The learning methodology was not foreseen despite the academic independence of teachers;
e) The methodology of student assessment was not reflected.[4]

At the end of their analysis, the experts suggested that:

✓ *The main direction of change had to be oriented towards reconceptualizing existing plans and programs;*
✓ *To plan and approve a clear model of curricular programming of all 8-year school activities.*

Only in this way opportunities were created for:

- coordination of knowledge and teaching skills for all classes;
- use of appropriate learning strategies to ensure continuity;
- defining and selecting learning objectives according to the criterion of continuity;
- fair distribution of content objectives during the school years in accordance with the psychological maturity of children.

They were convinced of the indisputable advantages of curricula over subject syllabuses and suggested that 8-year education contain three types of curricula:

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[3] Nishku A., Daci J. (1998) "Analysis of compulsory education syllabuses and programs and the basic directions of their reform in the future.". Pedagogical Journal (2), pp.8-11
[4] Idem, pp.11-13

formal curriculum, applied curriculum and extra curriculum which would represent a single macro and microlevel system.[5]

Research Methodology

The study is based on the review and analysis of an important part of the documentation related to the process of reforming Pre-University Education, carried out by specialized national institutions and on the International Consultancy Report on the evaluation of the Basic Education Curriculum.

The beginnings of changes in conception and content and the new curricular framework of pre- university education

In the early 2000s, a period related to the second phase of the reform of the pre-university education system, experts identified the main challenges facing them in terms of improving the situation in this system. They were:

   c. national curriculum reform; and
   d. creating a stable and efficient structure for the professional development of teachers working in pre-university education[6]

The new curricular framework would direct and manage the functioning of curricula in public and non-public education, in accordance with the current needs of Albanian society, as well as new developments in education in democratic countries. It would indicate the directions in which the country's education system should develop in order to meet the educational policies it aimed for[7]

The draft of the new curricular framework envisaged the step-by-step realization of some important objectives starting from the adoption of the guiding principles and philosophies on
which it would be based, the planning of continuity, coherence and curricular progression, the adoption of national goals and general objectives and those expected for each cycle of pre-university education, setting objectives and subject content, drafting standards of student achievement, etc. [8] On this basis,

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[5] idem pp.16-18
[6] Mato, E. (2002) "Curricular framework to help improve the national curriculum". Pedagogical Journal (1), pp.3-4
[7] Idem, p.4
[8] Idem, p.8

the curricula of different subject areas would be drafted.[9]

The draft curricular framework envisages 7 main areas of learning as well as an eighth area called "activities and optional subjects". These curricular areas were:

1. languages and communication;
2. mathematics;
3. natural sciences;
4. social sciences;
5. art;
6. technology;
7. physical education and sports.

The areas summarized the knowledge, habits, attitudes and competencies that needed to be developed in the students. When designing specific programs, the links between learning areas should be taken into account, as well as the inclusion of cross-curricular issues and topics.[10]

At the end of the second phase of the pre-university education reform, (2010) the current basic education curriculum (Grades 1-9) underwent a detailed analysis by an international consultancy. In addition to the achievements, the Final Report also identified a number of issues, both conceptually and procedurally.[11]

A Conceptually, the main problems identified were:

- The curriculum for basic education lacks a clear and coherent vision as well as such a philosophy, as there is no clearly expressed Curriculum Framework that would regulate the curriculum system in general.
- The Basic Education Curriculum is one of the overloaded in Europe.
- Curricula and programs built on it, are very overloaded focusing on information and theoretical and academic knowledge, instead of procedural knowledge and cognitive learning skills, etc.
- The objectives and content of the programs are poorly adapted to the age of the students and their real capacities to meet the requirements of the curriculum and do not have a deep vertical and horizontal connection; and thus lacks consistency and real cross-curricular integration of subjects (and topics within the subject).

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[9] Mato, E., Nishku, A., Papajani, A., Dautaj, A., Lulja E., Koci, E., Hamza, M., Gjokutaj, M., Spahiu, Y. (2004) "The new curricular framework for pre-university education (Draft)." Pedagogical Journal,p.7

[10] Idem,pp.10-11

[11] Crisan A. (2010) Report of the international consultancy for the evaluation of the Basic Education Curriculum; pp.6-8

- The curriculum does not meet the real needs and interests of students on the one hand, and those of parents and the school on the other.
- Most textbooks are overloaded, textbooks are highly "scientific", with a typical academic language and a number of pedagogical solutions (ie, "apparatus") are very difficult for students to understand.
- Curriculum implementation was not properly "nurtured":
    (a) special training for teachers on the implementation of the new curriculum was insufficient;
    (b) lacks a school-based professional development system or the support of "mentors" in curriculum implementation.
- A clear and consistent system of Quality Assurance, Monitoring and Evaluation of the system is lacking. In this way, students' achievements in relation to the expected learning outcomes are modest, as shown by the national exams at the end of grade 9 or the final results of PISA 2007.

From the procedural point of view, the main problems identified were:

- Lack to some extent of a conceptual and procedural leadership, strong and stable; (Total Quality Management) which would provide mechanisms and procedures to be respected by all.
- The Institute for Educational Development did not and still does not have a package with an Operational Procedural Manual ("Vade Mecum") for the authors of the curriculum and for the whole process of curriculum development and implementation;
- The curriculum for basic education was developed mainly "in pieces" and not as a system where all parts should be connected to others.
- Experts and working groups acted during the process mainly as independent units without any serious and formalized cooperation or affiliation.
- There is no mechanism to ensure cross-curricular reading of the attached curriculum products, and thus to present a unified image; The curriculum seems more like a "summary" of subject programs rather than a system
- There is a lack of total involvement of teachers as the main actors in the process

At the end of the report were given the relevant recommendations for improving the situation divided into two processes related to operational aspects and policies within the curricular system for Basic Education according to a well-defined timeline:

- Process 1 (2010/2012):
  - It would consist of a rapid "revision" of the current Curriculum for basic education, undertaken with the aim of improving the current provisions until a new Curriculum for this level is gradually developed and implemented;
  - The revised curriculum can be implemented from 2012 with grades 1 to 6; It is recommended in the Report that the review process focus on grades 1 to 6, in order to prepare the parallel process below.
  - Its implementation should continue with fewer classes in attendance, until a new Curriculum covers all classes
- Process 2 (2011 onwards): with a development phase (2012-2014) aimed at developing a brand new curriculum for basic education in Albania (grades 1 to 6 and 7 to 9, according to the Draft Law on Education Parauniversitar); an implementation phase starting from the school year 2014/2015 (grades 1/7); 2015/2016 (class 2/8); 2015/2016 (class 3/9); 2016/2017 (class 4); 2017/2018 (class 5); 2018/2019 (class 6) [12]

Further reformation of the Curriculum in the Pre-University Education System

The curriculum and the whole teaching process underwent an extensive review and evaluation process in order to further improve it. In 2012 the structure of pre-university education changes again according to the scheme (6 + 3 + 3)[13]

According to a preliminary report drafted by the working group for the reform of pre-university education, it was stated that: "The current curriculum of pre-university education has undergone fragmented changes, according to levels of education, which have affected the coherence of changes. Thus, the curricular reform of upper secondary education in 2010 did not follow the same curricular philosophy and approach as the curricular reform of basic education in 2004. Although this reform aimed at aligning with new trends in competency-based curriculum development, failed to realize a curriculum that reflected the development of competencies in all aspects. While the Basic Education Curriculum Reform in 2013 tried to offer a new curriculum, but despite the efforts made, it failed to develop a competency-based curriculum."[14]

The Strategy for the Development of Pre-University Education for the period 2014-2020 envisages a broad and competency-based conception of the curriculum. [15]This was an important development which complemented a shortcoming identified in the process of reforming Pre-University Education

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[12] idem
[13] Law 69/2012 "On pre-university education", (article 72, 4).
[14] Reform of the Pre-University Education System (Preliminary Report) (2014), pp.10-11
[15] Evaluation of the pre-university education strategy 2014-2020. Final Report (2019)

until 2013. Defining key competencies, expressed through learning outcomes, as well as defining criteria for assessing outcomes provide conditions for equal opportunities for education for all students, for accurate assessment of the quality of education offered at national or local level, for fair assessment of the level of student achievement, etc. Key competencies for lifelong learning would already be reflected in the competency-based teaching process as well as student-centered teaching. The competency-based curriculum shifts the focus from learner-centered learning of subject content to learner-centered learning situations. As a result, this teaching offers different learning situations through which the student is formed in the social, cultural, intellectual and civic aspect. The key competencies set out in the curriculum framework are 7:

1. Communication and expression competence;
2. Thinking competence;
3. Learning to learn competence;
4. Competence for life, entrepreneurship and environment;
5. Personal competence;
6. Civic competence.
7. Digital competence.[16]

Key competencies are closely linked to areas of learning. The latter form the basis of the organization of the teaching-educational process in the school, for each educational level and the respective levels of the curriculum. The following areas were identified as learning areas:

1. Languages and communication
2. Mathematics
3. Natural sciences
4. Society and the environment
5. Art
6. Physical education, sports and health
7. Technology and ICT

Each area has its own learning outcomes pertaining to the development of key competencies. Areas of learning include one or more subjects or modules. Courses and modules are based on the learning outcomes defined for each area. Some subject areas may be part of several curricular levels. In the areas of learning, learning objectives are set which enable the achievement of key competencies.[17]

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[16] Curriculum Framework of Pre-University Education of the Republic of Albania (2014)
[17] Idem

In the school year 2019-2020, the implementation of the competency curriculum started in all grades I-IX, including the preparatory class, while starting from the school year 2017-2020, the implementation of the competency-based curriculum in all grades of high secondary education has continued.[18]

According to an analysis of the internal evaluation of the implemented curriculum, conducted by the Agency for Quality Assurance of pre-university education for the school years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, results that:

- Implementation of competency-based curricula in institutions of pre-university education has brought significant positive changes in the understanding of curricular philosophy and the implementation of pedagogical practices related to curriculum planning, teaching / learning methodologies and student assessment.
- Teachers and school leaders have created successful experiences, in a wayspecial in terms of the use of learning methods, techniques and strategies that promote students' interest, inclusion, interaction and research.
- Ongoing training by curriculum specialists and other actors, with a focus onspecial use of techniques and strategies that promote critical and creative thinking, problem solving, etc., as well as publications that the Agency for Quality Assurance of Pre-University Education has prepared to help implement the curriculum, have supported the work of teachers in the use of techniques that develop skills of high levels of thinking.
- Curriculum implementation is associated with challenges that address support in a way continued further professional development of teachers in such areas as: student assessment, meeting the needs of students with special needs, use of ICT, etc. Improving communication between actors and the role of school leaders in implementing competency-based curricula are aspects that need to be further improved and supported.[19]

However, in the Final Report of the evaluation of the Pre-University Education Strategy 2014-2020, in addition to the achievements, there are also problems for which the relevant suggestions for their improvement were given.

Some of the main findings were:

1. Unsatisfactory levels of funding are one of the main issues that negatively affect the outcome of the education sector in Albania. The level of budget available compared to Gross Domestic Product remains below the target

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[18] Achievement report. ASCAP.September 2017 - December 2020 pp.9-10
[19] Idem pp.18-19

level and Albania remains one of the countries with the lowest investment in education in the region.

2. School leaders are seen as weak bridges within the system. The need lies in consolidating and improving the education management system with a particular focus on strengthening the systems, to include the establishment of monitoring services and professional support.

3. Major achievements have been made, especially in the area of access to schools. The Government continues with the same commitment demonstrated so far in addressing issues related to quality and justice issues in the Pre-University Education Development Strategy, and as a national priority.

4. Albania has increased investments in support of inclusion, as a key policy issue in meeting national goals. However, the data show that there are still groups excluded from education.

5. Improving the quality aspects of education is a matter of concern.

6. It is very important to pay attention to the latest regional studies, regarding what works in the implementation of the new competency-based curriculum. Trends suggest that true competency-based education can only work in alternative settings, in schools that are given the flexibility to meet the needs of non-traditional students, with methods that overcome the limitations and lack of flexibility of traditional education as we know it.

7. Teachers need more support for the implementation of the new curriculum. Curriculum success has been limited due to lack of resources at the school level, especially ICT.

8. Significant progress has been made in selecting and providing textbooks.

9. The use and utilization of ICT is at low levels. Although the necessity of ICT is recognized in progressive education in Albania, the difficulty found is related to its effectiveness within the new curriculum model.

10. There is a limitation regarding the duration and time of organizing the training that is currently offered to teachers, in the framework of the implementation of the major reform. The three days set aside for curriculum training are too few to see from the perspective of the diversity and complexity of changes in education.

11. Teachers need to be better prepared, supported and provided with resources, which would also lead to changes in the budget and resource allocation for schools.

12. Practice-based teaching is the least efficient link in the system. Effective implementation will contribute to improving the quality of enhancing the learning outcomes of all students.

13. In the next phase of implementation, it would be important to develop a Competency Framework for Teachers. Developing a Teacher Competency Framework will be important to support future developments and build on the platform of professional standards already developed for teachers.[20]

In the Draft National Education Strategy for the years 2021-2026, [21]the Ministry of Education outlines its vision for a comprehensive education system based on the principles of equality and lifelong learning, which enables the quality formation of all individuals, contributing in their personal well-being, as well as in strengthening democracy and the country's integration into the European Union. According to her, "inclusion and equality are necessary preconditions to ensure the quality formation of all individuals and to narrow the gap of educational achievement between different social groups."

In pre-university education the strategy will also include:

- Teachers;
- Mastery of lifelong learning competencies;
- Digitalization of education;
- Quality management and assurance.

Conclusion

The pre-university education system is based on the positive tradition of education, operates in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Albania and the relevant legislation in force, and is implemented in relation to the common values of modern education systems, which have

at their core is competency-based learning which prepares young people to face the challenges of knowledge society.

The Albanian education system has entered a series of contemporary educational reforms after 2000. Some of the positive elements of this reform, despite the weaknesses and criticisms, were the integration of the curriculum, the conception of the curriculum in the areas of lifelong learning, critical thinking, structuring of basic education 1 - 9, Alternative textbooks, etc., but in essence the curriculum of this period could not overcome the emphasis on imparting knowledge rather than on building knowledge and competencies.

At the strategic and long-term level, the standards create the possibility of providing quality in the education system, monitoring and evaluating the content, as well as create the reference system for gradual changes in education.

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[20] Evaluation of the pre-university education strategy 2014-2020. Final Report (2019)
[21] Draft National Education Strategy for the years 2021-2026, p.67

Organized in this way, the standards help educational institutions to assess the objectives in the areas of learning, ensuring the proper direction of the organization of the teaching and learning process.

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Homeroom teacher – an important factor in the Albanian education system, for the education of the new generation

_____ **Prof. Asoc. Dr. Tomi TRESKA** _____
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Abstract

Homeroom Teacher (HT) today in Albania is a school teacher, who is in charge of taking care of a certain class to help in the educational teaching work, throughout the school year. The purpose of this research is to evaluate the quality of performance of HTs in "New York High School - NYHS" The raised hypothesis: NYHS HTs implement a good and very good performance of their role, responsibilities, and functions as HTs. The methodology of this study is a combined one: quantitative and qualitative. The study population is Pupils, Parents, Homeroom Teachers (HTs), School Principals, School Psychologist, and NYHS School Senator. The sampling of the population of Students and Parents is determined at the rate of 50% of all respective populations, while for the HTs is taken 100% as their sample. The main results of the survey support the raised hypothesis but there are reflected also some very sensitive issues.

Key words: Homeroom Teacher, high school, pupils, parents, Homeroom Teacher's role, responsibility and functions, New York High School – NYHS.

Introduction

Homeroom Teacher today in the pre-university education system in Albania is a school teacher, who is in charge of taking care of a certain class to help in the educational teaching work, throughout the school year.

The Homeroom Teacher has an important role from the first grade to the twelfth grade. It should create an atmosphere of understanding and cooperation between students, for students with disabilities, for those with learning difficulties; should help newcomers; attend student attendance at school; advise students on curricular and career choices and work with parents.

His/Her legal obligation is to draft the annual plan of classroom hours, which is approved by the school director, for his/her obligations; prepare the diary and have a special page in the register. (Dispozitat Normative: 2013, page 41)

Based on the Normative Provisions (Dispozitat Normative), the Homeroom Teacher has the following concrete duties and responsibilities (Dispozitat Normative: 2013, Article 84):

Duties of the Homeroom Teacher in relation to the pupils of his/her class:
The Homeroom Teacher takes special care:

- to create an atmosphere of understanding and cooperation between pupils;
- for pupils with disabilities, pupils with learning difficulties, newcomers and those with behavioral disorders;
- for pupils' school attendance;
- to supplement the consents of pupils with elective curricula;
- not to overload pupils;
- to advise pupils on curricular and career choices.

The Homeroom Teacher introduces the parents and pupils to:

- health and safety conditions in the institution;
- Normative Provisions (Dispozitat Normative) articles that discuss the rights and obligations of parents and pupils and the obligations of employees of the educational institution to parents and pupils;
- internal regulation of the institution;
- elective curriculum;
- the child's career opportunities after completing an educational level;
- indemnification procedures;
- complaint procedures.

The Homeroom Teacher has the following duties:

- regularly inform parents about the well-being of their children;
- meet with priority the parents of pupils with learning difficulties, disturbing behaviors or problems attending school;
- increase the interest of parents for the well-being of their children.

The Homeroom Teacher prepares for each pupil the subjects' grades of the first semester and the end-of-year transcript and submits them to his/her parent.

The Homeroom Teacher invites all parents to a general meeting, with or without pupils, at least once every three months, in which it:

- raises issues that belong to the class as a whole;
- discusses topics about the role of parents in their children's success.

In these meetings, the Homeroom Teacher is forbidden to mention with by name the pupils of the class for their failure or achievement. Information about the pupil is given only to his parents.

The current obligations of the Homeroom Teacher (HT) in the Republic of Albania are based on the tradition of the Albanian school over the years and the most positive experience built by it. The Albanian school has a consolidated tradition in defining the role, responsibilities and duties of the Homeroom Teacher. He/She has been the central figure of the school and the entire Albanian pre-university education system for many decades. In general, in the tradition of the Albanian school, he/she is considered by pupils and parents as a "second parent" for each student. (Treska, L. Doctorate, 2017, page 63)

The Albanian school and the pupils who have gone through it, together with other parents and family members, "owe" to the figure of the HT the formation of hundreds of thousands of citizens who have contributed to the good of the country, society and their families. The truth is that specifically for the role, responsibilities and duties of the HT, pedagogical studies have been shown to be a little sparing, especially nowadays, while there are mostly many bylaws, normative provisions and regulations that define these functions. The improvements that have taken place so far in this field have a legal, political, administrative and practical character, rather than didactic, substantive, educational and functional.

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the quality of performance of Homeroom Teachers in high schools in Tirana, taking as a case study "New York High School - NYHS" This is the first study of this nature.

The **research question** of this study is: What is the level of quality of performance of the Homeroom Teacher in the high schools of Tirana, and specifically of the New York High School?

The raised **hypothesis**: NYHS Homeroom Teachers implement <u>a good</u> and <u>very good</u> performance of their role, responsibilities and functions as Homeroom Teachers.

The standard to which the study refers is the current legal framework of Albanian pre-university education regarding the role, responsibilities and functions of the Homeroom Teacher in the Republic of Albania.

The independent variable of this study is: The current legal framework of Albanian pre-university education on the role, responsibilities and functions of the Homeroom Teacher in Albania.

The dependent variable is: the level of quality performance of the Homeroom Teachers at New York High School.

Methodology

The methodology of this study is a combined methodology: quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative research method deals mainly with the collection and processing of structured data that can be presented numerically (Matthews and Ross, 2010).

The methodology is expressed in the instruments selected for conducting the study. Three structured questionnaires were constructed for quantitative data collection: one for NYHS *Pupils*, a second for *HT* and a third for *Parents* of pupils at this school.

The relevant questionnaires were constructed referring to the current legal framework of Albanian pre-university education, which defines the role, functions and responsibilities of the Caring Teacher in the Republic of Albania. Specifically, the aspects covered by the Student Questionnaire and the Parent Questionnaire are: General Information, including: Gender, Class, Age, for Pupils and Gender, Age, Education Child's Class and Current Occupation, for Parents. The questions addressed to the Pupils, Parents and HT themselves, try to measure the respect and application of the essential aspects of the role and responsibilities of the HT currently in this school. They specifically address how much and possibly the way how a HT: creates an atmosphere of understanding with students. takes care to cooperate with them, or to take care of pupils with disabilities (if there are such pupils in the class), how much he/she cares for pupils who have learning difficulties, for newly arrived ones, as well as for those who express concerns in their behavior, as well as the level of care that pupils

regularly attend/follow school and make as few absences as possible, how much he/she advises them about elective subjects, how much he/she cares to avoid overcrowding of pupils, or how much he/she advises pupils in his/her classroom on issues related to their career, or how much he/she informs students and their parents about the health conditions and safety at school.

The Questionnaire also tries to measure how much the Homeroom Teacher is acquainted with the articles of the Normative Provisions (Dispozita Normative), both those that elaborate the rights and obligations of pupils, as well as those that elaborate the obligations that all teachers have.

Specific questions are specifically formulated as to how well the Homeroom Teacher has informed its pupils and their parents about the School Rules, or whether he or she has informed them of the compensation procedures and disciplinary measures against pupils in case they violate the School Rules and the rules set out in the Normative Provisions.

In addition to these aspects that are common to pupils and parents, the Parent Questionnaire also has some additional aspects related to the requirements of how much the HT has regularly informed the parents about the child's well-being, if he/she has prepared grades of the relevant semester and the year-end transcript for the child and has delivered it to the parents, if the HT has invited the parents to a general parent-teacher meeting, with or without pupils, at least once every three months, and finally if the HT or school principal has notified and requested parental written permission for the children's after-school activities or extracurricular activities.

The reason why most of the questions are almost the same in both the Student Questionnaire and the Parent-Teacher Questionnaire is to be able to make a comparative analysis of the answers given by both the students and the parents of the caretaker teacher. This has been simplified by the fact that the duties and responsibilities of the HT are almost the same for both students and parents, with the exception of the last aspects, which we just mentioned.

Regarding the Homeroom Teacher Questionnaire, in addition to the aspects included in the Student and Parent Questionnaire, based on the Normative Provisions, there are also some additional aspects that relate mainly to the documentary part of the Homeroom Teacher activity, such as when a pupil from HT's classroom becomes ill or had an accident, the HT or head of the educational institution had immediately notified the parent, or if the HT had regularly filled in the class register pages. Also, if the Homeroom Teachers had drafted the annual Tutoring Hours Plan and approved it by the school principal/ deputy principal, or if the Homeroom Teachers had always listed the tutoring hours on a special page of the class register and placed them in weekly school schedule.

The questionnaire asks if the Homeroom Teachers had regularly written the Classroom Diary, if they had regularly calculated the average of the annual grades of all subjects of each pupil, if they had assessed as reasonable/unreasonable absences of up to two days during a month, of pupils, if they have regularly collaborated with the school psychologist, or have consulted regularly with other teachers to write down pupils' characteristics.

The instruments built to obtain the quantitative data are the Likert scale and measure the frequency of application of the study variables.

The reliability level of Likert scales is as follows: (1) never; (2) rarely; (3) sometimes; (4) often; (5) always. These scales used in the structured questionnaire were determined by the Cronbach alpha coefficient. According to Laerd statistics (2012) Cronbach's alpha is the most widely used instrument, which serves to measure the internal consistency of the scales of a questionnaire, it is widely used in a Likert questionnaire with many measurement scales for which we are interested if the scales are reliable.

In addition to instruments that attempt to collect quantitative data, instruments for obtaining qualitative data were also designed for this study.

A semi-structured Interview Guide has been developed for qualitative data collection, which has been implemented for NYHS leaders, the School Psychologist and the School Senator.

The content of the interview guides is mainly built on the basis of the legal framework of the pre-university education system in the Republic of Albania, focusing specifically on the role, responsibilities and functions of the HT, viewed in relation with school leaders, school psychologist and the school senator.

The content of the semi-structured interview includes dimensions and questions in order to answer the formulated research question and in order to verify the hypothesis raised.

The Interview Guide built for school board representatives considered the following aspects of the Homeroom Teacher-School Leader relationship:

- The work of HT towards students in their homeroom classes.
- The work of HT towards the parents of pupils in their homeroom classes.
- The work of the HT in relation to their responsibilities to the school principal and school documentation.
- Their relationship as leaders of the institution with the caretakers of the school.
- To what extent did the HT know the legal framework related to the duties, role and responsibilities of the Homeroom Teacher in the Republic of Albania?

A special Interview Guide was designed for the school Psychologist. The main sections that are included in this Interview are:

- Responsibilities of the Homeroom Teacher in relation to the School Psychologists and vice versa.
- Concrete relationships as a School Psychologist with the Homeroom Teachers of the school.
- In which aspects was the work of the Homeroom Teachers in the school mostly focused?
- The work of Homeroom Teachers towards students in their homeroom classes.
- The work of Homeroom Teachers towards the parents of the students in their homeroom classes.

A special Interview Guide was created for the school Senator. The main sections that are part of this Interview are:

Concrete relationships of HT with school students in terms of their care for students within the learning process, but also outside it.

The help and support that HT provide to students in their homeroom classes for their civic education and beyond the school premises.

HT's care is as broad as involves the aspects of their students' personal lives.

The semi-structured interview format contains spaces to deepen the respondents' answers, as well as to include their problems related to the variables in the study.

The study population is Pupils, Parents, Homeroom Teachers (HTs), School Principals, School Psychologist, and NYHS School Senator.

The sampling of the population of Students and Parents is determined at the rate of 50% of all respective populations, while for the HTs is taken 100% as their sample.

Quantitative data were processed according to the SPSS system.

Determining the sampling of this study according to the categories taken into consideration is intentional.

For students, the methodology of selecting respondents is defined as follows:

There is a total of 194 students.

There is a total of 83 students in the 10th grade. The student questionnaire for this class was distributed to 42 of them.

There is a total of 66 students in the 11th grade. The student questionnaire was distributed to 35 of them.

There is a total of 45 students in the 12th grade. The student questionnaire was distributed to 23 of them.

The condition for the selection of respondents for each class is selecting them according to the register of each class, one Student YES, one Student NO.

The same criterion was followed for determining the *number of parents*, but for their selection, although it was done according to the register of each class, the order was followed as follows: one Parent No, one Parent YES. The purpose of this selection method is to avoid questioning the student and his/her parent at the same time. This selection methodology for Students responders and Parents responders aims to cover as large a number of study populations as possible.

The NYHS School Principal has clarified the intentions of this initiative and ensured, together with the authors of the research, the understanding and cooperation of the students, their parents and the HTs of this school.

The questionnaire was completed by a total of 93 Students, or 48% of the total number of students, a total of 83 Parents, or 43% of the total number of parents and a total of 13 Homeroom Teachers, or 100% of their number.

The student questionnaire for classrooms in the 10th grade was distributed to 42 of them, it was completed by 42, or 51% of the total number of students in this year; in classrooms of the 11th grade 35 questionnaires were distributed, of which 34 or 52% of the total number of students this grade year;in classrooms of the 12th grade 23 questionnaires were distributed, of which 17 or 38% of the total number of students in this class were completed.

36 questionnaires were completed by parents of classrooms in the 10th grade, or 43% of the number of parents of students of this grade year (one parent is calculated per student), 20 of all parents of classrooms in the 11th grade completed the questionnaire, or 30% of the number of parents of students of this grade year, 17 of the parents of classrooms in the 12th grade, or 38% of the number of parents of students of this grade year, have filled in the questionnaire. So, a total of 83 questionnaires were completed by parents, or 43% of the total number of parents of students of this school.

The main results of the survey

Conclusion 1 (Students):

From the results obtained from the students' answers, it results that the students are (in over 70%) satisfied and admit that the HT has acquainted them with the articles of the Normative Provisions (Dispozita Normative) that elaborate their rights and obligations, with the Internal Rules of the School, with Compensation procedures, in case something is damaged from the school inventory, with disciplinary measures, in case of violation of the School Internal Regulations and

the rules set out in the Normative Provisions, how he/she takes care that students regularly attend school and do as much less absences, that he/she cares for newly arrived students, also that he/she creates an atmosphere of understanding and takes care to cooperate with them, that he/she cares especially for students who express concerns in their behavior, and that he/she acquaints them with the conditions of health and school safety, etc.

From the students' point of view, the problem is the fact that the Homeroom Teacher does not advise them enough on issues related to their career (less than 50%).

Conclusion 2 (Parents):

From the results obtained from the answers of the parents it results that over 70% of the parents confirm that HTs of the child's homeroom creates an atmosphere of understanding with them and that he/she cooperates with the parents, that he/she takes care that the child attends school regularly and does as few absences as possible and that the HT has informed them (the parents) regularly about the well-being of their children. The vast majority of parents confirm that the tutor has invited them to general parent meetings, with or without students, at least once every three months. They acknowledge that the HT has introduced them to the School Rules and to the health and safety requirements of the school. Parents also confirm in large numbers that in cases of after-school activities hours or extracurricular activities, the school principal or HT has notified them and requested their written permission. From the parents' point of view, the problem is that HT does not advise them enough on issues related to their child's career.

Conclusion 3 (Homeroom Teachers):

The data collected from the questionnaires completed by HT, result that most of them think that they know the students of the homeroom and their parents about the health and safety conditions in the school, specifically acquainted the parents with the progress of homeroom students, that they have invited parents to general parent meetings, with or without students, at least once every three months. Homeroom teachers massively confirm that for after-school activities or extracurricular activities the school principal or HT has notified the parents and asked for their written permission. Homeroom Teachers confirm that when a student of their homeroom falls ill or has an accident, they as HT or head of the educational institution, immediately notify the parent. Homeroom teachers have regularly written the annual Tutoring Hours Plan and approved it by the

school principal/deputy principal. Also, they have always marked the homeroom hours on a special page of the class register and they have been mentioned in the weekly school schedule and have regularly become part of the Homeroom Teacher Diary.

From HT's point of view, the problem is that they do not take enough care of the students of their homeroom to attend school regularly and to make as few absences as possible. They also want to do more about advising students and their parents about the subjects that students in their homeroom should choose.

At the same time, they acknowledge that as HT they need to take extra care to avoid overloading the students during their homeroom hours. Finally, HTs acknowledge that they need to improve their work as HTs in advising their homeroom students, and their parents, on issues related to student careers.

Conclusion 4 (Interviews):

School Principal Interview Summary

Regarding the evaluation of the relationship between the HT and the students of the homeroom, schools principal says: "When I talk about teachers, I almost always mean the teacher of a respective subject, but also the homeroom teacher. I do not divide these two categories, because you cannot be a good teacher in a subject and a bad Homeroom Teacher or vice versa. If you neglected one of these, I do not believe that you do the other one with dedication. The relatively small number of students in our classrooms enables the teacher to get to know each of them well, the problems they have and their transition to create a successful team. From my experience, success is achieved by the Homeroom Teacher who organizes with his/her students beautiful and educational activities in the school but also outside of it. Also, the teacher's cooperative relationship with the parents or the parents between them is created more naturally in a small group."

Regarding the evaluation of the relationship between Homeroom Teacher and Parents of students, the school principal states: "Cooperation and communication with parents is not left to chance. It is no coincidence that the first in-house training at NYHS was with parents. We have been active members in the initiative "schools for successful parenting" where participants are parents and teachers. Our efforts should be directed at attracting parental involvement in classroom problem solving. In this aspect we have much to do and learn."

Regarding the evaluation of the relationship between Homeroom Teacher, the Principal of the school and the school's documentation, the Principal of the school states: "The Homeroom Teachers complete the school documentation

in a timely and accurate manner. I would like everyone to make good use of statistics to organize a researched work and not just what the day brings."

Regarding the evaluation of the Principal – Homeroom Teacher relationship, the school principal states: "The NYHS Homeroom Teachers are the ones I value most among other teachers. It is a difficult job, even more difficult than to implement the relevant curriculum according to the standards and not to be a dedicated and responsible Homeroom Teacher. The Homeroom Teachers are well aware of the problems of their classrooms and stay close to their homeroom classes, in their own way. The way of approaching the problems is often narrow, counseling, meetings with the psychologist about the problem, notifying the parents, etc. It would be necessary to organize, with a lot of fantasy, various activities in accordance with the problem."

Regarding the assessment of the level of knowledge of the legal framework by Homeroom Teachers, the school principal states: "Every homeroom teacher has in his file at the beginning of each year, the legal framework that relates to his duties and responsibilities. The surveys completed this year, helped the teachers of our school to face their knowledge, the impact they have had as a homeroom teacher and to reflect on the future."

Summary of the Interview given by the School's Psychologist

Legal support:

- Article 102 of the Constitution of the Republic of Albania
- Article 26 of Law No. 69.2012, dated 21.06.2012, "On the pre-university education system in the Republic of Albania" Law 69/2012;
- School Psychological Service Manual.
- Order No.31, MASR, dated 28.01.2020 on the Approval of the Regulation on the Functioning of Pre-University Educational Institutions in the Republic of Albania.

Regarding the responsibilities of HT in relation to the school psychologist and vice versa, school's psychology states that: "The Regulation on the Functioning of Pre-University Educational Institutions, in Article 30, point 5 states: The psycho-social service collects and processes data on:

a) changes in student behavior;
b) social and economic level of students;
c) relations with friends;
d) relations with teachers;

e) communication and relations with persons exercising parental responsibility of students;
f) the phenomenon of bullying in IA;
g) the way students spend their free time;
h) students' dependence on the Internet;
i) Addiction to smoking, alcohol and drugs, etc.

Article 30, point 6: The psycho-social worker has the duty to inform the Homeroom Teacher of the student and the leaders of the AI about the data they collect about the student.

According to her at NYHS the HT collaborates with the psychologist/social worker on specific student problems. She would describe her working relations with HTs of the schoolas correct and cooperative. Some of the strengths of these relationships are: prompt and immediate contact regarding any changes observed in students. Some of the aspects in which these relationships can be improved is to develop even more and more.

Regarding the evaluation of the aspects of the work of HT, the school psychology says: "In my opinion the cooperation with the Homeroom Teachers of the school where I am employed, is focused on the implementation of the tasks set out in the Normative Provisions (Dispozita Normative), as well as on the School Strategies and the annual work plan of the Psycho-social service in the school.

Regarding the question on the evaluation of the work of Homeroom Teachers towards the students of their homerooms, the school psychology states: "I appreciate the communication and sharing of information for the students, according to the respective behavior and issues, and the continuous discussion about each of them. Some of the aspects in which this work can be improved, I would mention group discussions, also with other teachers who can contribute to a better and more successful approach, depending on the situation and the issue or issue."

A summary of the interview with the school student Senator

A Homeroom Teacher, above all, turns into a second parent. It is precisely his duty to take care of the student, not only in terms of teaching, but also in terms of caring and ensuring that all the difficulties of a student are overcome. Beyond the articles that define the duties of a HT, I want to talk about the real importance of a teacher, especially the one of the HT.

Einstein says: "*Each of us is a genius. "But if we judge a fish by its ability to climb trees, it will spend its entire life thinking it is incapable.*"

The duty of a HT extends beyond the walls of the classroom. He/She must enter into the hearts of every student and help them find their talents and inclinations. Above all, it is the Homeroom Teacher who, more than others, helps you to create as a human being, with moral, human and professional values. A HT gives his/her contribution in all aspects of the formation of an individual of the future, sharing advice or even personal experiences. I came to this school two years ago. I was a shy girl, who was still living inside her world. It was my HTs who, with their care, managed to create a space where I could feel confident in myself. Our relationship probably broke the typical barrier student-teacher barrier, but their support gave me the impetus to pursue my dreams. I now feel incredibly grateful to have encountered such teachers in my life, who have become an inspiration to me. Whenever I was busy, they made sure to lighten this burden for me. They advised me about my future, being completely honest and truthful. They were there for any concern, whether school or personal. A true Homeroom Teacher is much more than a mere educator. Because a good Homeroom Teacher creates a relationship based on mutual trust and love for knowledge and life.

I wholeheartedly thank you, my dear Homeroom Teachers!

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Public or private corruption?

(The ideological dimension of anti-corruption discourses in Colombia, Ecuador and Albania)

Dr. Blendi KAJSIU

Abstract

This is a summary of some of the main arguments and findings of the book ¿Corrupción pública o privada? La dimensión ideológica de los discursos anti-corrupción en Colombia, Ecuador y Albania (Bogotá: Tirant lo Blanch, 2020). The book compares the official anti-corruption discourses of president, Juan Manuel Santos (2010-2018) in Colombia, president, Rafael Correa (2007-2017) in Ecuador, and prime minister Edi Rama (2013-present) in Albania. It shows that although these three countries face very similar levels and perceptions of corruption their governments articulate this phenomenon differently due to their distinct ideological positions. While the neoliberal governments of Santos and Rama define corruption primarily as abuse of public office and locate it mainly in the public sector, or in its interaction with the private one, the government of Rafael Correa, which embraced the 21st Century Socialism, defines corruption primarily as a problem of the private sector that captures and distorts the public sector.

Key words: *Corruption; Anti-corruption discourses; Perceptions of corruption; Albania; Latin America; Ideology; Politics*

Introduction: The illusion of corruption

In many developing countries, such as Colombia, Ecuador and Albania, the topic of corruption is so ubiquitous that it is easy to imagine that we are dealing with an objective phenomenon that can be as easily identified as poverty, inequality or

breast cancer. In fact, politicians present it as a disease when they denounce "the cancer of corruption". Therefore, the "war against corruption" often resembles the war against poverty or the war against breast cancer.

This is what I call the illusion of corruption. The idea that this phenomenon exists out there and that it can be objectively identified or measured. This is an illusion that vanishes as soon as we ask: what is corruption? In the academia many refer to corruption as the abuse of public power for private ends. Some like Nye (1967, p. 419) define it as behaviour that deviates from the formal duties of public office due to private considerations. Some like Dobel (1978, p. 960) understand it as a general failure of citizens to commit to the common good. Others define corruption at a more political level as a form of political exclusion (Warren 2004) or as the failure of liberal democracy to live up to its standards (Sullivan 2005, p. 100). The definitions of corruption are so varied and numerous that it is difficult to believe that they refer to the same phenomenon. The disagreement on the nature of corruption extends well beyond academia. Although politicians, journalists and citizens all denounce, and complain about, corruption it is not always clear that they are talking about the same practices, actions or phenomena. (Isaza y Sandoval, 2018, p. 111).

Naturally, one could argue that corruption is not the only contested concept in politics. There is hardly a complete consensus over concepts such as poverty or inequality, which are widely debated. The level of disagreement over the concept of corruption, however, is much deeper than in the case of poverty and inequality. This is reflected in the simple fact that while there are indexes that measure actual levels of poverty and inequality, such as the Gini coefficient, there is no such an index in the case of corruption. It is easy to forget that the most commonly used index of corruption developed by Transparency International, Corruption Perception Index (CPI) measures perceptions of corruption not its actual levels. In a similar fashion the Control of Corruption Index (CCI) developed by the World Bank measures the degree to which there is a perception that public power is exercised for private benefit (World Bank 2018).

In other words, corruption is so elusive that there is no measure of its actual levels. This happens not only because corrupt acts take place under the shadow of secrecy but also because we are dealing with a concept that is far more ideological than cancer, poverty or inequality. Even if we agreed at a very abstract level that corruption essentially means the transformation of something from good to bad, which means that it refers to degradation, perversion, degeneration, depravation, etc., it would be difficult to reach a consensus over its meaning in the political sphere. This happens because there is no agreement as to what is the "good" political condition from which a political system, a public official or a citizen has deviated. There can be no consensus as to what corruption is in

politics "because there is hardly a consensus on the ´naturally sound condition of politics´" (Philp, 1997, p. 445).

This means that every definition of corruption reflects certain political ideals as well as certain ways of understanding politics in general (Philp y David-Barrett, 2015, p. 392). So, if social justice constitutes one´s principal political ideal than corruption will most likely be defined as social injustice. If, on the other hand, the highest political ideal that one advocates is free competition, corruption will appear as the deviation from such ideal, that is distorted or unfair competition. As consequence, there is no agreement as to the meaning of corruption because there cannot be an agreement on the ideal political regime. For some, the ideal political system should prioritise freedom, for others equality or stability.

Given how central the ideological dimension is to the concept of corruption it is rather surprising the scarce attention it has received in political science in general. In the case of Colombia, for example, out of myriads of articles and books on corruption I could only find two that directly addressed its ideological dimension (Vasquez and Montoya 2011; Montoya 2000). Such neglect was also reflected in the four-volume monumental study of the Universidad de Externado entitled *Corruption in Colombia* that explored the nature, causes, consequences, perceptions of and the fight against corruption in the country. None of the fifty articles that constituted this four volume research addressed explicitly its ideological dimension.

Hence the current book aims to fill this void in corruption literature by identifying the ideological implications of different definitions of corruption and the anti-corruption policies they give rise to. To this end I compared the official anti-corruption discourses of the government of president Juan Manuel Santos (2010-2018) in Colombia, president Rafael Correa (2007-2017) in Ecuador and prime minister Edi Rama (2013-present) in Albania. Although these three countries faced similar levels and perceptions of corruption their governments differ both in its articulation and in their anti-corruption policies. I argue that such differences are an outcome of their different ideological positions. Santos in Colombia advocated a moderate neoliberal ideology that while identifying the market as the primary source of socio-economic development did recognize the necessity of state intervention. Correa in Ecuador propagated the 21st century socialism, which was highly critical of the neoliberal developmental model and identified the state as the key motor of socio-economic development. Finally, Edi Rama in Albania advocated a more fundamental neoliberal ideology which identified the market as the only source of development while reducing the state to an obstacle that had to be overcome.

The ideological and discursive analysis of corruption: A theoretical framework

 A discursive and ideological analysis of corruption combines discourse theory developed by Laclau and Mouffe (1984) with the conceptual analysis of ideologies developed by Michael Freeden (1996). From a discourse theory perspective corruption does not enjoy a fixed signified or an essence. Its meaning appears within a specific discourse which determines what signified will be associated with the signifier corruption. From a conceptual analysis, on the other hand, the meaning of corruption is relational, it is construed through association with other concepts that are articulated along with it. That is to say, the meaning of corruption differs depending on whether it is articulated in association with a concept such as "public" (public corruption) or "private" (private corruption).

Despite their differences these two perspectives are complementary. The discursive perspective allows us to identify the conditions, as well as the power relations, that enable the connection between a signifier such as "corruption" and a specific signified, such as "abuse of public office for private ends". This is an ideological process insofar as fixing the meaning of a concept is one of the core functions of ideology (Freeden 2013, p. 75). Thus, the dominant definition of corruption as "abuse of public office for private gain" has ideological implications because it limits the phenomenon in the public sphere. It therefore, tends to legitimize neoliberal policies that under the anti-corruption banner seek to reduce the public sphere through privatization or the extension of the market logic.

Nevertheless, the ideological dimension of corruption above is not exhausted by its definition. This means that a left wing ideology, such as the socialism of the 21st century, can also define corruption as "abuse of public office", but articulate it in association with the capture of the state by private actors. In this case the signifier "corruption" while connected to the signifier "abuse of public office" does not exclude the private sector from where it originates. In a similar fashion a populist ideology could articulate the concept of corruption as abuse of public office in association with the political elite, articulating it as a problem that results primarily from the corrupt elites. Finally, a neoliberal ideology can articulate the same concept in proximity with other concepts such free competition or government intervention articulating a corruption that has to do with the distortion of the market by government intervention. To sum up, the concept of corruption as abuse of public office has different ideological dimensions depending on whether it is articulated as the capture of the state by private actors, as a characteristic of the ruling elites or as a consequence of state intervention in the market.

Corruption as a discursive phenomenon: floating and empty signifiers

Discourses are practices that "systematically constitute the objects they talk about" (Foucault, 1972, p. 49). This means that instead of analysing corruption as concept with a stable meaning it is more useful to analyse it as a sign which consists of a stable signifier "corruption" that connects to a multitude of distinct signified such as "degradation", "abuse of ´public office", "state capture", "political exclusion", "bribery", etc. This means that instead of looking for a singularity, the common denominator of the different definitions of corruption or the phenomena that they all define as corrupt (such as bribery), we should recognize and identify the plurality of meanings that the signifier "corruption" denotes. The concept of floating signifier developed by Laclau and Mouffe (1984) is very useful here. A floating signifier is characterized by the "sliding of the signified under the signifier" (Torfing 2004, p. 62). Corruption can be analysed as a "floating signifier" insofar as it is assigned different meanings by different actors in different contexts. This happens not only in politics where different actors compete to connect the signifier "corruption" to different signified, but also in academia.

Thus, in the modernization paradigm developed in the 1950s corruption marked the distance between a modern state and a traditional or a modernizing one. In the economic paradigm that followed it in the 1980s corruption was understood more as public sector problem that resulted from state intervention in the economy. Finally, in the political paradigm corruption was understood more as a failure of politics or democracy. Table 1 below summarizes the way the signifier "corruption" was connected to different signifieds in different academic paradigms.

TABLE 1. Corruption as a floating signifier

Discourse/Paradigm	Modernization	Economic	Political
Signifier	Corruption	Corruption	Corruption
Signified	Lack of modernization Nepotism Clientelism Bribery Abuse of public office	Rent seeking State capture Bribery Lack of free competition	Injustice Betrayal of public interest Deceptive exclusion Failure of liberal democracy

Source: Kajsiu 2020, p. 73.

A floating signifier can be transformed into an empty signifier if it begins to represent such a multitude of different demands that it tends to loses a

specific meaning. The easiest way to describe an empty signifier is as a signifier without a signified. (Torfing, 2004, p. 301). A particular social demand (such as democratization, development or order) is transformed into an empty signifier when without necessarily completely abandoning its particularity it is transformed into a signifier that represents a variety of other social demands (Laclau 2005, p. 39). Anti-corruption can be a good example of an empty signifier because it often serves to represents such a wide variety of demands that the signifier "anti-corruption" comes to stand for almost everything in general – from democracy to development – and nothing specific in particular. By representing a myriad demands, often contradictory, anti-corruption can articulate a political, economic or social order that is free of internal contradictions, whose failure is simply due to corruption or its bad implementation.

This was the function performed by the anti-corruption discourse of Ivan Duque, the presidential candidate of the right wing *Centro Democratico*, in the 2018 presidential campaign in Colombia. Against corruption Duque could promise more democracy, a cleaner politics, more market, less taxes and more social spending at the same time. See figure 1 below:

Figure 1. Anticorruption as an empty signifier in Ivan Duque´s 2018 presidential campaign

Source: Kajsiu 2020, p. 198.

As we can see from the figure above anti-corruption embraced so many different signified that it came to represent a number of different social demands, which would otherwise be contradictory. It is against corruption that such different demands appear as equivalent, defined not in opposition to each other but rather in opposition to corruption.

The ideological dimension of corruption

According to Freeden (1996, p. 77) ideologies are characterized "by a morphology that displays core, adjacent, and peripheral concepts". The central concepts of an ideology constitute its conceptual core that can be identified in its diverse manifestations. They are defined not only in relation to each – other but also in relation to adjacent concepts that limit their meaning within a given cultural or logical context. Liberty, for example, is a central concept of liberalism, but its specific meaning depends on whether it is placed in proximity to adjacent concepts such as "free competition" or "human rights". The latter represents a cultural constraint on the concept of liberty given that the notion of universal human rights is a western cultural construction (Freeden 2013, p. 81). Unlike the adjacent concepts the peripheral ones are "situated in the exterior perimeter of an ideology, between thought and action" (Ibid., p. 84). In other words, the peripheral concepts consist in the practices or policies that certain ideology engenders in a given context.

I utilize the conceptual analysis of ideologies developed by Freeden (1996) in order to spell out the conceptual structure of four important ideologies in contemporary Latin America, Neoliberalism, Populism, the Socialism of the 21st Century and Conservatism. Table 2 below summarizes their central, adjacent and peripheral concepts.

TABLE 2. The morphology of four ideologies in Latin America

Ideology	Socialism of the 21st Century	Populism	Neoliberalism	Conservatism
Core Concepts	Equality Solidarity Social Justice The state as a source of socio-economic development Work as a source of socio-economic development	Antagonism between the honest people and the corrupt elite. Popular will as the main source of political legitimacy. The people as the underdog	The market as the principal source of socio-economic development. Free competition Economic liberty Personal responsibility Private property.	The extra-human origin of the social order Order, Authority, Tradition Gradual not radical change Private property
Adjacent Concepts	Participative democracy Pluri-nationalism The state as collective action Anti-Corruption Anti-imperialism Anti-neoliberalism National sovereignty	Direct democracy Anti-corruption Anti-imperialism National sovereignty Solidarity Human rights Equality Caudillismo	Electoral democracy Anti-corruption Human rights Equality before the law Fair competition	Legal democracy: r espect for the law and authority Equality before the law Anti-corruption

Peripheral Concepts	Income redistribution policies Social inclusion Increase of social spending Public education Universal health Nationalization of natural resources.	Referendums Social inclusion policies Increase of social spending Redistribution of resources	Tax reduction Deregulation Privatization Free trade	Protection of the traditional family, religion and values Strengthening of institutional authority Tough on crime

Source: Kajsiu, 2020, p. 99-100.

As the above table shows different ideologies share common concepts such as democracy, equality or corruption, but they articulate them in distinct ways. The notion of democracy, for example, when articulated in proximity with concepts such as equality gives rise to "participative democracy" where all participate in equal fashion in the decision making process. However, when democracy is articulated with notions such as "free competition" it implies "electoral democracy" where its key feature is not participation as much as free and fair competition between different political actors. In a similar fashion when the concept of democracy is related to other concepts such as popular will it becomes "direct democracy", where the people make decisions directly without intermediaries, not through representation (utilizing referendums, for example). Finally, if democracy is articulated with concepts such as order and authority, as in the case of conservatism, then it can become "legal democracy" that it can be identified with the respect for the law, institutions and authority.

The same logic applies in the case of corruption. A neoliberal ideology places it in relation to concepts such as free competition and the market, which is why it is articulated as lack or distortion of free competition that results from state intervention. Corruption, therefore, serves to distinguish between a clean private sector and a corrupt public one. Likewise, in the populist ideology corruption is placed in proximity to the elites, as their core feature. It serves to distinguish the honest people from the corrupt elites. From the perspective of the socialism of the 21st century the relation of corruption with other concepts such as equality, social justice and the state as a source of development articulates a concept that is characteristic of the private sector. Finally, the articulation of corruption with core concepts of a conservative ideology such as order and authority identifies it with illegality. In sum, different ideologies define corruption in distinctive

ways because they place it in proximity with their core concepts which fill it with different meanings.

Public vs. private corruption: The ideological dimension of anti-corruption discourses in Colombia, Ecuador and Albania, 2002-2017

I utilize the above theoretical framework in order to compare anti-corruption discourses and policies of three governments in three countries, Colombia, Ecuador and Albania. Although these three countries faced similar levels and perceptions of corruption their governments differed both in their articulation of corruption and their anti-corruption policies due to their distinct ideological positions. President Santos (2010-2018) in Colombia advocated a moderate, third way, neoliberal ideology that while identifying the market as the primary source of socio-economic development did recognize the necessity of state intervention. President Correa (2007-2017) in Ecuador, on the other hand, propagated the 21st century socialism, which was highly critical of the neoliberal developmental model and identified the state as the key motor of socio-economic development. Hence, while the neoliberal government of Santos presented corruption as a problem of the public sector and its interaction with the private one, Correa articulated it as a phenomenon that originated primarily in the private sector. Finally, prime minister Edi Rama (2013 – present) in Albania advocated a more fundamental neoliberal ideology which identified the market as the only source of development while reducing the state to an obstacle that had to be overcome. As a consequence, he identified corruption with bribery situating it almost exclusively in the public sector.

The Government of Rafael Correa: Private corruption

The key anti-corruption strategies and legislation produced by the Correa Government, where corruption was defined implicitly or explicitly, were the New Constitution of Ecuador of 2008, The National Plan of Prevention and War Against Corruption, 2013-2017, The Organic Law on Fiscal Paradises, the National Plan of *Buen Vivir* (Good Living) 2013-2017 and the Integral Organic Penal Code of Ecuador of 2014. Despite their differences all these documents shared a common objective: they sought to identify corruption in the private sector. The attempt to rearticulate corruption as something inherent to the private sector can be first seen in the article 204 of the New Constitution of Ecuador (*Nueva Constitución de Ecuador*) in 2008, which stated that the Office of Transparency and Social Control:

[…] will promote and stimulate the control of entities and organisms of the public sector and of natural or legal persons in the private sector that provide services or carry out activities of public interest, so that they perform them with responsibility, transparency and equity […]; and it with prevent and fight corruption. (p.108).

It is interesting to note here that anti-corruption applied to the public and the private sector. The latter was not restricted to the companies that interacted with the state through state contracts or public tenders, it included all natural or legal persons that provided services of "public interest". Such definition included almost all of the private sector as it is easy to argue that any private company offered services that were of "public interest".

This understanding of corruption of something pertaining to the private sector was further developed in the National Plan for the Prevention of and War Against Corruption 2013-2017 (*Plan Nacional de Prevención y Lucha Contra la Corrupción 2013-2017*). Here corruption was defined as:

[…] the deliberate and covert illicit or illegitimate action of public officials or private persons in order to benefit particular interests, realized through any means or bases of power in institutionalized and structured normative spaces, affecting the interests of the public, of collective subjects, of individuals and ethics (p. 11).

The definition of corruption as a phenomenon that undermined public interest implied that it could be present both in the public and the private sector, insofar as the public interest could be subverted both by public and private actors. For this reason, the above document emphasised that one could not argue that corruption was inherent to the state and its bureaucracy, it was "a phenomenon that encompasses all the institutions and organizational forms of society" (Ibid., p. 14).

This in turn meant that there was a kind of corruption that was typical of the private sector which had nothing to do with the public one, "it is carried out by private actors, amongst them and to their detriment, without the direct participation of the public sector". (Ibid., p. 16). Such examples of corruption in the private sector included: "money laundering, telecommunications fraud, abuse against the consumer, abuse of privileged information" (Ibid., pp. 16-17). All of these phenomena had to do with corruption by private actors, such as the financial sector, telecommunications and enterprises in general. According to the Superintendence of Market Control, one of the institutions that constituted the Office of Transparency and Social Control, they were instances of "abuse of the market power by economic operators" (Superintendencia del Control del Mercado, 2018).

Corruption defined as "abuse of power" was situated both in the public and the private sector. That is to say, if public officials abused of their power so did private actors. Accordingly, if the unjustified enrichment of public sector officials was called corruption, the same should be true for the unjustified enrichment of private actors. Hence, as part of the attempt to define corruption as inherent to the private sector Correa's government introduced a new type of violation in the Organic Integral Penal Code of Ecuador (2014), article 297, "Unjustified private enrichment" which was defined as obtaining "for oneself or for another [person], directly or through another, an unjustified patrimonial increase of more than 200 minimal salaries of a general worker [68 000 USD]". In a similar fashion, the Law Against Fiscal Paradises, while not mentioning corruption explicitly, was introduced by Correa's government as a key instrument in its war against corruption. According to Correa:

> Fiscal paradises [were] an extreme expression of capitalism without a face, without responsibility, without transparency, without country, without humanity. The war against fiscal evasion and corruption cannot be carried out in isolation. We need global action in order to end this form of savage capitalism. (cited in Andes, 2017).

It is important at this point to emphasise that a large part of the National Plan of Prevention and War Against Corruption 2013-2017 focused on public sector corruption (pp. 15-16, for example). It also paid special attention to corruption that surged from the interaction between the public and the private sector due to the "corporatist structure of the state, because of which public administration has responded to particular interests in power" (p. 22). The problem here was the connection of the public sector "with powerful economic groups and politicians in order to favour particular and specific interests" (p. 27). It is interesting to note here that even when dealing with corruption in the interaction between the public and the private sector the National Plan identified the origin of this phenomenon in the private sector, whether in the private enterprises or the corporatist logics of governance.

Juan Manuel Santos: The public-private corruption

The anti-corruption strategy of Santos Government recognized that corruption could be carried out by both public and private actors, so that it involved both sectors. Nevertheless, the phenomenon was primarily defined in relation to the public sector:

> [...] corruption is understood as «the use of public power in order to divert the administration of the public towards private benefits». This implies that corrupt

practices are realized by public and/or private actors who have power and influence in the taking of decisions about and the administration of public goods. (Conpes 2013, p. 18).

Corruption here was defined in relation to the administration of public goods, which meant that it always involved the public sector although at times in collusion with the private one. This is why the main objective of the anti-corruption strategy of Santo´s government was "to strengthen the instruments and mechanisms necessary to prevent, investigate, and sanction corruption, so that […] better levels of integrity and transparency are achieved in the public sector" (Ibid., p. 8).

In a similar fashion the Secretary of Transparency of the Presidency of Colombia in 2016 declared that "the Public Administration is the natural space for the implementation of measures against corruption". (p. 39). From this perspective anticorruption was essentially a problem of good governance which entailed an efficient and transparent public administration: "The prevention and the control of corruption are covered by the guiding principles of good governance and administrative efficiency and are associated with the transparency and the proper functioning of public administration" (Plan Nacional de Desarrollo, 2010-2014, p. 653). Corruption was a disease of the public sector that affected the legitimacy of the state and of its public policies: "A corrupt practice does not violate only a particular rule or influences a specific collective decision, it also affects the legitimacy of the State […]. Social systems with high levels of corruption have ineffective and badly focused public policies" (Conpes 2013, pp. 20-21). In other words, corruption was connected essentially with the state and its public policies, even when committed by private actors from the private sector.

Santos did recognize the involvement of private actors in corruption. He understood that the problem was not only the corrupted public official but also the private corrupter: "We know that corruption has two sides: the public official and the private person. That is why we shall sanction in exemplary fashion the traffic of influences by private persons." (Santos, 2011). Therefore, he would declare that "the private sector should play a protagonist role in reducing corruption within enterprises and mechanisms of self-regulation in order to prevent bribery." (Ibid.). To this end he introduced measures to "prevent corruption in the business world". (Santos, 2015). Such measures included "more severe punishments on private corruption, fiscal evasion, illegal enrichment, bribery and […] transnational bribery". (Santos 2018). In order to avoid the capture of the state by private actors Santos engaged with the private sector in order to clarify norms on lobbing so that "private interests did not interfere improperly in the decisions of the state." (Santos, 2017a, p. 3). All these

measures show that in his understanding corruption could also be encountered in the private sector.

Nevertheless, it is important to point out here that even when talking about corruption in the private sector Santos was in fact articulating it in the context of its interaction with the public sector. In other words, he was talking about the public-private corruption. Thus, he often mentioned activities such as collusion of private firms in order to fix prices in public tenders: "We should eradicate corrupt practices, such as, for example, when competitors in public tenders agree to present proposals or to regulate their participation in public tenders" (Santos, 2017b). In other words, Santos defined as corruption the collusion between private actors in relation to the state market of public tenders. The concept of corruption disappeared, however, when Santos talked about the same practice in the private sector, such as collusion between private actors in order to fix market prices. In this case instead of corruption he talked about "harmful practices"; "One of our principal duties has been to undo harmful practices (*practicas nociva*) that undermine this free competition […] we have managed to break up cartels of competitors in areas such as diapers, toilet paper, livestock auctions, private security and sugar" (p. 3). This implies that even when corruption was situated in the private sector it was always related directly or indirectly to the public sector. It was difficult to find in Santo's discourse an articulation of corruption as inherent to the private sector, by associating it with fiscal paradises or oligopolistic practices.

Edi Rama: Public corrruption

Rama defined corruption almost exclusively as state failure, its inability to offer efficient services to its citizens, to defend free competition and to build a meritocratic public administration. These failures forced citizen to resort to corruption in order to enjoy the services they were entitled to but the state did not provide. According to Rama (2014a):

> In the end, corruption is nothing more, in general terms, than the alternative to a service the citizen expects from the State. When the service that citizens except from the state, and which the state has the obligation to provide, is slow, bad and leads to completely obscure procedures, corruption appears as a rapid and efficient alternative.

In this contexts the elimination of corruption called for the modernization of the state so that it could provide its citizens with rapid, high quality and transparent services, in addition to a meritocratic public administration and a free competitive

market. According to Rama (2014b) "modern states do not have corruption as an alternative to [public] services. […] Archaic states develop corruption as an alternative to [public] services and the answer is modernization". Hence, Albanian corruption was essentially a problem of the public sector. What differentiated corruption in Albania from corruption in other developed European countries was the fact that it was "endemic in every cell of the state organism and in every contact of the state with the extended hand of the citizen that is asking for a service". (Rama 2013).

There were occasions when Rama alluded to corruption in the private sector, especially in higher education, where he would criticise high levels of corruption in both public and private institutions. This was, however, quite rare and even in this case his focus was primarily in the public education sector. It was this understanding of corruption as a public sector issue that structured Rama´s anti-corruption strategy 2015-2020. Its primary objective was: "Transparent Albanian institutions with high levels of integrity which enjoy the trust of citizens and guarantee high quality and incorruptible services" (Këshilli i Ministrave, 2015, p. 11). According to this strategy the principal challenges that anti-corruption faced in Albania were:

- Strengthening the integrity of public administration.
- Reforming and strengthening the independence of judicial power.
- Improve the quality of legislation.
- Improve the stability of public administration.
- Support the independent or/and autonomous functioning of key institutions (executive and independent)
- Lack of inter-institutional trust and cooperation. (Ibid., p. 8)

As the above list indicates the anti-corruption challenge in Albania was limited to the public sector. This is why the key objective of anti-corruption policies in Rama´s government was "eradicate corruption primarily in the public administration and in all the state institutions and especially in the institutions that services to citizens" (Ibid., p. 11). The anti-corruption strategy would clarify that its principal objective was to strengthen transparency "in all the areas of activity by the state" (Ibid.).

There was no mention in the 2015 Albanian anticorruption strategy of phenomena such as lobbing, state capture, or the "revolving door" between the private and the public sector. Such absence is quite telling given that by the end of 2011 there were no legal provisions in the Albanian legislation in order to regulate lobbing or revolving doors phenomena (Chari y Murphy, 2011, p. 5).

In Rama´s discourse the private sector appeared primarily as the victim rather than the perpetrator of corruption. Even when businesses participated in corrupt

acts they were forced to pay bribes by the inefficient bureaucracy and complex procedures. This is why the anti-corruption strategy sought to reduce:

> Contacts between enterprises and the state. The larger the number of contacts, the larger the bureaucracy, the larger the amount of impediments and corruption. The smaller the number of contacts, the smaller the bureaucracy, less impediments and corruption, and more freedom for enterprises. (Rama 2015).

Corruption here appeared as a consequence of the bureaucracy and its obstacles. In order to overcome these obstacles enterprises had to resort to corruption. They were passive participants in a phenomenon perpetrated by public actors. This is why Rama (2013a) would promise that:

> There will be no more entrepreneurs obligated to pay, to pay and hold silence. Hold silence out of fear that if they speak up they have to pay more and their tongue is completely cut off. The opposite with happen! We consider every entrepreneur as a partner in the process against this endemic corruption that appears in every contact between the entrepreneur and the [public] administration, as if it were a contact with the plague.

It is interesting to note that the "plague" in the above citation refers to the public administration, which terrorizes the honest entrepreneurs with corruption. The same happened to citizens in general. In Rama's words (2014b) corruption was "a system that every day sucked the blood of the citizens, the families, sucked from their pockets the money that they should not have to pay for services they are entitled to by law and custom." Corruption here stood for the bribes that citizens had to pay in order to receive a service.

Different ideologies, different articulations of corruption

A simple quantitative way to compare the articulation of corruption in the governments of Correa, Santos and Rama is through content analysis. To this end I have measured the frequency with which each of them defined corruption in their speeches as a problem of the public sector, of the private sector, of the interaction between the private and the public sector, or as a socio-cultural problem that did not have to do with neither the public nor the private sector as such but with society at large. See Table 3 below.

TABLE 3. The concept "corruption" in the speeches of Correa,
Santos and Rama, 2002-2017.

Politician Category	Rafael Correa	Juan Manuel Santos	Edi Rama
Corruption as a phenomenon of the public sphere	13%	28%	57%
Corruption as a phenomenon of the private sphere	26%	6%	5%
Corruption as a public-private phenomenon	23%	13%	10%
Corruption as a socio-cultural phenomenon	10%	14%	3%
None of the above	28%	39%	25%

Source. Kajsiu 2020, pp. 122 and 156.

As the above table shows Edi Rama emphasised corruption as a problem of the public sector more than Juan Manuel Santos and much more than Rafael Correa. The latter on the other hand tended to see corruption much more frequently as a problem of the private sector and its interaction with the public one, rather than as primarily a problem of the public sector *per se*.

The differences reflect the distinct ideological positions of these political leaders. Unlike Santos in Colombia and Rama in Albania who propagated a neoliberal development model, the government of Rafael Correa in Ecuador embraced the socialism of the 21st century, an ideology that "in Venezuela as much as in Ecuador and Bolivia was an anti-neoliberal social alliance" (Monereo, 2010, p. i). Such embrace of anti-neoliberalism led to projects such as "the nationalization of natural resources, increase of public spending and a realigning of foreign policy in Latin America [away from the USA]" (Valencia, 2016, p. 114). The 21st century socialism was "a developmental project based on the state rather than the market" (Ibid. p. 118). It criticised the neoliberal development model, especially its tendency to prioritise the market and capital at the expense of human labour. Correa´s 'citizen revolution' was socialist because it sided with "the supremacy of the human being over capital […] expressed in decent wages, labour stability, adequate work environment, social security, fair distribution of the social product". (Paz and Cepeda, 2015, pp. 3-4). In this context the role of the state as a source of socio-economic development was crucial. President Correa criticized neoliberal ideology because it "negated the necessity of the state, of collective action, pretending that all could be solved by that illusion called the market" (Correa, 2010, p. 5). To accept the importance of the public sector as the principal motor of development did not entail a complete negation of the importance of the private sector, but a recognition of the "obvious imperfections of the market" (Ibid. p. 5).

This relationship between the private and the public sector was articulated

in Correa´s anti-corruption discourses. They emphasised the importance of the public sector and the imperfections of the market. It is no surprise, then, that in Correa´s discourse corruption was situated more in the private rather than the public sector. Such articulation reflected his ideology – 21st century socialism, which identifies the state as the expression of the collective action of society and as a source of socio-economic development and the private sector as an obstacle to this end.

Santos and Rama, on the other hand, both developed their anti-corruption discourse from a neoliberal position which identified the market as the fundamental motor of socio-economic development. Hence, in both cases corruption was articulated primarily as a public sector challenge. There were, however, differences between these two articulations that reflect distinct nuances of neoliberalism. In Santo´s case the articulation of corruption as a public-private sector phenomenon reflected his "third way" ideology that while prioritizing the market did recognize some of its limits and the need for state intervention when necessary. Rama´s articulation of corruption, on the other hand, reflected a more fundamental neoliberal ideology that identified the private sector as the only source of socio-economic development and saw the state primarily as an obstacle that had to be removed.

The differences between Colombian and Albanian neoliberalism reflected the wider context within which neoliberalism emerged in Latin America and Eastern Europe. Although neoliberalism has been dominant in both regions it has met with far more resistance in the former than in the latter. In Latin America numerous social and political movements have mounted a strong resistance to neoliberal reforms (Harris, 2003). Although such resistance has been weaker in Colombia as compared to other neighbouring countries (Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador and Venezuela) it has been important, nonetheless (Chambers, 2017). As a consequence, Colombian political elites have moderated their neoliberal ideology, even when implementing it in practice, criticizing the market on occasion, recognizing the necessity of state intervention in others, and often paying lip service to concepts such as social justice.

In the case of Eastern Europe, on the other hand, resistance to the neoliberal hegemony has been much weaker, especially at the elite level (Hirt, Sellar and Young, 2013). The societies of Eastern Europe when faced with the structural reforms of the 1990-ies were far more patient than "the rebel countries of Latin America" (Greskovits, 1998, p. 15). The communist past served as a perfect enemy against which the new neoliberal order could be legitimized and implemented. This could explain, in part, why neoliberalism met with far less resistance in Eastern Europe than in Latin America. This was especially the case in Albania where a traumatic communist past hampered the emergence of political movements, whether left or

right, which would challenge a dominant neoliberal ideology that was legitimized as the opposite of Albanian communism. (Kajsiu, 2016, p. 282).

Table 4 below summarizes the differences in the different articulations of corruption we have seen so far bringing together the discursive and ideological analysis of this phenomenon.

TABLE 4. Ideological dimensions of corruption discourses in Ecuador, Colombia and Albania, 2007-2019

Ideology	Socialism of the 21st Century	Moderate Neoliberalism	"Hard" neoliberalism
Representative	Rafael Correa	Juan Manuel Santos	Edi Rama
Country	Ecuador	Colombia	Albania
Signifier	Corruption	Corruption	Corruption
Signified	Capture of the state by private actors Abuse of private power and market power. Abuse of public office for private gain. Unjustified enrichment in the private sector.	Abuse of public office for private gain. Bribery Squandering and stealing of public funds Lack of competition State capture	Abuse of public office for private gain. The failure of the state to provide services to citizens Bribery
Principal location of corruption	Private Sector Public-Private sector	Public sector Public-private sector	Public sector
Key anti-corruption policies	Eliminate private corruption Fight fiscal paradises Fight the capture of the state by private actors. Expand the public sector Nationalize public resources.	Stronger penalties for corrupt behaviour More competitive public biding Reform the state and public administration	Modernize the state Limit the contacts between the state and citizens De – regulate, Privatize Reform the state and public administration.

Source. Kajsiu 2020, p. 209.

Conclusion: Beyond anti-corruption

My main aim has been to expose the ideological dimension of anti-corruption discourses. To this end I have spelled out how anti-corruption proposals of different governments and politicians reflected and at the same time articulated their ideological positions. This ideological dimension, however, was not present only in political discourses but also in academic analysis of corruption

in general, even those that claimed to be objective and value-free. This is not surprising given that corruption is an essentially ideological concept, which marks the distance between a given ideal and its limited realization in practice.

Therefore, anti-corruption policies had a strong ideological dimension although they were often presented as technocratic or scientific reforms. The economic analysis that shaped most anti-corruption reforms, especially by leading international institutions such as the World Bank, built upon a specific ideal: the free market as the central source of socio-economic development. A neoliberal order of free, open and perfect competition was deemed inherently free of corruption. As a consequence, the elimination of corruption called for open and deregulated markets, privatization, marketization and a general reduction of state intervention into the economy along with the improvement of public administration so it could better support the market framework. Much of the anti-corruption programs and discourses of Santo´s government in Colombia, and most of the anti-corruption policies of Edi Rama's government in Albania, were shaped by the anti-corruption programs developed by institutions such as the World Bank.

The strong ideological dimension of the anti-corruption programs could explain, in part, why anti-corruption policies whether in Ecuador, Albania or Colombia have failed so often (Isaza, 2011, p. 236). Anti-corruption can be easily transformed into an empty signifier that articulates a certain political order (neoliberal or otherwise) as free of internal contradictions. So the problem is no longer with the political and economic order *per se* but rather with its corrupt implementation. As I showed in the case of the anticorruption discourse of the presidential candidate Ivan Duque in the 2018 presidential elections in Colombia, against corruption one could demand at the same time more capitalism, more free market, more democracy, more political participation, less taxes and more social spending. In this aspect, corruption is a very useful enemy because it serves to obscure the internal contradictions of a political agenda. It is this usefulness that can, in part, explain why anti-corruption discourses and programs are as ubiquitous as they are unsuccessful.

That is not to say that all anti-corruption policies are useless or that we should built anti-corruption programs that are free of ideology. Quite to the contrary, the best anti-corruption policies should spell out in a transparent manner their political ideals and assumptions instead of implementing them surreptitiously against corruption. This is why the anti-corruption programs developed within the economic paradigm are quite problematic. They tend to bury their ideological assumptions under "scientific" pretensions. Yet no amount of econometric analysis can overcome the ideological aspect of the definition of corruption.

The implication here is that when analysing and evaluating an anti-corruption discourse one has to pay close attention to two elements. First, it is necessary to

identify the ideals or political suppositions that inform it. It is important to ask, which political, economic or social ideal will be realized through the elimination of corruption? Second, it is important to assess the extent to which the anti-corruption discourse is utilized in order to obscure or spell out such political, economic or social ideal. Any discourse that articulates corruption as an empirical fact, or an objective phenomenon, which has to be eradicated tends to ignore its ideological dimension and serves to stifle the political debate on its causes and remedies.

Unfortunately, this is the perspective of most anti-corruption programs. The "war" against corruption (like many other "wars" against terrorism and drugs) often focus on the consequences of corruption and ignore its causes. The articulation of corruption as an enemy that wreaks havoc in society and, therefore, has to be defeated, creates the illusion of an autonomous subject, which is the cause more than consequence of the degradation of a given political, economic or social order. Thus, the war against corruption can easily serve to divert attention from the evaluation of the justice, legitimacy and the functioning of a given political order towards its restoration through the elimination of corruption.

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The Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms According to International Laws and Domestic Laws in North Macedonia - Comparative Aspects

PhD. Cand. Nail ISUFI[1]

Abstract

Human rights and freedoms are of particular importance in international arena for which are adopted different legal acts that are focused for its protection. Also, such protection is foreseen within the states, starting from the highest legal act which is the constitution, i.e. the Constitution of North Macedonia and other legal acts which are under the constitution. In this regard, it is important to mention the role and the importance of the international acts in the international arena. Therefore, the efforts always have been made by the international organizations and states, with the aim to protect these rights as fundamental rights.

In today's legal and international theories, there are almost same opinions, which consists in the protection of human rights and freedoms, and for the same are provided different legal mechanisms.

Through this paper, I have elaborated the legal overview of the protection of the human rights and freedoms, as well as the international protection and domestic protection of these rights within state institutions of North Macedonia, for which are adopted various legal acts.

However, the international organizations and the states are those who should always ensure the legal protection of the human rights and freedoms, but this is not always applicable and depends on their ability. Therefore, as a result of such weakness,

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the citizens have the opportunity to address for the violation of their rights to various institutions of international organizations, in order to realize their subjective rights.

Introduction

Taking into consideration the importance of human rights and freedoms, it can be said that obviously they are a fundamental value of the constitutional order of any state. Therefore, states are the ones who should always provide legal mechanisms for their protection. It is also important to mention the role and the importance of international organizations, which through their acts ensure and protect the human rights and freedoms.

Whenever we mention the states that have a crucial role in the protection of human rights and freedoms, it is normal that they exercise this through their domestic legislation, starting from the highest legal act-the constitution, the law to the bylaws. However, this ranking must always be in line with the international acts, such as international conventions. Therefore, this is a principle and action that should always be followed by the states.

The domestic laws of different states, which regulate in more detail the matter of human rights and freedoms, must always be in function of their full implementation in practice, respectively in the protection of human rights as basic rights. All of these issues are provided in the paper on what states provide for in their domestic laws, which are almost very similar to each other. In addition, I am also focusing on Law on Prevention and Protection Against Discrimination of North Macedonia, which refers to the procedures in case of various forms of discrimination before the competent authorities, as well as do not exclude the role of ombudsman for this purpose. Also, it is important to mention the implementation of the basic guarantee that are provided in the Constitution of North Macedonia, the role of the courts and the Constitutional Court in the protection of human rights and freedoms, etc. The human rights and freedoms, except for national protection, they also enjoy international protection. For this purpose, in a part below the paper, I have used some international acts which relate to this issue and which have an almost identical content, but which differ depending on the bodies that bring them.

The development of human rights

The struggle for human rights begins with efforts to recognize his fundamental rights, such as the right to life and liberty, which have been important, especially in the period of the slave owning and feudal system. Bourgeois revolutions add to these basic rights some other rights which belong to the so-called natural rights, such as the right to equality, the right to security, and the right to resist the oppressor (Gruda, 2003, p. 363). Therefore, the mentioned rights are present even today and are an integral part of the domestic legislation of the states. Many lawyers, politicians and philosophers of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as well Grotius, Locke, Spinoza, Pufendorf, Thomasius, Volf, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Russo, Jefferson, etc., under the influence of the school of natural law, begin to treat the human rights as rights defined by "divine law" or "law of God", which is rooted in the heart of every human being and which obliges to do all that corresponds to the rational nature of man, and to refrain from that which harms. These rights the individuals enjoys by birth. They are inviolable, inalienable and unpredictable because they are given by the Creator (God). This group includes: (a) the right to life; (b) the right to freedom; (c) the right to security; and (d) the right to equality. Later was added the right to resist the oppressors and seek happiness (Gruda, p. 363).

On the issue of the individualization of human rights, there are a number of individualization discourses which relate to two categories of human rights and freedoms, namely: (a) civil rights and politics; (b) economic and social rights. This notion was used early in the United Nations, especially after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, where the Commission on Human Rights took care on the finalization of the draft Convention on Human Rights, which were included only civil rights. However, when the United Nations General Assembly deemed it reasonable to decide in 1950 that political, economic, social and cultural rights should also be included, than the mentioned Commission took expedited steps to fulfill some of the articles proposed by the Assembly. The Commission was also informed that the rights and obligations of states for these rights had different comparisons in their civil law, and there was little debate about this. However, they disagreed on what those differences meant in terms of the unity of the Universal Declaration (Whelan, 2015, p. 72).

It is worth noting that the essence of human rights is to protect individuals. In literature have two different approaches. The first involves holding individuals criminally accountable for directing or carrying out violations of international humanitarian law and human rights standards. The second approach to protecting human rights focuses more on the obligations of "states" to refrain from violating human rights standards and their responsibilities if and when

they have failed to do so (Gibney, 2015, pp. 90, 91) Thus, in Europe, there are two instruments of relevance, namely: (a) the European Social Charter 1961 (revised in 1996); and (b) the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR) and its Protocols.

The European Social Charter (ESC) was drafted in 1961. It was meant to be the "sister" of the ECHR and to guarantee protection of ESCR in member states of the Council of Europe. Between 1990 and 1996 the Charter underwent changes aimed at giving more teeth to the protection of human rights incorporated in it. The most important change worth highlighting here is the adoption of the revised ESC in 1996. The revised Charter restates the 19 rights contained in the 1961 Charter, amends some of them and introduces new ones. The revised Charter also incorporates rights set out in the 1988.

The revised ESC contains an impressive number of provisions that apply to specific groups of persons. These provisions include: (a) the right of men and women to equal pay for work of equal value; (b) the socio-economic protection of children and adolescents in the occupational field; (c) the right of employed women to protection of maternity; (d) the right of persons with disabilities to independence, social integration and participation in the life of the community; (e) the right of children and young persons to social, legal and economic protection; (f) the right of migrant workers and their families to protection and assistance; (g)the right of elderly persons to social protection; and (h) the right to equality of opportunity and treatment of men and women workers with family responsibilities (Sutton, 2017, p. 44).

It is important to mention that the first sparks of proclamation and guarantee of certain rights of citizens is found in a document called Magna Carta Libertatum proclaimed in 1215 by King John Lackland of England (Saliu, 2001, p. 121). Other important documents which regulates this matter are: (a) the Petition of Rights (1628);(b) the Haebas Corpus Act (1679); (c) the Bill of Rights (1689);(Saliu, p. 122)(d) Declaration of Independence of the United States of America (1776) and;(e) Declaration on Human and Civil Rights (1789 and 1793) (Gruda, 2003, p. 363). The Petition of Rights has a declarative character, therefore it is not so important in the legal theory. Whiles, the Haebas Corpus Act represents a system of guarantees of personal liberties to the court and the police. And, although the Bill of Rights document resembles these two documents (i.e. Petition of Rights and Haebas Corpus Act), it differs from those two acts by the timing and manner of its adoption (Saliu, 2001, p. 122).

The classics of Marxism and the human proletariat have added a social dimension to them, claiming to liquidate the social inequality, because without this many of the proclaimed rights have more formal than essential character.

Until the recent times , the human rights were treated as matters of internal competence of the states. Therefore, nor states and the international community, has no the right to raise the issue of human rights violations in a state without the risk of this being interpreted as interference in the internal affairs of that state.The exceptions were the capitulation regime and humanitarian interventions(Gruda, 2003, p. 363). However, today, such a thing does not exist, especially in the spectrum of international organizations, which mainly act in the protection of human rights and freedoms, although in some cases their decisions are mandatory, but still not respected by the state to which they referred. As for the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states, which is current to this day and which is internationally recognized and accepted? Nevertheless, the international community, especially after the creation of the League of Nations and the United Nations, has increasingly paid attention to the well-being of theindividual, as one of the most important conditions for maintaining peace, security, stability and democracy (Gruda, p. 363). However, in many countries in the world, the human rights and fundamental freedoms are brutally violated, and are oppressed ethnic, racial or religious minorities, the discrimination and apartheid are practiced, and even the acts of genocide, which prove that despite the progress that has been made, the struggle for self-determination in full in human rights life has not yet been won everywhere (Gruda, p. 364).

In accordance with the international law, disputes of a legal nature can be initiated by the states before the international courts. In case of any adversarial procedure before an international tribunal, they are known as "continued" procedures". And, as such, they are realized between the state on the one hand, corporate body or an individual on the other, especially in case there is no disagreement on a question of law or fact, a conflict, a clash of legal views or of interests. Institutions which are entitled for such disputes are: the Court of Justice of the European Union in Luxembourg, the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in San José, Costa Rica, or the newly-created African Court on Human and People's Rights in Arusha. However, with the ICJ, to which no contentious case can be submitted unless both applicant and respondent are states. Private interests can only form the subject of proceedings before the court if a state, exercising its right of diplomatic protection, takes up the case of one of its nationals and invokes against another state the wrongs which its national claims to have suffered at the latter's hands the dispute thus then becomes one between states (Handbook of ICJ, p. 33). I will not give a detailed explanation for the legislative side of the ICJ, as I will address in the following part of the paper.

However, human rights debates have been going on for several years United Nations about that how and to what extent human rights should be integrated in

peace-keeping operations and it was achieved that the United Nations Human Rights Programme should be enhanced and fully integrated into the broad range of the organizations activities. Also, it was underlined that "human rights are a key element in peace-making and peace-building efforts and should be addressed the context of humanitarian operations" (Ramcharan, 2002, p. 105).

International laws and its role in the protection of human rights

The human rights and freedoms, except that are enjoying domestic protection by the states through the legal acts adopted in regular procedure, they are also enjoying protection by various international laws which are accepted internationally. In addition, I will mention some international acts which are mostly focused on the protection of human rights and freedoms, as well as for their effect on implementation in the practice.

It is worth noting that with the drafting of the UN Charter in San Francisco in 1945, it was decided by a majority that the world should be given the power in promoting of international cooperation, with the aim of the universal realization of the human rights. However, they rejected the idea of giving the power to organization in protecting of human rights.

The Security Council, which has mandatory powers, was focused more on security and international peace than on human rights (Ramcharan, 2018). However, the preamble of the UN Charter itself emphasizes the importance of fundamental human rights, in order to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small (UNCH). Therefore, in the UN was established also the Commission on Human Rights in 1946, which had the task of mediating human rights violations. This opportunity was given in 1967, for which the Commission was specifically authorized (by the Economic and Social Council, with the encouragement of the General Assembly). Therefore, the Commission on Human Rights procedures and mechanisms was mandated to examine, monitor and publicly report either on human rights situations in specific countries or territories (known as country mechanisms or mandates) or on major phenomena of human rights violations worldwide (known as thematic mechanisms or mandates). These procedures and mechanisms were collectively referred to as the Special Procedures of the Commission on Human Rights. But, today instead of the UN Commission on Human Rights is the Human Rights Council. The Human Rights Council is an intergovernmental body within the United Nations system responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe and for addressing situations of human rights violations and make recommendations on them.

What characterizes the Human Rights Council has to do with complaint procedures which allows individuals and organizations to bring human rights violations to the attention of the Council. In this case the parties have the right to supplement procedure form in which are provided data that should be completed by natural and legal persons, as well as government organizations. In the procedure form are foreseen some conditions that should be fulfilled: (a) information on the state concerned, (b) facts of the complaint and the nature of the alleged violations,(c) exhaustion of domestic remedies, (d) submission of communication to other human rights bodies, (e) request for confidentiality.

The Human Rights Council also works with the UN Special Procedures established by the former Commission on Human Rights and now assumed by the Council. The special procedures of the Human Rights Council are independent human rights experts with mandates to report and advice on human rights from a thematic or country-specific perspective. The system of special procedures is a central element of the United Nations human rights machinery and covers all human rights: (a) civil; (b) cultural; (c) economic; (d) political; and (e) social. (www.ohchr.org).

The other act that addresses the issue of human rights and freedoms isthe Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Among the many rights incorporated and especially the article 2 provides: "everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty" (UDHR, article 2). As can be seen in this provision, it is noted that such thing is provided in the constitutions of different states, for which they pay special attention to human integrity as the most perfect being, and at the same time also enjoys special protection. Although the Declaration does not contain a specific provision regarding treatment of non-nationals, it can be inferred that they are covered (Steiner, 2012, p. 24). Also important is the principle of equality before the law, as a very important principle of justice (UDHR, article 2).

The issue which still does not find the right solution in our country has to do with discrimination which occurs in all forms. However, in this case I would like to mention the provision from the UDHR which provides that: "everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work"(UDHR, article 23). Thus, in the mentioned the article it is clearly defined what the institution or organization should do with the employees. This is where the dilemma arises, what is the effect of the domestic laws of the states; in this case the law which

regulates the work of the state institutions, respectively the administration of North Macedonia.Therefore, the mentioned law in most cases finds different interpretations which make it impossible to implement it effectively in practice.

Another important document obviously is the European Convention on Human Rights, 1950. At the beginning of the provisions of this convention, is foreseen the right to life, namely inarticle 2 is provided: "everyone's right to life shall be protected by law. No one shall be deprived of his life intentionally save in the execution of a sentence of a court following his conviction of a crime for which this penalty is provided by law". The mentioned provision clearly provides for the possibility of enforcing the death penalty depending on the states that enforce it. However, on the other hand, the meaning and importance of the right to life fades, and normally it excludes the principle of resocialization of the sentence, as the main goal to the convicts. Absolutely, here can rise different interpretations which in reality should not happen, as it is in expressing the right to life as a fundamental right.

Taking into consideration that with this article are protected individuals from being killed arbitrarily by a state, but does not ban the death penalty, where it exists under the law. For that reason an additional protocol (no. 6) to the convention was opened for signature in 1983. It provides: "the death penalty shall be abolished. No one shall be condemned to such, penaltyor executed". This protocol is the first international legal instrument to make the abolition of the death penalty a legal obligation. To accede to the protocol states must, eliminate the death penalty from their law, except in respect of acts committed in time of war or of imminent threat of war (Бурдин, 2003, p. 19). Also, the same is foreseen in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, in which it is provided "no one shall be condemned to the death penalty, or executed" (article 2). Therefore, the death penalty in these states is prohibited in all forms.

The above document contains a series of provisions which pertain to human rights and freedoms, starting from: (a) right to life; (b) prohibition of torture; (c) prohibition of slavery and forced labour; (d) right to liberty and security; (e) right to a fair trial; (f) no punishment without law; (g) freedom of thought, conscience and religion; (h) freedom of expression; (i) freedom of assembly and association; (j) right to marry; (k) right to an effective remedy; (l) prohibition of discrimination (ECHR, article 2-14).

It is interesting to expand little the meaning of article 7 of the convention, which provides: "no one shall be held guilty of any criminal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a criminal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the criminal

offence was committed". Obviously, the criminal offences are considered to have been committed at the moment while the law is in force and which recognizes the action by a person as a criminal offence, otherwise such an offence will not be considered a criminal offence if it is not provided by law. Therefore, here is expressed the temporal aspect, as a circumstance. And, on the other hand, it cannot be given more severe punishment than the one that was at the time when the criminal offence was committed, i.e., that the punishment cannot be imposed to the detriment of the convicted person, but in his favour.

In cases of violation of rights, the parties have the right to submit a request to the aforementioned court i.e. European Court of Human Rights. The court may receive applications from any person, non-governmental organization or group of individuals claiming to be thevictim of a violation by one of the High Contracting Parties of the rights set forth in the convention or the protocols thereto (ECHR, article 34). Then, the court may only deal with the matter after all domestic remedies have been exhausted, according to the generally recognized rules of international law, and within a period of six months from the date on which the final decision was taken (ECHR, article 35). Therefore, for the parties, these actions in the last instance, also can only be taken after all domestic remedies have been exhausted, according to the generally recognized rules of international law, and within a period of six months from the date on which the final decision was taken.

It is also important in the context of human rights and freedoms the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989. Therefore, member states must respect the rights of children under their jurisdiction, regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status (CRCH, article 2). Also, in article 3 of this convention is provided: "in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration", which means that children should be given special care, and that there should be no abuse by the mentioned institutions.

What characterizes our country and relates to the provision of the mentioned convention is the issue of the right to acquire a nationality (CRCH, article 7). Although our state, North Macedonia, is a party to this convention, but in practical life many citizens in our country do not enjoy this right. And, on the other hand, this is contrary to the law of our country as well as non-compliance with the mentioned convention.

As was mentioned above, respectively in the protection of human rights and freedoms with domestic laws, and especially for the role and the importance of the ombudsman in the promotion and protection of legal and constitutional

rights of citizens, obviously is provided their protection by the European Ombudsman, which operates within the EU countries, are more precisely this is justified in the following article, that provides: "any citizen of the Union and any natural or legal person residing or having its registered office in a member state has the right to refer to the European Ombudsman cases of maladministration in the activities of the institutions, bodies, offices or agencies of the union, with the exception of the Court of Justice of the European Union acting in its judicial role". Therefore, even here the function and role of the ombudsman in the protection of rights and freedoms, in this case of EU citizens, are clear.

Domestic laws in North Macedonia and its role in the protection of human rights

The human rights obviously enjoy internal protection and this should be ensured by the state through positive laws starting from the highest legal act-the constitution. Therefore, the human rights and freedoms are one of the fundamental values of the constitutional order.This is also foreseen in article 8 of the Constitution of North Macedonia, in which, the human rights and freedoms have been given priority and are placed in the first place, which in reality it should be.

In our law, has been doing the categorization of human rights and freedoms, including: (a) civil and political freedoms and rights; (b) economic, social and cultural rights (CNM, part 1 and 2).

Among the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the constitution, more of them which have particular importance are personal freedoms and rights, which ensure the protection of personal and physical integrity as human beings. From this set of freedoms and rights, with the constitution of the North Macedonia are guaranteed: (a) the right to life; (b) inviolability of physical integrity; (c) the right to privacy; (d) inviolability of human freedom; (e) the presumption of human innocence; (f) the right to protection; (g) the right to appeal; (h) freedom of movement and choice of residence; (i) inviolability of the apartment; (j) inviolability ofsecrecy of letters and other means of communication; (k) freedom of belief and the right of citizenship (Saliu, 2001, p. 369).

The right to life is one of the most important and that at the same time finds application not only its formal but also its practical side.Thus, human life is inviolable, and the death penalty cannot be imposed on any basis (CNM, article 10). From here, it can be seen that the death penalty is prohibited under the constitution of the North Macedonia. It even means the functioning of a democratic state whose goal is to promote the fundamental values, among

which are part and which are more important, such as human rights and freedoms. However, if we enter and analyse the practical side of the protection of these rights and freedoms, it seems that is contradicts with article 9 of the constitution. I say this for many historical and national reasons, which later led to interventions aimed to improve some constitutional provisions, which came as a result of the war in 2001and which resulted by the signing of the Ohrid Agreement atthe same year. Therefore, the constitution of North Macedonia remains in the group of flexible constitutions which are easily changed, depending on the circumstances that arise. If we look at the positive provisions of the mentioned constitution, it is normal that every citizen can be called for the protection of rights and freedoms before the regular courts, and to the Constitutional Court of North Macedonia, in a procedure based on the principle of priority and urgency. Therefore, every citizen has the right to be informed about the human rights and fundamental freedoms and actively to contribute, individually or together with others, for their progress and protection.Also, the constitution of North Macedonia is guarantees the judicial protection of the legality of individual acts of the state administration and other institutions that exercise public authority(CNM, article 50).In addition to these guarantees, the constitution provides also other guarantees, which includes: (a) rule of law; (b) the principle of constitutionality and legality;(c) public announcement of laws; (d) *vacatio legis* period; (e) prohibition of retroactive effect of the regulations, except in exceptional cases, in cases when it is more favourable for the citizens, etc. (CNM, article 51, 52). Among the human rights and freedoms, which has to do with his physical integrity, the well-known principle"nullum crimen nulla poena sine lege",which still plays an important role today. This rule is provided in the legislations of different states, as well as in the article 13 of the constitution of North Macedonia.

The citizens of North Macedonia also have the right to appeal against the decisions of the court of first instance (CNM, amendment XXI). So, here the right to appeal is presented to us as a constitutional category, while for other appeals which are directed against the decisions in the first instance to the state administration bodies or the body that performs public authorizations are regulated by law. As a result of such a change, there was a need to amend Article 15 of the Constitution of North Macedonia.

However, in the protecting of the human rights and freedoms, the courts also have an important role. Namely, the judges during the application of law should protect human rights and freedoms (LC, article 2, paragraph 2). Also, everyone has the right to equal access to a court in protecting his rights and legitimate interests. In the decision on civil rights and obligations and in the decision on criminal responsibility, everyone has the right to a fair and public trial within a

reasonable time before an independent and impartial court established by law (LC, article 6, paragraph 1-3).

Except in the controlling of constitutionality and legality, solving of conflicts of the jurisdiction, decision on the responsibility of the President of the Republic and other competencies, the Constitutional Court of North Macedonia protects the rights and freedoms of the individuals and citizens. Thus, according to the constitution, the Constitutional Court protects the rights and freedoms of individuals and citizens that relate to freedom of belief, conscience, opinion and public expression of the opinion, political association and action and the prohibition of discrimination against citizens on the grounds of sexual, racial, religious, national, social and political affiliation.

Unlike to the abstract normative control, the subject of, assessment within this competence is the individual acts and actions of the public authorities for which the citizen considers that are violated some of the mentioned constitutional rights. In addition to the immediacy of the request (constitutional appeal) for protection of the rights violated by an individual act or action, a second feature of this competence is that the subject of dispute can be not only an administrative act, but also a court decision in any instance.

Despite the fact that the introduction of this competence within the Constitution of 1991 is a significant novelty in the tradition of the constitutional judiciary in North Macedonia, its limitation to only three groups of freedoms and rights proves to be a serious obstacle to significant entry of the court into direct protection and to other constitutional freedoms and rights of the individuals and citizens(http://ustavensud.mk).

Regarding to the procedure for the protection of the rights and freedoms, according to article 110, paragraph 3 of the Constitution of North Macedonia that provides: "every citizen who considers that by an individual act or action is violated his right or freedom which is determined by article 110, paragraph 3 of the Constitution of North Macedonia, may request a protection from the Constitutional Court within 2 months from the day of adoption of the final individual act, i.e. from the day of detection of the action by which the violation was committed, but not later than 5 years from the day of its undertaking" (RPCCNM, article 51). Upon completion of the procedure, with the decision for protection of the rights and freedoms, the Constitutional Court will determine whether there is a violation of them and depending on that, it will annul the individual act, will prohibit the action with which the violation was committed or will reject the request (RPCCNM, article 56).

The Republic is obliged to guarantee the protection of ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity to all members of the communities (CNM, amendment VIII).The novelty here is the phrase "members of communities"

and not "members of nationalities" as previously cited in article 48 of the constitution. However, what remained unchanged initially had to do with the protection of linguistic identity, respectively its materialization in public life and for this it was later intervened with a special law in order to advance the use of languages, in particular the Albanian language.

Another issue regarding to human rights and freedoms and especially their protection, is also in the United Nations Report on Human Rights of 2019, which mentions the need to intervene to change the laws that have to deal strongly with discrimination and its manifestation in all forms. The case belongs to our country-North Macedonia, which was assisted through civil society organizations in the adoption of the new law, i.e. the Law on Prevention and Protection Against Discrimination by the Parliament of the North Macedonia (UN HRR, 2019, p. 4). The above law was drafted in an almost two-year working process, with the inclusion of civil society organizations that work on the provision of free legal aid in cases of discrimination and following several public consultations (Bogdanovska, 2020, p. 4) Within the framework of the mentioned law, is foreseen the Commission for Prevention and Protection from Discrimination, whose function is more promotional in the protection of human rights and discrimination (LPPAD, article21). However, this should not be considered as unimportant, because persons who consider that are discriminated can initiate a complaint to the mentioned commission, which then gives further recommendations. If the opposite does not happen, then the commission initiates a procedure for minor offences before the competent court (LPPAD, article 23-27). Also, in case it is concluded that there has been discrimination, the same can definitely be done through a lawsuit by the person who finds such a thing (LPPAD, article 32). From here it can be said that the mentioned law has a more preventive role in case of discrimination, as well as it guides efforts to improve the situation created by discrimination, otherwise the decisive role will have a lawsuit initiated before competent court.

It is important to mention that the human rights and freedoms, as basic values of the constitutional order, are definitely foreseen in the constitutions of other countries, such as in the constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, Albania, Serbia, Croatia, etc.Therefore, due to the importance that have the human rights and freedoms, and especially provided for and protected by international acts, for which I will elaborate later, they enjoy a special place in the constitutional order of a state.

The Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo provides a special chapter that deals in detail with every right and freedom which enjoys individuals in accordance with the laws and the highest legal act i.e. the constitution, starting from human dignity as a fundamental value, equality ofindividuals up to the

fundamental rights and freedoms during emergency situations.However, here is given also importance the equality of individuals before the law, more precisely all citizens are equal before the law, and that everyone enjoys the right to equal legal protection (CK, article 24).

What remains as a principle which in reality should be applied is the right to a fair and impartial trial and the right not to be tried twice for the same offence "ne bis in idem". These two principles are very important in the field of jurisprudence and the competent authorities should always take into account these universally accepted principles (CK,article 31, 34). The protection of human rights and freedoms is also guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Albania.And, for this, is foreseen a special chapter which in an exact manner, foresees some of the rights and freedoms which are also internationally protected.Thus, the constitution above divides the human rights and freedoms into: (a) personal freedoms and rights; (b) political freedoms and rights; and; (c) economic, social and cultural freedoms and rights (CA, part II-IV).

The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia also pays attention to human rights and freedoms. Thus, the issue of the human rights and freedoms is regulated in a separate part of the constitution, starting from the article 18 to article 81 (CS, article 18-81). At first view, it seems that it is completed in the formal-legal aspect in terms of the human rights and freedoms, but in the practice the opposite has always happened, which means not only the violation of the highest legal act- the constitution, but also the violation of international acts, which were always manifested by war from the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and which resulted in international intervention in order to prevent from the invasion of the territories of its republics.

In the Croatian constitution, the human rights and freedoms are categorized in several parts, including: (a) personal and political freedoms and rights; and (b) economic and social freedoms and rights (CC, article 14-70). In the protection of human rights and freedoms, except the state-it is about central states, non-governmental organizations also play an important role. In this regard, it is worth to mention when they, i.e. non-governmental organizations, are presented to us as promoters or protectors, which are related to the promotion of democratic processes. In this case the organizations can be at the local and central level, namely, when they follow the municipal council, during adoption of decisions and its implementing in practice. Regarding to the adoption of the decision in the council, the NGO assesses whether it was adopted according to legal procedures, respectively, whether the decision is contrary to the laws and the constitution of the North Macedonia. This action the NGO'smake while participating in the sessions of themunicipal council or by analysing the decision. Regarding to the implementation of the decision in practice, the NGO's take care that

if the decisions that have been adopted before are respected and ensure the participation of all stakeholders in following the implementation of the decision (http://irz.org.mk).On the other hand, it is worth to mention that the Delegation of the European Union (DUE), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as well as USAID-funded projects have funded and supported a large number of NGO's to engage in judicial reform with an aim to building and independence of the judiciary, its capacities as well as to provide special training for this purpose(Димитриева, 2015, p. 36).But in practice it can be said that such a thing does not happen, taking into consideration the weaknesses and the great corruption that has captured the judicial system of our country, which normally results in not enjoying in all the fundamental human rights and freedoms.

In protecting of human rights and freedoms also play an important role the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights which is registered in 1994. So, the Committee monitors the situation with human rights, provides legal assistance, co-operates with other organizations and state bodies for the purpose of improving the promotion, respect and protection of human rights and freedoms. The Committee's goal is the protection and promotion of the human rights and freedoms guaranteed with the Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia, the international instruments and the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, as well as building democratic conditions in which they can be exercised based on the rule of law. The Committee sets off from the premise that all people should have the possibility to enjoy and practice their basic rights and freedoms and should be able to protect them in case of violation or limitation. This is the basis of the rule of law, human rights and democracy (https://mhc.org.mk).

In the promotion and protection of the legal and constitutional rights of citizens and all other persons against whom they have been violated by acts and actions by the state bodies, obviously the Ombudsman plays an important role, as a preventive mechanism for the protection of human and civil rights and freedoms(LO, article 2). The protection of the legal and constitutional rights of citizens and other persons, according to the rules of procedure of the ombudsman are divided into four groups and include the following areas: (a) civil rights and freedoms; (b) civil protection and security rights; (c) economic rights and the regulation of humanitarian spaces; (d) labour rights, environmental rights and the rights of service users (RPO, article 12).

What specifies the work of the ombudsman and which has to do with the protection of the human rights and freedoms in case of their violation, respectively the protection of the legal and constitutional rights of citizens, especially the protection of the principle of non-discrimination and equal treatment of all communities to state bodies, to local self-government bodies, as

well as public services, is done by filling a complaint(RPO, article 32).There is also a possibility for complaints to be filled by the ombudsman himself, in case of violation of legal and constitutional rights or in case of violation of the principle of non-discrimination and fair representation of members of communities, and precisely in these cases before initiating the procedure, he is obliged to obtain the consent of the injured person (RPO, article 36).Inthe formal-legal point of view is reasonable and leaves such a possibility, but looking at the practical side and especially based on the statements of the ombudsman institution it turns out that his actions, respectively his recommendations, in most cases are not taken into account by the state institutions, which are related to the protection of human rights and freedoms. Therefore, the state is the one who should always take care and ensure not only in the conduct of legal acts, but special attention should be paid for the full implementation in practice not only to laws that relates to human rights and freedoms, but also other legal acts, starting from the highest legal act-constitution.

And, in the end it is worth mentioning the importance and the role of the permanent survey commission for the protection of the freedoms and rights of citizens.

According to article 76 of the constitution of North Macedonia, the Assembly sets up a permanent survey commission for the protection of the freedoms and rights of citizens. The Committee considers issues regarding: (a) general questions, proposals and opinions regarding the implementation of the provisions of the constitution, laws and other regulations and acts of significance for the realization and protection of civil freedoms and rights; (b) points to the need of adoption of laws, regulations and acts with a view to a more comprehensive protection of civil freedoms and rights; (c) follows, reviews and analyses the implementation of the ratified international acts which regulate the protection of civil freedoms and rights; (d) reviews communications from citizens and takes a position upon them; (e) cooperates with scientific and professional organizations in the filed of protection of civil freedoms and rights; (f) cooperates with relevant foreign and international bodies in the filed of the protection of the civil freedoms and rights and (g) other issues related to the protection of civil freedoms and rights. The Committee cannot exercise investigative and other judicial functions (https://www.sobranie.mk)

Conclusions

The efforts for the protect human rights and freedoms have existed since ancient period, as natural rights which are still relevant today. Therefore, states

are the ones who should always be available to ensure and guarantee the full implementation of these rights as the most vital values of the individual and society in general.

In addition to the international protection of human rights and freedoms, their protection is also foreseen by international laws, and that this protection must be provided by various international organizations and institutions for this purpose. However, I can conclude that despite a large number of international laws, respectively international documents, in most cases their nature is more proclaiming rather than obligatory for the states.

Human rights and freedoms, as a constitutional category are obviously fundamental values of the constitutional order of a state, and as mentioned above such a thing is provided in the constitutions of many different states, so they have a central place in the hierarchy of higher acts within states. On the other hand, except to the formal side of the existence of human rights and freedoms, their material side is also very important, and that is why citizens have at their disposal the right to appeal, for any violation that hinders their realization in practice. However, I can say that this is more valid in states which have a more advanced legal system, and which provides opportunities for their realization before the authorized state bodies, or in other words the realization of these rights and freedoms occurs in states with developed democracies, states which have a clearer view of the concept of democracy.

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The increasing need for science communication! - A theoretical approach

Dr. Irena MYZEQARI

Abstract

There is an increasing need for more communication from the scientific communities. Often perceived as a closed and talking to limited audiences, today's world is putting further pressure to scientists to be more open to opportunity of bringing their research to the citizens. Based on a theoretical approach, this article aims to bring the latest debates focused on science communication, trying to open a new path of discussion and research in the higher education system in Albania.

*   **Key words:** *science communication, public understanding, audiences*

I. In search of a definition

From open talks of the ancient "Agora", to the public space of Habermas, from printing to a Metaverse reality, it seems that communication has been all-powerful in changing and reshaping societies. No matter the type of information or data produced it was soon understood that if people would not communicate and share results among them, politics, economics, culture, religion and science would not hold neither the importance not the identity that they have today.

From all the categories mentioned above, science, especially natural ones, appear to be the last in need of communication, given that its results and feasibility are far more concrete and easily to be perceived and/or experienced. This would still be true in the late 1950's, when C.P.Snow held his famous speech on the

unbridgeable gab between the more mathematical sciences and humanities. Science had no chance to remain indifferent to the growing interconnectivity of the world and that is why the two hostile branches of knowledge had to come closer and closer, giving rise to more interdisciplinary scientific paradigms which had to be properly communicated to the world out there and its numerous audiences.

In a traditional perspective science has to be communicated because… "it [could provide] the public with information essential to forming opinions about public policy and about the costs and benefits of governmental expenditures on science (Treise and Weigold, 2002.pp. 23). Led by the idea that the majority of people lack interest on science, the deficit model, which has been predominant for many years, saw science communication… "as a oneway communication from experts with knowledge to publics without it"(D. Cheng et al. (eds.), 2008: pp). Based on this model of "Public Understanding of Science", from now on PUS, "science that transmitted by experts to audiences is perceived to be deficient in awareness and understanding" (ibid.119). In other words, audiences are hostile, ignorant and easily persuaded. Despite "the long-standing concern by science communicators about the prevalence of the "deficit model" thinking" (Besleyand, 2011,pp: 50)…things seem to be moving in a more positive direction. Van Dijik argues that… "despite its powerful echoes, PUS has recently been complemented by postmodern approaches, resulting in what [he calls] a "(multi)cultural" practice of science communication (van Dijck, 2003) and that the "increasing public knowledge about science, will lead to greater enthusiasm for science and technology" (Besley and Tanner, 2011). Furthermore, Van Dijik says that "he prefers more the term science communication over public understanding of science, because the latter still assumes an implicit hierarchy between the experts and the ignorant (van Dijck, 2003, pp: 63)

T.w. Burns,.J. O'Connor, and S.M. Stocklmayer (2003) have been working in proposing a more contemporary definition on science communication, trying to find if there exists any difference among the key theoretical concepts of this paradigm such as public awareness, public understanding of science, scientific culture and scientific literacy. They define science communication as "the use of appropriate skills, media, activities, and dialogue to produce one or more of the following personal responses to science: Awareness, Enjoyment, Interest, Opinion-forming, and Understanding" (pp. 74)… stating clearly that it cannot be used as a synonym of the terms mentioned above. "Science communication aims to enhance public scientific awareness, understanding, literacy, and culture by building AEIOU responses in its participants" (Burns, O'Connor and Stocklmayer, 2003, pp:102)… [by empowering] the public to attain an interest in science.

The vowel analogy AEIOU is a very empowering concept in the sense that it opens the path for a more constructive model of how science is communicated, leaving more space for dialogue and participation. It focuses more on the variety and inter-dependent publics who receive the scientific information and construct meaning based on their cultural practices. For Van Dijik (2003), "science communication implies reciprocity among all agents involved, a feature basic to a cultural practice" (pp. 68). The AEIOU acronym lets us know that the public is the ultimate goal of science communication, whose construction and message should be created based on the awareness, enjoyment, interest, and opinion and understanding ofit.

II. The public (s)

The public is not homogenous! - This has been one of the strongest critics that Nancy Fraser has against the Habermas's theory of public spaces. "The public" is a very heterogeneous group; it is as multifaceted and unpredictable as the individuals that compose it" (Burns, O'Connor and Stocklmayer, 2003, pp: 184). Within the society we could identify at least six overlapping groups "each with its own "needs, interests, attitudes and levels of knowledge" have been identified for the purposes of science communication activities and/or research (Levestein 1998, pp.1-3).

- "Scientists: in industry, the academic community and government.
- Mediators: communicators (including science communicators, journalists and other members of the media), educators, and opinion-makers.
- Decision-makers: policy makers in government, and scientific and learned institutions.
- General public: the three groups above, plus other sectors and interest groups. For example, school children and charity workers.
- Attentive public: the part of the general community already interested in (and reasonably well-informed about) science and scientific activities."Evaluation Associates, Ltd., Defining Our Terms (Evaluation Associates, cited 9/10/2000), http:\www.evaluation.co.uk/pus/pus_dfns.html
- Interested public: is composed of people who are interested in but not necessarily well informed about science and technology. (Miller, 1992)

This categorization of the types of audiences is important because we have to keep in mind that… "any science communication efforts need to be based

on a systematic empirical understanding of an intended audience's existing values, knowledge, and attitudes, their interpersonal and social contexts, and their preferred media sources and communication channels"(Nisbet and Scheufele, 2009, pp: 123). For the purposes of this paper we will focus on three levels where science communication happens and those are: science to academia, science to policy makers and science to the general public. "Certainly, if a goal of public engagement is to promote mutual understanding between scientists, policymakers, and the public, then consulting with those members of the public who are the most directly affected, attentive, and active should be a priority"(Wynne, 2006)

III. Science to general public

Avoiding furthering clarifications on which the public is, this part of the paper focuses on the need of science to be properly communicated in the media. Given the wide range of mediums, public or private broadcasting companies, large numbers of newspapers and journals published around the globe and the increasing use of social media or alternative media, it sounds silly to claim that "*there is no room left where scientists can communicate science*". Studies have shown that despite several initiatives undertaken to improve science communication, the general public is not satisfied or worse not interested on what is being communicated, because "these initiatives …tend to reach a small audience of already informed science enthusiasts" (Nisbet and Scheufele, 2009, pp. 1768)."Science communication efforts grapple with a wider public that is for the most part unable or uninterested in developing an in depth understanding of scientific breakthroughs, and instead rely on cognitive shortcuts and heuristic decision making to help them reach opinions about policy-related matters (Popkin, 1991; Scheufele, 2006). Actual studies, focused on finding new ways to communicate science properly, identify three major causes that contribute to the actual state of art it and these are:

1. Lack of communication competency by the scientists;
2. Over-generalization of the media, especially journalists;
3. Scientific illiteracy of the audiences

Scientists as communicators

"You get pregnant, suffer morning sickness, experience sleepless nights, not in Seattle, but at your bed, give birth and then people come and say: the baby is the

copy your mother in law". With all respect to the mother in law, this is exactly the feeling a scientist gets when he sees how is research is used or described by the media: "his baby" loses originality and people forget him to remember only the headline his/her work occupied in this television or in that newspaper. Scholars argue that the fault for this relies on the scientists themselves… "[who] "reverted" to discussing intra-scientific communication—that is, communication within the scientific community (such as publishing papers or presenting at conferences" (Davies, 2008, pp: 23). In practice science is not the one who comes in contact with the audiences in a normative form, rather than as the product of the individuals or small groups that are put in contact with them… "and it is therefore the practices of individuals which will frame and shape the communication process"(ibid, pp:). Due to the fear from the "deficit model" that takes from granted the ignorance of the audiences, scientists prefer to stay in an isolated island, leaving more space to unqualified journalists or PR specialists to communicate their research results. Once Dr. Neal Lane, former head of the National Science Foundation, claimed that "with the exception of few people… we do not know how to communicate with the public, because we do not understand our audiences well enough…- it is difficult for them to hear us speak. We don't know the language and we haven't practiced it enough (fq.38).

Scheufele (2007) argues that effective communication is not a guessing game, it is a science" (p.48) and it is the duty of the scientist to be directly involved in the process of constructing the discourse on science. All those who practice science have to be… "challenged to be science communicators and to enter into dialogue with their peers, with the public, and with mediators" (Scheufele at al.).It is true that with the growing importance of science communication, scientist are eager in acquiring proper communication skills and in a research conducted by Hartz and Chappell in1997, results that more than 80 % of scientists are willing to take a course to help them learn to communicate better with journalists.

If we were to use an analogy, "the science communicators (mediators) may be thought of as the mountain guides. They teach people how to climb (skills), provide ladders (media), assist with the actual climbing event (activities), and keep climbers informed about progress, possible dangers, and other issues related to the climb (dialogue)"(Burns, O'Connor and Stocklmayer, 2003, pp:194). One reason why scientists should celebrate is that the ladders, so the media, offers a wide range of alternatives to be used by them as a communication space. Being it a "traditional ladder" as the TV or newspaper or a virtual one as the internet and cyberspace, the scientist can make the best of choices based on the research or communication style. It is not important to provide with scientists and researchers with "a science communication tool kit"; rather than tools they need to understand that "science communication…empowers the public to attain ".

Media and journalists as science communicators

Gossips, spectacles, advertisements, political scandals, sexuality and economics are more than enough to cover the life of the place where there is always light, the television. Said this, scientists are often lamenting of the small place being given in the TV or even in other mediums, such as daily newspapers and even when they find that space, …. "[they] complain that the press [or TV-s] oversimplify… [and run] to sensationalist headlines that make nonsense of the careful caveats in which research papers tend to be wrapped" (Rose, 2003, pp: 311).In a way they are right and the fault for this lies on the lack of qualification of those who cover science in the press or television.

Brumfi (2009) argues that… "even leading national media outlets are investing less and less money in staffing their newsrooms with science writers, meaning less coverage devoted to important scientific topics". (pp: 89). This lack of expertise is faced with the "obsession" of the scientists, who perceive themselves as experts, infallible, showing zero tolerance for the bad transformation that their data have to go through to reach audiences. "In contrast, journalists contend that scientists lack a basic understanding of the journalistic process and the communication skills needed to relay information to the public" (Nelkin, 1996; Tanner, 2004; Willems, 2003).In an ideal world this clash would not have existed, because each one has to take an ethical responsibility in doing his job properly, scientists the research and the journalists its coverage. "Some critics…..have argued that scientists should stick to research and let media relations officers and science writers worry about translating the implications of that research (Holland et al., 2007).

The naked truth is that both parts lack expertise and have not found yet a model of successful partnership. If researchers are often condemned for not being able to explain themselves through mediums, scholars argue that media outlets tend to hire one person who covers many fields. "For example, research suggests that those who cover science frequently lack any but the most cursory backgrounds in the sciences..." (Treise and Weigold, 2002, pp:) and this lack of expertise may contribute to widespread error in reporting on science (Ankney,Heilman,andKolff 1996). In other word rather than by science journalists, science in media outlets is usually covered by regular reporters. For Friedman (1986) it is due to the journalistic values that reporters create short term focus on science. He says that:

> Editors and reporters tend to value stories that contain drama, human interest, relevance, or application to the reader, criteria that do not always map easily onto scientific importance (Friedman, 1986)

This delicate, yet prevailing conflict between the researchers and journalists appear to be seizing to exist due to the strong influence of the internet and new media. If in the traditional media, scientists had to be in the same frequency with the journalists, the internet offers a wide range of communication tools for them in order to communicate science properly. Today is more than normal to see scientists to have a twitter or Facebook page, share their speeches on their YouTube channel or manage a blog followed by many. The scientist "is the creator" of his/her own message and selects the medium he/she considers to be the most convenient. Said this, rather than parallel lines that never meet, the relationship among scientists, media and journalist is interconnected nowadays

Studies suggest that… "when science communication professionals stand for the choice which medium to use in their efforts to communicate science, they should take into account how the public uses television and the Internet, and how effective these media are in exchanging information"(Koolstra, C.M;. Bos,Mark J.W and Vermeulen. I.E, 2006; pp. 1). "Based on empirical studies conducted in Europe….the old mass medium television should still be regarded as the most important medium for science communication, because (1) people use television more frequently than the Internet, (2) television is more effective in transferring messages to the public than the Internet…"(pp.1). For Van Djick the reality is much more complex than a simple calculation of uses and gratification of the audiences, stating that:

> "The "media" [no matter which one]…no longer mediate between experts and lay persons but are actors in processes of construction and dissemination. The media, like science, is not something out there, bound to disseminate messages or expose a mass audience to experts' knowledge; media is equally distributed, heterogeneous, and equally implicated in the construction of science as part of culture"(van Dijck, 2003, pp:15)

Audience's Scientific (IL) literacy

Are people interested on science? Are they aware or do they understand what science is about? These are some of the questions that pop out when science communicators tend to analyze the role of the audiences when constructing their messages. Given that in most of the cases, people in the society are perceived as the ultimate goal of science communication, it is important to talk about the scientific literacy of the audiences.

The term itself has changed during the course of the years and for many scholars this is due to… "its complex and dynamic nature rather than to a lack of definition" (Jenkins,1994, pp: 602). Burns and his colleagues argue that…

"Scientific literacy is the ideal situation where people are aware of, interested and involved in, form opinions about, and seek to understand science(Burns, O'Connor and Stocklmayer, 2003, pp: 190). No matter if it is a practical, civic or a cultural scientific literacy, it should be fundamental, especially for countries as Albania and Serbia, to include scientific literacy in the school curricula… [by] helping [citizens, youth above all] to be interested in and understand the world around them, to engage in the discourses of and about science, to be skeptical and questioning of claims made by others about scientific matters, to be able to identify questions, investigate and draw evidence-based conclusions, and to make informed decisions about the environment and their own health and well-being" (Hacking, M.W; Goodrum, D; Rennie,J, 2001; pp: 6-7)

Although studies can testify an increase in scientific literacy, thanks to the several initiatives taken by universities, private research institutes and even media outlets, we should be watchful in confounding awareness with understanding; the first means that audiences "are not ignorant" about science's existence and is out there influencing their lives, while the later includes a higher and deeper level of meaningful interaction with the scientific information they receive. Said this, despite the discrepancies among scientists, journalists, media outlets, science communication has a higher goal to achieve and that is to make the public understand that "[they] need to be scientifically literate to live well in modern societies, and scientific literacy remains the basic target of all the efforts of the science communication community"(Donghong, Ch; Claessens,M; Gascoigne, T; Metcalfe,J; Schiele,B and Shunke,Sh (2008): pp:154)

IV. Conclusion

Latest research show that the scientific communities are considerably more open in embracing open science. Many countries and universities are paying further attention to how research are being communicated broadly, aiming to make science and research more accessible to citizens. Still, in countries as ours the need for more science communication comes with the need for more qualitative research by universities and think tanks. Even though the new research assistants in Albania are being trained in being better communicators and to consider media and audiences as science's allies, universities are striving to produce research and scientific projects that have a general impact on the society and sustainability of the country. Lack of infrastructure, qualified staff, lack of collaboration among higher education institutions and most importantly a missing relationship between universities and political decision bodies, has made it difficult for science to be communicated properly among larger audiences in Albania.

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Career guidance and its impact on graduate employability

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"A career choice is an expression of personality"
John Holland

Abstract

The upward growing of globalization and the constant extension of active employees are increasingly requiring job seekers to adapt their skills in order to be one-step ahead of any predictable change as well as maintain a balanced position in the career path. Effective career guidance helps individuals to reach their potential, economies to become more efficient and societies to become fairer. This process highlights the importance of discerning individual talent and maximizing human potential, including mobility in their career development. An improper career orientation renders decision-making difficult, with higher personal, familiar, and social cost, often manifested in inconsistent skills and unsatisfactory employment prospects. For young people, the decisions they make about what they will study, both during and post compulsory education have become more important and more difficult. This paper intends to inspect the features of an effective career guidance practice, including the emerging necessity for schools to start introducing and encouraging student vocation at an earlier age combined with the essential role of exposure to the working realm. This small-scale research examined the effectiveness and models of seeking help for educational and career planning issues through a sample of 103 individuals; 92% of them employed and 8% master students, with previous employment experience.

Although career guidance is the most common source of support regarding their future occupation, 61% consider it as a pointless process, 17% are neutral and 22% consider it helpful. The results show inefficiency in career guidance provided and a need to plan alternative applicable strategies.

*   **Keywords:** *Career guidance, vocation, education, strategy*

Introduction

Several adolescents interviewed expressed their concerns and lack of confidence about how they would live their lives. They do not believe they will be able to see their dreams realized; they are afraid that if they make the wrong choice, it will affect their lives in long term perspective; they feel that they cannot discuss with their parents on what is currently happening to them; they are afraid that they will not find themselves and discover their passions. There are many constantly changing circumstances, and this makes them feel insecure; they do not know enough about all available occupations to be aware of what suits them best (Amursi, Haxhiymeri, Qirjako, & Ndrio, 2010).

Questioned "What will they do in the future?" teenagers are not prepared to give a thoughtful and analyzed answer. This statement implies that adolescents need more sources of information to clarify their perspectives on the employment domain (Bilgili & Kara, 2020). Furthermore, interviewed adults state that they chose what to study under their parents' persuasive encouragement. Despite the capacities for good education and space for practicing the profession, they felt that it was not the field that would make them happy. This would affect the quality of their life. International data show that in many countries access to career guidance is insufficient, especially for those most in need (Cedefop, et al., 2021).

We have come to the point where "res publica", as a general issue and "res priva", as a personal interest come together. The biggest challenge that individuals face is defining their identity and self-discovery. Unless they are still clear about their likes, dislikes, desires, dreams, fears, abilities, and personal qualities they will not be capable to determine what they can achieve in the future. The whole guidance process should be led by the question "What will I become based on who I am?" If an individual is not aware of the personality traits, interests and what is significant for them, they risk choosing the wrong academic discipline and consequently looking for the wrong job. Such a risk implies dissatisfaction for the rest of their life. Only being fully aware of our potentials and desires leads us towards productive use of energy and work with more convenience and efficiency. In his book 'The Element', Robinson elaborates the astonishing

diversity of human talent and passion and their tremendous potential for further growth and development. It is also about understanding the conditions in which human talents can flourish or fade. It is about how we can all prepare and fully engage ourselves in the present, choosing the only best way towards a completely unknown future (Robinson, 2009).

Guidance includes activities that help young people gather, understand, and analyze information, apply it to their situation, as unbiased guidance, and expertise-level support to help them understand themselves and their vocation, to overcome barriers, to resolve conflicts, to develop new perspectives and make progress (Watts AG, 2013). Holland, in "Hidden Order" recommends finding "the strong points" in every person's personality. There have been so many cases which have shown that a small hint has produced large, predictable, and desired changes, with a fundamental effect on the individual. RIASEC's basic principle that professional preferences are somehow a hidden expression of our character is considered a helpful model for individuals to identify occupations and working environments that match their characteristics. Every individual should become aware of their inner voice to have a deeper understanding of themselves. When personal qualities match the requirements of the profession, the ideal combination for having a successful career is achieved (Holland, 1996).

Development theories, on the other hand, assert that for everyone, career is a dynamic process accompanying different life stages and experiences. Rottinghaus, Day, and Borgen describe vocation as a tendency that affects the way an individual learns to understand their ability to predict and adjust changing work agendas. According to them, adaptability is the flexibility and competence to adapt to changes and make new career choices (Bilgili & Kara, 2020).

Operational job consulting and education systems do not accurately predict specific needs which can become visible in the future, and neither can they predict the specific on-the-work practices. Nevertheless, they can prepare successive skills for the potential range of changes and a more balanced approach to overall skills, considering individual skills as well.

Our personal general interests, skills and characteristics are incessantly shifting, thus bringing consequently shifting requirements; a few years from now, job seekers may need to adapt to a different profession from what they might have anticipated to suits them best. Therefore, they find themselves into a twofold dynamic that can either make it difficult or facilitate the resolution of individual choices.

P.S. *Terminology such as "career consulting", "career development", "career information, advice and instructions", "professional consulting" or "professional guidance" are used in some countries are used to refer to the wide range of activities related to the term career guidance (Cedefop, et al., 2021).*

Methodology

Quantitative and qualitative methods are used in data collection to serve the purpose of the study. A questionnaire (compiled by the researchers and conducted in Google form) and face-to-face interviews have been used as measurement tools with this study. The questionnaire was piloted in advance in order to test it on a small-scale sample of 22 people. Based on its feedback, the questionnaire proved to be reliable and understandable for this study. The sample consists of 103 randomly selected people with pre-determined criteria. First, the target group should consist of individuals employed in the public and private sector, as well as second-year students. Second, the age group this paper intends to study is from 18 to 35 years old. The geographical distribution of the sample includes the cities of Tirana, Elbasan, Durrës. The ethical code was maintained throughout the questionnaire and the conduct of interviews by ensuring and upholding participants' anonymity. The quality of this study is guarded through validity and reliability during collecting and analyzing data which are seriously considered. SPSS program was used for processing data, attaining the purpose and objectives of the study, as well as evaluating the findings.

Literature Review

The 2018 OECD report based on PISA data from 79 different nations and economies, including some middle-income countries in Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Latin America which are not OECD members, show that teenage career aspirations are frequently narrow, confused and distorted by social background. Too few teenagers have access to the guidance they need to make informed decisions about their futures. On average, just half of students in OECD countries have spoken to a career counselor in school by the age of 15. Many occupations and learning routes, such as apprenticeships in some countries, are stereotyped or poorly understood, so contributing to skills shortages and risk of educational disengagement. Participation in career guidance activities is often linked to the social background of learners, running the risk of inequitable outcomes (Cedefop, et al., 2021). According to a recent Deloitte survey of 3,000 full-time U.S. workers, across job levels and industries, only 20% say they are truly passionate about their work. Research that others and I have conducted show that many—if not most—of us don't know how to pursue our passion, and thus we fail to do so (Jachimowicz, 2019).

New education opportunities and new occupations on the job market may not be well understood by students, teachers and parents, making career guidance

services even more important. Young people need to have more access to better information regarding the consequences of their decisions at an early age and to build effective decision-making skills for their study choices, focusing on their desired occupation. Research has shown how easy it is for young people, especially those from underprivileged backgrounds, to fail to choose the right direction, due to the cost or lack of opportunity to become employed after education (Blanden & Gibbons, 2006). After 2004, the phrase "through the life span", was added to the term "career guidance" used mainly in EU documents, completing the perspective of lifelong learning. Services and activities like these, aim to help individuals make educational choices and manage their careers.

Career Guidance describes a wide range of network-related activities. These would include career information on courses and professions, study opportunities, career choices, as well as information on where to find help and consult on how to approach what they aspire to. Early experiences of unemployment are linked with long-term economic and psychological damage for individuals. Today's young people are working to build up education, qualifications and skills that will qualify them to find a decent work.

However, rapid changes in demand for labor (due to automation, digitalization, globalization, population ageing, the climate-related challenges, and the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic) makes decision-making about education and training options much more difficult. With many new occupations emerging and many existing ones changing or diminishing, young people need heightened support as they prepare themselves for working life. During the Covid-19 pandemic, surveys have shown that many young people are actively reconsidering their career plans. (Cedefop, et al., 2021).

The model for evaluating career guidance properly is a very complex one (Maguire & Killeen, 2003). The labor market is characterized by the mismatch between persistent unemployment and difficulties in recruiting in certain sectors, and guidance provides a means of responding more effectively to labor market needs; Social inclusion and equal opportunities are still major challenges for education, training, and employment policies (UNION, 2008)

Career education aims to expand in students the ability to discover opportunities, as well as to self-assess their interests and preferences to decide on further education / training and then employment, to learn to be efficient members of the society (Amursi, Haxhiymeri, Qirjako, & Ndrio, 2010). Just a personalized interview-based approach is not enough to develop students' skills for career self-management and decision-making (OECD, 2004).

Career orientation as a primary part of career education, should be regarded as a need to develop a person's responsibility in solving problems generated in his or her career development, in addition to the developments on the nowadays

labor market. Direct contact within the sphere of work intends to give young people first-hand understanding and labor market experience, hence showing the way towards career aspirations upgrading. (Hughes et al., 2016).

Career orientation as a public service, is being reformulated in the limelight of long-life learning policies, in the vein of active labor market policies and the concept of sustainable employability. Therefore, career guidance should be accessible not only to those who do not attend school and the unemployed, but to all people throughout their lives (Watts & Sultana, 2004).

Research shows that effective guidance will begin in primary school, addressing student assumptions and expectations about work and focus on developing the competences that can be estimated to help young people manage their careers in adulthood (Cedefop, et al., 2021).

Let the intelligence of young people be the guide in the wide range of ways in which adults pursue their vocation in life. This can help young people develop their aspirations in choosing their education and career (Armstrong, Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom, 2009). When talking about careers with students, it should be noted that different intelligences are required for each profession. The key to success is to nurture all our intelligences (Armstrong, Other Applications of MI Theory, 1994).

Results and discussions

Nowadays, career is a dynamic process that shifts through different stages and experiences of everyone's life. Labor market dynamics, as well as individual experiences that lead to a deeper knowledge of oneself, interests, skills, and gifts previously undiscovered, can be adapted to professions completely different from the existing ones. This makes it obligatory to find an inner vocation. On the other hand, choices, or solutions readymade for them by an expert opinion may bring resistance from the individual being instructed. Otherwise, leading them to conduct an analysis of their capacities and abilities on a certain subject or field will encourage them to discover by themselves whether a career objective is realistic or not.

TAB.1

1. Jeni studentie apo ie punësuar?

103 responses
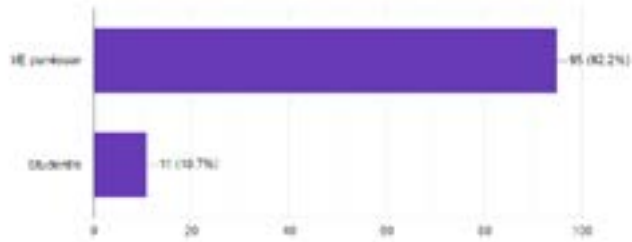
In this small-scale study, most of the respondents are employed. Considering this fact, it is taken for granted that the reflection time on the choices made years ago is sufficient for them to have built a more objective judgment. Consequently, it is difficult to make a promising comparison between the perception on the importance of career counseling (absent or not) during the years of study and the same perception after several years of work experience.

TABLE 4-5

4. Cili ishte faktori më i rëndësishëm në vendimmarrjen e zgjedhjes suaj?

103 responses
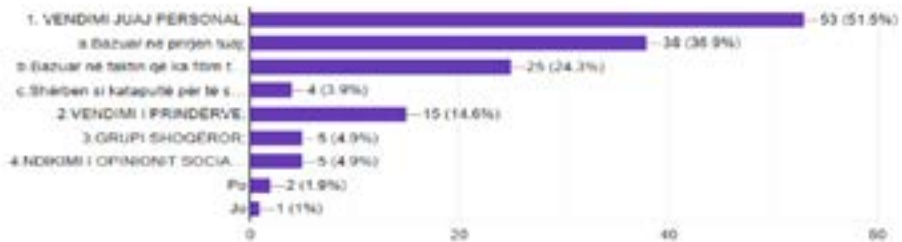
5. Nëse do ta bënit sot këtë zgjedhje, cili do të ishte faktori më i rëndësishëm në vendimmarrjen e zgjedhjes suaj?

100 responses
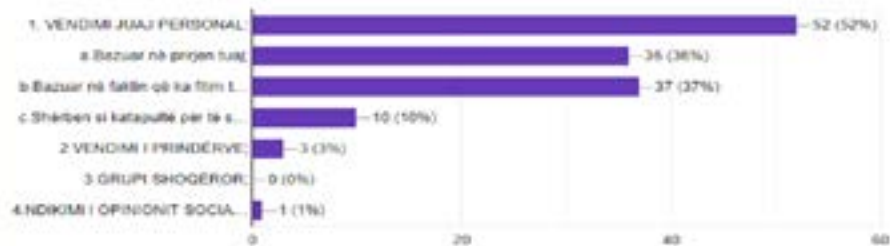
The results show that most participants report that the choice for the future career was their personal decision. This was based mostly on the skillfulness they thought they had and then on the financial benefit that their professional choice would bring. Whereas when asked about regrets and possible re-evaluations regarding the choice they once made, we notice a significant change in values when they admit that they would have paid more attention to the profitability of a profession as a decisive factor. Another indicator related to the globalization of the labor market, shows a significant increase related to their choice in case of a second opportunity.

The people interviewed state that job security and payment are much equally favorable when seeking a job in their country. It seems that the financial gain factor is not as important at a young age compared to the importance given afterwards when confronting the reality of an adult life. Surely enough this cannot be generalized as it is usually mediated by other individual factors such as socio-economic status of the family they come from, ongoing financial support, etc. *It becomes evident that the lack of career counseling has created a lack of awareness about the importance of profitability in the future rather than self-awareness of their individual skillfulness; seemingly, individuals mirror themselves as self-aware of their vocational skills and strong points of their personality.*

Another important change is parental influence. Almost all participants who reported being trapped into parental influence at the decision-making time, reported that if they had the possibility to go back in that time, they would choose not to be influenced by their parents' enthusiasm or opinion. The same pattern appears for social or friendship group influence. Young people, their parents, teachers and other third parties often demonstrate insufficient information or poor understanding of some options, including those related to education and training. Their prospective to support young people towards their final employment lacks expert quality orientation.

TABLE 6

6. Si e vlerësoni procesin e Këshillimit të Karrierës në shkollën e mesme ku keni studiuar?
102 responses
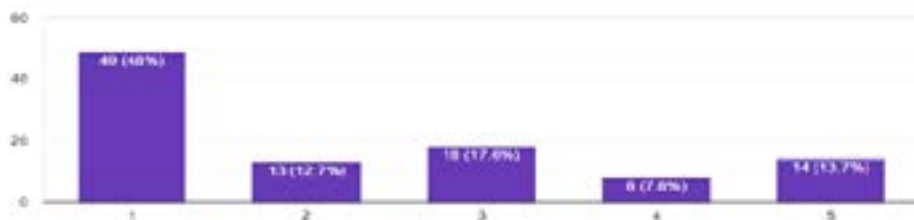
Among the answers given in the study, 61% of participants consider school career guidance useless or little useful. This tendency may be partly influenced by the personal preferences of counseling teachers, who may have been influenced by their education. Particularly, in cases of career guidance services being entirely education-based, the labor market expertise may be weak. In addition, those who plan to attend university education may receive more attention than those who plan to work instead. The most objective interpretation we can build in this case is that there exists a proportional relationship between the age and being easily influenced, indicating that the younger the person is, the easier it is to be influenced. This interpretation leads us to the logical derivation that career orientation (missing in high school) would have undoubtedly been helpful. However, career guidance involves a wide-ranging projecting perspective that the individual may not be aware of at a very young age **with or without proper counseling at these significant stages.**

What about their vocational self-awareness? The root of professional guidance and career training is self-awareness. Sometimes, without realizing how, they get lost and find themselves on a dead end. Hence, before professional facilitation is required, the best of all is for people to have reached full awareness of job and occupation environments, which are mostly in agreement with their personality, interests, and values.

This is about how well they know to answer these questions:

- What kind of personality do I have?
- What are my first and foremost needs for the moment? For example, economic security, new incentives...
- What do I like? For example, teaching, solving mathematical problems, communicating/interacting with people...
- What is important to me? For example, making a career, having time for my family...

TABLE 7

7.Në cilën moshë mendoni se është më e përshtatshme të merrni Këshillim Karriere?
47 responses

Attending career vocational training is often associated to social background. Research shows that effective career guidance should begin in elementary school, addressing students' assumptions and expectations about performance and competence development, but this is still not widely supported to be taken into consideration. The age of 16-18 is considered to be the most successful. This may be supported by interviewees' answers regarding the time they think would be preferable to take career guidance training. Only 39% consider the 12-15 y.o. important in finding individual inner vocation. However, this would be a good opportunity that increases their potential for career management in later life as adults. The precondition would be not to over-influence, from an early age, the efforts to approach the type of children's intelligence appropriate for a specific career. This would be too early, bearing in mind their development.

Recommendations

- Better exposure of career guidance topics in meetings, conversations and round tables with specialists, academics and experts who would discuss it professionally.
- Involvement of last graders (of each education levels), in multiple intelligence tests, to stimulate their "inner voice" and natural vocation.
- Frequent "Open Days" meetings from the University according to the programs they offer. It should be clarified that this practice is already applied but the way it is organized is too formal and not efficient.
- It is important to help children recognize their strong and outstanding skills in a study program. The common question to children, "How smart are you?", should be replaced with "In what way am I smart?" helping the children ask themselves the question in order to lead them towards self-knowledge. In the wide spectrum of occupations mostly associated to their self-discovered fields of intelligence, children can begin to make their own decisions about what feels right or what is not relevant for them.
- Establish a special office in QSHA (Educational Services Centre) to plan, monitor and evaluate: the establishment of centers for planning the career guidance process; the support and orientation instruments for students to facilitate their decision-making in this important process; the development of an individual plan for the career that a student intends to build; the course which will meet students' individual needs based on the skills he or she has acquired and demonstrated in class X-XI.
- Publish a syllabus or outline for career guidance and vocation.
- Carry out studies to come up with updated results on labor market trend.

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The dark social capital as an effective way in getting things done: explaining dark sides of social capital in Albania ⸺

⸺ **Dr. Gerti SQAPI** ————————————————

Abstract

For almost three decades, social capital has become an important concept (and a variable) that has attracted much attention in the social science literature to explain various social problems and phenomena. In the many debates that have taken place about the role of social capital, conceived at different levels, it should be noted that its value is seen mainly in positive terms, emphasizing the potential benefits that the possession of social capital in itself has for the individual and society as a whole. The negative consequences that "dark" social capital produces on the relationships between people and for the society have been largely ignored in the literature. The focus in this paper will be precisely on the negative societal consequences that the possession of social capital of a certain form, the "dark" one, has on the individuals that make up a particular society. In this study, the role of norms and social structure of society is emphasized as essential for the formation of social capital that individuals within it possess. Social capital understood in this way is seen as reflective of the social structure of society, as it is this structure that generates various forms of social capital. Albania will be the empirical case where the theoretical framework of this study will be applied (in Part III), highlighting the negative impacts that dark social capital has on Albanian society at the expense of breaking its established formal universalistic rules.

Key words: Dark social capital, norms, social structure, social relations, particularistic norms, corruption, informal networks.

Introduction and definition of "social capital"

Social capital is undoubtedly one of those controversial concepts in the social science literature, as it has been explained and interpreted in various ways by different authors. Also noted in this literature have been the difficulties or disagreements for its possible measurement to claiming its validity in explaining several social problems. The concept of "social capital" gained much attention principally after the 1990s and beyond by social scientists, policymakers, but also by various international agencies that have tried to operationalize the term based on different dimensions and indicators. The term, although it became famous with the seminal work *"Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy"* by Robert Putnam, this author credits James Coleman as the inventor of the term "social capital". Following the conventional definition made by Putnam, he notes that: "theoretical definition of social capital refers to formal and informal networks and connections among people that can be used for their individual and collective benefit (Putnam, 1996; Cited in Letki, 2009: p. 163). Bourdieu and Wacquant, on the other hand, define social capital as "the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrues to an individual or group by virtues of possessing a durable network or more or less institutionalized relationships or mutual acquaintance and recognition" (1992: p. 119). Thus, the term is conceived in different ways, being seen as a resource/characteristic that resides in both individuals and groups; which can be used both for individual benefit and for the collective benefit of the group. Although according to Portes, there is a broad consensus "that social capital stands for the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures", there is much debate about such issues as how to evidence social capital, the potential benefits of social capital and which types of types of social capital are most beneficial in what circumstances (Cited in Martikke, 2017; p. 8-9).

In the numerous debates about the role of social capital, conceived whether, at the individual, group, community, or society level, it should be noted that its value is seen mostly in positive terms emphasizing the potential benefits that the possession of social capital in itself it has for the individual, the group or the society by "reducing transaction costs" and by "facilitating the interaction between the members of the society". The dark sides of social capital have been largely overlooked, leaving aside the fact that "the same characteristics of social capital that enables beneficial, productive benefits have the potential to cause negative externalities" (Claridge, 2004).But, as Graeff has pointed out, "in order to understand the forces driving social capital relationships and to get a more complete picture, negative implications of the social processes deserve attention as well… Negative consequences are inherently part of special social bonds" (Graeff, 2009: p. 143).

With social capital we refer in this paper to when people use their social relationships and informal networks to accomplish their personal goals(Graeff, 2009, p. 143).The adjective "dark" that we add to the term social capital is used in this study to indicate the negative results of special social bonds that people have in their relationships or the stock of informal networks that individuals use to achieve their personal goals (or benefits).As Richard Rose has emphasized, in common with other definitions, this emphasizes that (dark) social capital is about recurring relationships between individuals (Rose, 1998; p. 3).As such it is not given, but can be gained and lost by ongoing relationships, exchanges, or even investments that individuals can make in it in view of their future personal goals.

Dark social capital as an aspect generated by the social structure of a society

In the theoretical framework of this paper, the role of norms and social structure of society is emphasized as essential for the formation of social capital that its individuals possess. Social capital understood in this way is seen as reflective of the social structure of society, as it is this structure that generates various forms of social capital (whether these results in the form of positive or negative consequences).To shed light on the relationship that exists between what we have called here "dark social capital" and the breaking of universalistic formal rules established in a given society, we will use James Coleman's approach as a starting point, as it "has the advantage of providing a theoretical basis of both social capital and norms" (Graeff, 2009: p. 144).In his approach to social capital, Coleman describes it as a set of socio-structural resources defining it in situational and instrumental terms. He emphasizes regarding the notion of social capital: "It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common: They all consist of some aspects of a social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure" (Coleman, 1990: p. 302).The terms "social structure" and "action facilitation" require further clarification of their meaning.

By social structure, we refer in this study to the pattern of typical social relationships that the members of a society have towards each other. As such, these are a relatively orderly and stable set of relationships that members of a society have in their interactions, and which can be best analyzed as *recurrent social practices* (Loyal, 2003: p. 75).Since Coleman defines social capital in situational and instrumental terms, he also implies that it is an endogenous feature of social relations that members of a society have towards each other. Thus, if the social

structure and the pattern of social relations that are embodied in a given society are mainly of a particularistic and clientelist type, one that does not substantially oppose corruption and which is based heavily on materialistic cultural values, this would make it more likely that in that society dark forms of social capital would be produced in the interactions between its members. Likewise, if the social relations pattern typical of the society is of a rule-bound, universalistic type, and based on broad interpersonal trust, then the social capital that would be generated by such a social structure would have positive consequences both for individuals (e.g., facilitating interaction between them towards achieving common goals) and for the society as a whole.

As for the term "action facilitation", as Peter Graeff refers: "the criterion of action facilitation implies that the benefit of social capital lies in its function, namely the achievement of particular aims that would not be attainable otherwise" (2009: p. 144).The value of social capital in this sense lies in the relationships that an individual has with other individuals, as well as in the resources that an individual can access thanks to the presence in networks and particular conjunctures, which can facilitate actions between different actors within the structure for achieving their personal aims/goals.

In this paper, it is argued that the characteristics of particular forms of social capital that appear in a society reflect the typical patterns of social relations between its members.Thus, the structure of social relations of a society in which social capital inheres (as an endogenous feature) has the potential to produce different forms of it, whether positive or negative, as is the case of dark social capital. The dark social capital possessed by certain individuals in society would consist precisely in the use of resources and in their ease of invoking their informal relationships/networks within the social structures of society to achieve their personal goals or benefits. As Alvarez and Romani have stressed, social capital represents exactly a feature of the social structure, an ecologic characteristic whether we look at it from the individual (ego-centered) or collective (socio-centered) point of view (Alvarez & Romani, 2017: p. 58).If in a society dark form of social capital prevail, this is because a good part of its members privileges particularistic norms and values over universalistic ones and tend to justify certain corruptive/clientelist behaviors for their own narrow personal or family benefits. As such norms (and values) have a significant influence on the exchange process in that they open access to actors for exchange as well as ensuring the motivation to engage in such actions (Nahapiet& Ghoshal, 1998).Certain norms that dominate in society make it possible to expand the opportunities among its members to engage in certain behaviors. They also regulate and frame people's expectations regarding these behaviors or the interactions they have with others. To better explain this idea, Bourdieu's concept of habitus can help us, as it sheds

light on the influences that the structural characteristics of society have on the norms and patterns of behaviors/relationships of its members, including on the social capital they possess.

> "Habitus is created over time by the interplay of actors' free will and the structural constraints they encounter. Shaped by past events and perceptions it influences current practices and structures, as well as actors' perceptions of these. Habitus is "a socially constituted system of cognitive and motivating structures" ... that produces certain behavioral patterns and the norms or tendencies underpinning this behavior. These behavioral patterns and norms have thus been shaped by actors' past experiences of the material conditions of existence over many years and, in turn, shape present and future actions. They determine what seems appropriate and normal in any given setting and as such amount to a system of behavioral patterns that transcend individual behavior and "reproduce" the existing social order, rather than questioning it" (Cited in Martikke, 2017: p. 7-8).

Thus, for Bourdieu, behavioral patterns and norms are taught in the context of a cognitive and motivating structure of a given society, internalized by individuals, and determine what is appropriate or expected in the various interactions between them.As such, these norms seem natural to individuals and set expectations on their behaviors in coping with certain everyday situations. Thus, to explain a type of a particularistic relationship as part of "habitual knowledge" between the citizens of a society which is to the detriment of the universalistic rules of a democratic system, Bourdieu takes the example of a clientelist interaction between (political) brokers and clients. Regarding this example, he states:"Problem solving [in such informal network as that between political brokers and citizens] become personalized and part of the habitual knowledge of members of brokers' inner circles. Those who receive things know that they have to go rallies and support their brokers. They are part of a universe in which everyday favors imply some expected return as the rule of the game, a rule understood as a "scheme immanent in practice" (Bourdieu, 1977: p. 38) or as something to be done as a form of reciprocal reward. Relations between problem holders and problem solvers are "practical" insofar as they are routinely "practiced, kept up, and cultivated" through the distribution of things and the granting of the favours (Bourdieu, 1977, 38).In this way, the content of the dark social capital that individuals possess and practice in the interactions between them must be seen in terms of the norms that dominate society and that guide their exchange relationship behaviors.

Dark social capital, we argue here, is a product of particularistic norms and values that dominate in a society, part of the social structure of that society. The

social structure [and its norms to which the members of a society adhere], is that which provides the conditions of opportunity for social action. As Coleman has pointed out, "norms adhere to the social structure; they are not a property or a feature of the actor themselves (Coleman, 1990: p. 243).As such, norms establish "a behavioral framework in advance that involves social ties or obligations" (Graeff, 2009: p. 151) and what is appropriate behavior in a given social setting. Norms, just as they can hinder, so they can facilitate a particular social action (and thus, people in a society can expect their appearance to occur relatively regularly, considering it as "normal").

As a part of the system of society's norms, particularistic norms allow members of society to struggle for their personalistic interests at the expense of formally universalistic rules sanctioned by the state and its agencies. They are dark social capital in the way that facilitate the action of group members at the expense of universal statutes (Graeff, 2009: p. 152-153).In a society where particularistic norms and values dominate, and where a large part of its members would justify to varying degrees corrupt or clientelist behaviors/practices, then individuals within it would be more inclined to break its formal universalistic rules by serving their interests and benefits. E.g. to be employed in a public institution, getting a good grade for a university course, or avoiding lengthy bureaucratic procedures in obtaining a permit from a government agency, it is more likely to achieve them by using strong ties and informal networks (i.e. connections or conjunctures with friends, acquaintances who have status in society or occupy positions of influence, as in the political parties) rather than believing that you can achieve them by adhering to the establishing formal rules. Diego Gambetta states that: "Corruption is parasitic on the existence of trusting relations… the greater the number of trusting relations [the close connections and the informal networks between individuals], the greater is the potential for corruption" (Gambetta, 2002, p. 54).Thus, the network of informal acquaintances and connections of an individual is much more relevant to achieve a personal advantage than the observance of established universalistic rules. Dark social capital in this sense, seen as a product of the dominance of particularistic norms in the context of society, is considered as a mechanism or instrument which facilitates the achievement of personal goals/interests by individuals who possess it.

Moreover, such particularistic behaviors are more likely to be reinforced when an individual would be inclined to believe that even other individuals within a society use the same particularistic strategies to achieve their personal goals at the expense of the established formal universalistic rules of the state. This is an example of what in economics and game theory is called *a strategic complementarily* – whereby if one agent does something it becomes more profitable [and more reasonable] for another agent to do the same thing. Models involving strategic

complementarities lead to multiple equilibria – in which the bad equilibrium is the one with the pervasive corruption (Mauro, 2004: p. 2).And in those societies where corruption is prevalent at high levels and accepted as a social fact among its members, the individuals within it will increasingly rely on the forms of dark social capital they possess (in their social relations) to achieve their personal goals and objectives.

Explaining dark social capital in the context of Albanian society

The main point of this article is that it is the social structure of society that generates different forms of social capital (whether the consequences of the latter are positive or negative).From this, we draw the hypothesis of this study: if a society is dominated by particularistic norms and tendencies and where a large part of its members would justify to varying degrees the corrupt behaviors and practices, then the individuals within it would have it easier to invoke their informal networks/relationships to achieve their personal goals to the detriment of established formal universalistic rules.

The social structure and pattern of social relations that are embodied in Albanian society are essentially of a particularistic and clientelist type and are mainly based on materialist (cultural) values and those of survival. Based on the studies of Ronald Inglehart and the studies carried out by Aleksander Kocani on the value profile of post-communist Albania, we conclude that the Albanian society belongs to the system of values of materialistic profile (Kocani, 2013, p. 43-44).In such societies with the value system of materialistic profiles, the main tendency of citizens is to achieve personal interest and benefits regardless of the different forms (e.g., particularistic, instrumentalist one) of how they are reached. In a society like that of Albania, particularistic norms and tendencies dominate the relations between individuals, therefore, a large part of its population tends to justify corrupt behaviors and practices to varying degrees. As such, these norms and values serve to generate dark social capital in the individuals who possess it, who will tend to use it in favor of their personal interests and benefits, even against the public interest or the common good. In a study conducted in 2016 by the Institute for Democracy and Mediation and the National Democratic Institute regarding Political Engagement in Albania, when citizens were asked about the reasons that motivate them to engage in political processes [by which, the main form of influence they saw through voting], 80.9% of respondents in a national survey said they would do it for their personal interests/benefits, while 87.5% said they would be involved in political processes if this would help their family and friends (IDM & NDI, 2016: p. 10, 26).The same study conducted

again by the Institute for Democracy and Mediation in 2020 in Albania, also with a national sample, replicated the same findings of the 2016 study, with even higher results regarding the (particularistic) reasons for the commitment of Albanian citizens to the political process. In the 2020 study, the willingness to engage in the political processes of the Albanian citizens surveyed was 89%, if this would be done for matters of their personal interest/benefit, and the same 89% of respondents said they would engage politically whether this would bring the support of families or their friends (IDM& NDI: 2020).In a general panorama, these results also show the tendency of Albanian citizens to see their engagement in political processes (mainly voting for a political party) primarily through a particularistic and instrumentalist optic [if this can benefit them personally or it can help their family members, relatives or friends] and not in the function of the common good or public interest by voting for the political alternative they consider that is the best. Thus, for them personal interest and family ties are more important to be considered when they face an option in their political engagement in society.

In a society where particularistic norms prevail and where a large part of its members would justify in one way or another the corrupt and clientelist practices, then the tendency of those who possess dark social capital to distort/bend the rule of games or the key institutions of fairness in a society in favor of their benefit would be greater. As Graeff points out in this argument, in a society where "universalistic norms do not prevail over particularistic ones, people cannot be prevented from realizing their private gain at the expense of society as a whole" (Graeff, 2009, p. 152).Once again, in this context, the dark social capital that people possess would make them less reluctant, whether from the moral or legal dictates, to achieve their personal goals.

Justifying at relatively high levels of corrupt norms and practices among the members of society would mean more incentives for them to archive what they want (their personalistic goals/benefits) at the expense of the established formal universalistic rules of the country sanctioned in laws, or statutes. The justification of corrupt practices in Albanian society is demonstrated in this section by referring to the World Values Survey's variable of "Someone accepting a bribe in the course of their duties". This is a good indicator to show the tendencies of the members of the Albanian society to consider corrupt behaviors and practices as justifiable (including their justification to varying degrees) or as never justifiable. The data for this indicator are presented in a binary scale between the responses of Albanian respondents who believe that taking bribes is never justifiable (value 0) and those who consider that taking bribes is justifiable to varying degrees (from 1 -10).The data are illustrated in the table I below.

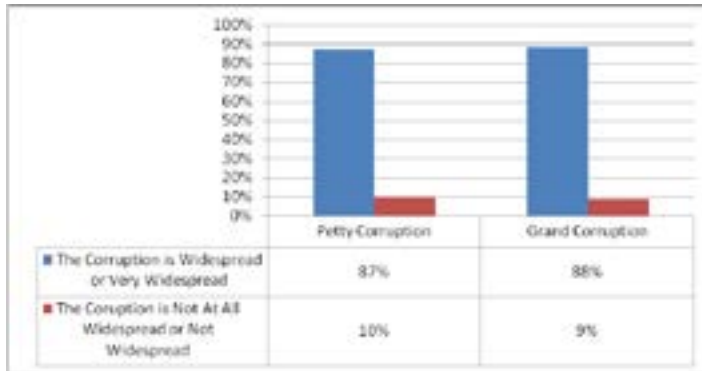**TABLE I:** Justification of Someone Accepting a Bribe in Albania
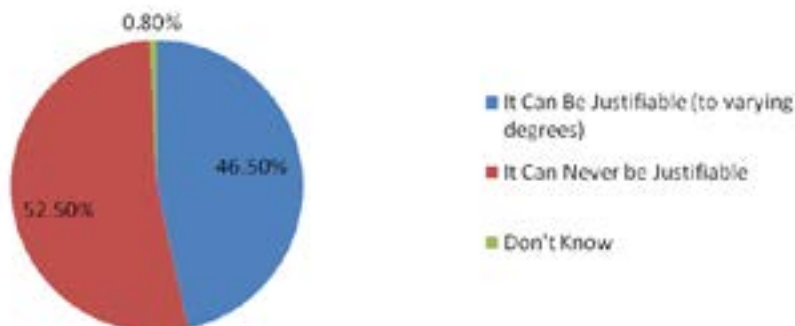
Source: World Values Survey Wave 4: 1999-2004[1]

As can be seen from the data in table I, almost half of Albanian citizens (46.5%), interviewed in the survey by the World Values, tend to justify to varying degrees someone accepting a bribe, which for them means that this corrupt practice is tolerable, in comparison with the other half (52.5%) who assert that bribery is never justifiable. The percentages of those who justify to varying degrees such a practice, although slightly less than half, remain at high levels and show the tendency of the Albanian population to accept corrupt norms and behaviors as legitimate, or at least to consider them as "normal". And as Diego Gambetta has pointed out about the self-fulfilling nature of corruption, "the more widespread is the belief that corruption is rife [among members of a given society] the greater is the incentive to engage in it (Gambetta, 2002: p. 55).

To demonstrate this widespread belief on the prevalence of corruption among members of Albanian society, we rely on a study conducted in 2017 on the *"Trust in Governance"* undertaken by the Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) on a national sample. Thus, the data of this survey show that almost 9 out of 10 respondents consider petty corruption (87%) and grand corruption (88%) as widespread or very widespread in Albanian public institutions (Data shown in Table 2 below). While the same survey on *"Trust in Governance",* conducted again with a national sample in 2020, showed that 31.5% of respondents had a personal confrontation with corruption in central government agencies, while 32.4% of them stated this concerning local government in Albania (IDM & UNDP, 2020: pp. 65-66).

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[1] The data for Albania for this variable (V207) is taken from the fourth wave of the World Values Survey, as this is the last wave where Albania is included. Inglehart, R. & C. Haerpfer& A. Moreno & C. Welzel& K. Kizilova& J. Diez-Medrano & M. Lagos & P. Norris & E. Ponarin& B. Puranen et al. (eds.). (2014*). "World Values Survey: Round Four (2000-2004) -* Country-Pooled".

TABLE 2: Perceptions on the Spread of Petty Corruption
and Grand Corruption in Albanian Public Institutions

	Petty Corruption	Grand Corruption
■ The Corruption is Widespread or Very Widespread	87%	88%
■ The Corruption is Not At All Widespread or Not Widespread	10%	9%

Source: Institute for Democracy and Mediation & United Nations Development
Programme, (2017), *"Opinion Poll 2017: Trust in Governance 2017",* p. 35.

Also, quite widespread according to this opinion poll is the confidence of
Albanian citizens that cases of grand corruption and petty corruption are not
prosecuted in society. Thus, according to the data (presented in Table 3), the
majority of Albanian respondents or more than 6 in 10 respondents (62%)
either don't have confidence (39%) or don't have confidence at all (23%) in
the prosecution of petty corruption cases (IDM & UNDP, 2017: p. 35). While
even higher is the percentage (73%) of those who believe that grand corruption
(involving political decision-makers and high-level public officials, who exploit
their positions to extract bribes or embezzle large amounts of money) is not
prosecuted, nor it leads to the sentencing of these officials in Albania.

TABLE 3: Perceptions of Prosecution of Corruption Cases in Albania

	Petty Corruption	Grand Corruption
■ Don't Have Confidence in Prosecution of Corruption Cases	62%	73%
■ Confidence in Prosecution of Corruption Cases	36%	25%
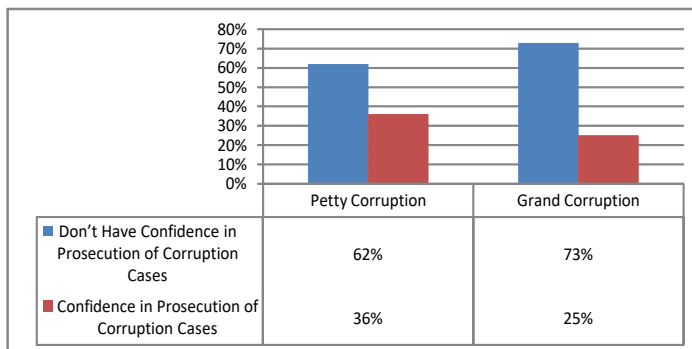
Source: Institute for Democracy and Mediation and United Nations Development
Programme, (2017), *"Opinion Poll 2017: Trust in Governance 2017",* p. 35.

Regarding the structure of social relations embodied in the Albanian society (which are essentially of a particularistic and clientelist type, as we have argued above) from where the dark social capital generates, an explanation of its historical, social, economic context is necessary to be made. Dark social capital generated in the context of the social structure of Albanian society, in the sense of informal networks/relationships that people invoke to achieve their personal goals/gains, has been instrumental as well as functional to fulfill their (survival) needs. Thus, at different periods, faced with numerous economic risks and uncertainties, Albanians have relied on their informal connections/networks (dark social capital) as an efficient way to provide a tangible flow of goods to ensure survival. During the communist period, for example, which was probably the most repressive regime in the entire communist world of Eastern Europe, Albanians had few other alternative ways to ensure their survival and to isolate themselves against an oppressive dictatorship than to rely on informal networks and the close connections they had. Faced with extreme poverty, inefficiencies of a centralized and almost entirely autarkic economic planning system, as well as with intrusive state organizations that penetrated into every aspect of citizens' lives, reliance on "strong and reliable networks of trust and reciprocity, which were the key resource used to cope with everyday life" (Cited in Letki, 2009: p. 166).Ideological mobilization by the party-state drove individuals to seek refuge in private and unofficial networks (Rose, 1998: p. 2).In this way, the (inefficient) centralization of the economy and the ideological mobilization of the totalitarian communist regime, which affected almost every aspect of the organization of public and private life in Albanian society, pushed the citizens to rely more and more on their informal relations / networks to protect themselves from intrusive and exploitative organizations (of the party-state regime and its transmission belts) as well as to guarantee survival in such an environment.

Likewise, also in the period of transition towards democracy (not yet well-functioning and not consolidated in Albania) and the transition to a market economy (somewhat chaotic, where informality remains at high levels and where economic actors do not compete on equal terms), where the state was (and still remains) enough to guarantee the social protection of citizens, and where its bureaucratic organizations are widely inefficient and overly politicized, Albanians again needed to seek to protect themselves and their families under conditions of such insecurities, relying on their reliable networks / informal connections in order to survive or move forward. This was generally done by utilizing their informal networks and connections and by invoking norms of mutual obligation, personal favors, the particularized trust between them; thus, the dark forms of social capital that each individual possessed to achieve their personal goals. As Richard Rose puts it, "informal networks can substitute for the

failure of modern bureaucratic organizations. Additional tactics include trying to personalize relations with impersonal bureaucrats or using connections or bribery in an attempt to get bureaucrats to violate rules" (Rose, 1998: p. 7).

The most used and common concepts in the Albanian society throughout its transition period, and which best describe these tactics and particularistic forms of behavior of its members in their social relations (or their portfolio of dark social capital networks) are those of *"the friend", "the coffee"* and *"the envelope"."The friend"*[in Albanian: *"Miku"*] means if someone has important close connections/conjectures to use them as an intervention to benefit a special personal service or to achieve something that would otherwise be inaccessible to him/her (e.g. earning a passing or good grade from a student in a course he/she is attending in the University, obtaining a legalization permit from state agencies for a dwelling built without permission even though it does not meet the legal criteria to benefit for it, or the inclusion in the lists of beneficiaries of a social program / assistance of a state agency, etc.). *"The Coffee"* [in Albanian: *"Kafja"*] on the other hand in Albanian society means informal meetings using personal connections and those of acquaintance between two (or more) people to see if there are "opportunities" to "solve the problems" or to "finish the job" (e.g. to get "privileged" information on how something can be achieved, what is the best way to get a special service from the public institutions by bending the rules etc.). While the *"envelope"*[in Albanian: *"Zarfi"*], on the other hand, refers along with informal connections/conjectures that someone has, to the addition of giving bribes (in cash) to the official who has performed the service by bending the rules or breaking the law. The use of personalized connections through these particularistic forms, the success of which depends precisely on the dark social capital that individuals possess, is also the most efficient and common way to achieve things in the context of Albanian society.

Beyond the importance that these informal networks and connections have had for surviving in the face of economic scarcities/uncertainties in the Albanian environment, their instrumental and opportunistic use by individuals who possessed such forms of dark social capital has been done to the detriment of established formal universalistic rules and by breaking state laws. As Richard Rose has pointed out, "ignoring rules to do favors for friends or taking a bribe in return for allocating public property are examples of networks mis-allocating goods, that is, breaking the rules governing state and market in a modern society (1998: p. 4).The more prevalent the norms of the particularistic type (along with the materialistic values to which they are oriented) among the members of a society in the social relations/interactions they have toward each other, the more they will tend to invoke the informal connections and networks they have depending on the dark social capital they possess, to achieve their own self-interest at the expense of the common good. In this context, as we have argued

above here, the dark social capital that people possess would make them less reluctant, whether from moral or legal dictates (universalist rules, statutes, or laws in force), to achieve their personal interests.

If we take as an example the case of employment in the Albanian public administration (where among Albanian citizens is very widespread the belief that the employment process is carried out on political grounds and acquaintances (of the "*friend*") and not on a meritocratic basis respecting the legal procedures and criteria), it also becomes clear to them that what determines someone's success in becoming a public employee are the personalized and informal relationships of his network (Do you know the right person?; It is your conjunction strong enough?) in order to achieve his goal. Thus, in a report presented by the Commissioner for the Supervision of the Civil Service in the Albanian Parliament in 2018, it was attested that 30% of the inspected cases of employment in the public administration were illegal, made by "director order" of the public institutions and outside the procedures of law (Erebara, 2018: p. 1).In this context, it is *"who do you know"* and *"how strong is your tie with someone well-positioned in the state or political party hierarchy"* that creates the advantage for someone to get a well-paid job in public administration in Albania, as opposed to what Mark Granovetter (1973) has argued in his famous essay *"The Strength of Weak Ties"*. As Light correctly puts it:"good jobs refer to jobs that, due to job seeker's exclusive and unequal access to networks, pay better than that person's qualification would normally allow" (Light, 2001: p. 5).And this happens because, as Peter Graeff has argued, the existence of this dark social capital entails a special relationship between politics or the employees of the public administration [e.g., the directors or officeholders of public directories/institutions] and the citizens: namely, that formal aspects have become secondary, and that administrative processing depends on the arbitrariness of people who use social capital in their own interest (Graeff, 2009: p. 153).If in such an environment where the vast majority of citizens believe that the particularistic norms (in some cases even clientelist one) dominate the social relations of society as a way of achieving specific goals/interests (e.g., as "success" models), it is unlikely that they will not follow the same "tactics" to achieve their personal goals/interests. Although this is done to the detriment of the formal legal, universalistic rules of the state and society.

Conclusions

The social structure, referred to in this study as the pattern of typical social relations among the members of a society and as recurrent social practices between them, is essential for the formation of the social capital that dominates

in that society. Understood in this way, the different forms of social capital and its different (positive or negative) outcomes it produces are reflective of the social structure of a given society. The structure of social relations of a society in which social capital inheres as an endogenous feature has the potential to produce different forms of it, whether these are positive or negative as is the case of the dark social capital. Thus, for example, if the social structure and pattern of social relations that are embodied (predominantly) in a given society are of a particularistic type and do not substantially oppose corruption, and then it would be more likely that in this society would be produced dark forms of social capital in the interactions and relations between its members. If in a society dark form of social capital prevail, this is because a large part of its members privileges particularistic norms and values over the universalistic ones, and they tend to justify certain corruptive / clientelist behaviors for their own narrow personal or family benefits. In such contexts, individuals would not hesitate to use or invoke their informal relationships/networks (the dark social capital of them) to achieve personal gains and private interest, even against the established formal rules in that society. Albania, as the empirical case where the theoretical framework of this study was applied (Section III), best shows the example of a society where particularistic norms and tendencies dominate and where a substantial part of its members tend to justify them (although to various degrees) the corrupt behaviors and practices, hence individuals within it find it easy to invoke their informal networks / relationships to achieve their personal achievement or goals to the detriment of established universalistic formal rules. In the conditions of today's Albanian society, the social capital that individuals possess within it, depending on their special social bonds and informal networks, is much more likely to be used in their personal interest and to the detriment of the public interest of society and the formal and universalistic rules of the state.

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Focusing on Eye Contact: Interpersonal Communication among Students at Eastern Mediterranean University

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Abstract

This study aims to find out the factors that affect eye contact decoding which gives different meanings to different people. Eye contact is the only common language in the world and feature of non-verbal communication which is a branch of interpersonal communication. It is as old as humanity and common in our everyday lives but is hardly researched in communication studies. Qualitative methodology has been chosen and carried out among the students at the Eastern Mediterranean University in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. In this university, approximately 14000 students study. They constitute the population of the study. They come from 60 different countries. Data were collected from three different levels. The first one is semi-structured interviews with students from twenty one to thirty years old. The participants are from different countries like Albania, Turkey, Iran, and Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Nigeria and Cameroon. The second method is focus group interviews. Ten people participated in these sessions: Five of them are males and five are females, from nineteen to twenty nine years old and all these students are from different cities of Turkey. The results show that eye contact is an important language of interpersonal communication. It can communicate a variety of attitudes such as anger, love, sadness, happiness as facial expression in different situations. On the whole, from both research that we conducted with students of Eastern Mediterranean University and field notes the researcher kept, how to decode the many

possible elements and understanding the discourses of eye contact are closely are tied to cultural, ethnic, gender, relationship, media, situation and other factors

Introduction

Eye contact is a feature of non-verbal communication which is a branch of interpersonal communication; it helps to express meanings and attitudes. It has subjective meanings as well, such as "friendship", "sexual attraction" and "hate and struggle for dominance" (Argyle & Dean, 1965).Eye contact can communicate a variety of attitudes such as anger, love, sadness, happiness. The absence, as well as the presence of eye contact, has a meaning. Indeed, "Even our silence and avoidance of eye contact are communicative. It is a quality that makes interpersonal communication transactional"(West&Turner, 2008, p.26). Hanna and Bernnan (2006) maintain that eye contact is developed at an early age, after two months old. Children are very sensitive to a person's head position. This is how the eye contact starts. Indeed, Spitz (1946), argues that "man is the only mammal which has habitual eye contact with its mother during the nursing" (Hodge, L. R. 1971, p. 265). Adults use the orientation of both head and eyes at the same time. Hanna and Brennan (2006) further argue that the eye contact can be different like when you look at an object for the first time, searching for a target, researching toward the object etc.

When two people look at each other even for one second, a crash takes place between pupils of their eyes; this is called "eye contact". Eye contact is defined as: "When two people look at each other's eyes at the same time"(Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary. Retrieved May 14, 2006).

When two people do not have eye contact, usually they will not have strong communication. For instance, when two people talk to each other and if one of them does not establish eye contact, the other one will feel uncomfortable and usually decode it negatively. Some people believe that poor communication takes place when there is distance between two or more people while communicating. This is invalid for chatting with each other on the Internet, sending messages through e-mail or telephone. On the other hand, people who are involved in face to face communication, eye contact make communication stronger and more valuable than those who do not have it. People do not feel that full communication takes place unless there is eye contact (Argyle and Dean, 2003).

Eye contact is a natural tendency for human beings but the way we face with it is shaped by other factors such as culture. People who support psychological

perspective, like Hodge (1971) hold that eye contact facilitates decoding the message of the communicator. For instance, most people can recognize the difference of eye contact of someone when s/he is angry or the way that s/he is falling in love with somebody. In a similar vein, Hodge (1971) argues that eyes are effective transmitter of information within the framework of the face. "Eyes are the gateway to the mind" (p.264).It takes up different meanings according to culture, age, gender and social relationship. In other words, people from different cultures decode eye contact differently and give different feedback. Every culture shows their own unique patterns of behavior that seems strange to the people from other cultures.

Peter Hartley (1999) believes that when media portrays interpersonal communication of other people, it gives an idea to audience to discourse and decode in the way that media shows. People are affected by popular media which portrays interpersonal communication. In other words, popular media guide audience to justify discourse of eye contact in the way it portrayed. Each medium has their own perspective for portraying programs. Media is a large area for research. The reason why we ask questions about Media is for finding out about their communication with it and how it affects them. Media helps the people to decode the eye contact which we need to be familiar with in order to understand the participants. Media is a source for information and learning about the other people.

This research intends to find out about different elements of eye contact in personal relationships, between people, like love partner, married couples, friends and strangers and how this element can be trusted as the translator for people who use it in order to decode messages given by the eye contact! At the same time, it is sought to find out whether there are any differences in establishing and decoding eye contact between the participants that are from different countries.

In summary, eye contact is something personal, private and most people do not want to talk about this subject. Some people do not know how to explain the feelings that they get from eye contact. Moreover, living in a multicultural city like Famagusta, people from different backgrounds can decode eye contact differently based on their background and culture where they come from. The culture in which a person lives shapes the way s/he lives. For instance, people use eye contact differently and at the same time they decode it differently from each other. Therefore, the cultural factor is as important as the personal one. At the same time age and gender plays important roles in decoding the eye contact. Duration of eye contact can play an important role as well on people. It can make them feel different and at the same time it depends if it is their friend or a stranger because from the person in front of them their attitude and feelings may differ and change.

More specifically, is to find out whether university students studying at the Eastern Mediterranean University in Fall2011 differ in relation to their attitude towards establishing and decoding eye-contact with respect to their gender, culture, context, social relationship, and media. Moreover, in the present study it is sought to find whether there is any relationship between eye contact and body language. The information included in this research covers different subjects like communication, interpersonal communication, models of interpersonal communication, non-verbal communication, differences and similarities between non-verbal and verbal communication, research about eye contact and the influence of eye contact on human relationships.

Communication

"The word communicate is historically related to the word common. It comes from the Latin verb *communicare,* which means 'to share', 'to make common' and which in turn is related to the Latin word for common; *communis"* (Rosengren, 2000, p.1). So, when we communicate we share things like knowledge and feeling with each other and at the same time we talk for common subjects of idea.

As the ways of communication have changed overtime from primitive methods to modern, at the present time, technology has started to play an important role in communication as well as media. With the help of technology, people can communicate very easily with each other. So technological media such as, TV, Cinema, Internet, etc make distances between countries shorter and breaks the borders.

Communication in itself includes signs and symbols that are called "codes or languages" signs include icons, indices, signals and symbols. "Way of codes or languages reality may be represented, understood, evaluated, explained and sometimes changed. Language is man's important tool of communication for transferring action-oriented information" (Rosengren, 2000, p.30). Human language is doubly articulated: at the level of sounds (phenomena, linguistically relevant sounds) and at the level of morphemes (minimal meaningful units) (K. E. Rosengren, 2000, p.31).

Rosengren argues that communication has got different forms which are:

1. Verbal and non-verbal communication;
2. Mediated communication;
3. Human languages;
4. Writing from printing to computing.

The communication form that is used for the present research is a form of non-verbal communication. As there are different forms of communication, at the same time, there are also different levels of communication. The levels are: interpersonal communication, individuals in group, societies, intrapersonal communication, group communication, organizational communication, societal communication, mass communication, international and intercultural communication (Rosengren, 2000). The level of communication used for the present research it is interpersonal communication

Interpersonal Communication

"Inter" as word means "between" or "among" and "Interpersonal" means between or among people (Wood, 2010). "Interpersonal communication refers to face-to-face, two way communications only" (Tubbs, Moss, 1981, p.4). Interpersonal communication is a very important part of social reality. It will happen every day when we start to have communication in social life. This kind of communication helps people understand each other and make reaction to what they understand or their feedback. Interpersonal communication takes place between a sender and receiver. The sender uses different tools for sending his or her message to the receiver.

The sender understands the message by listening, reading, viewing the vision and conversation. It can be understandable and observable during this exchange and it can be changeable from moment to moment. Interpersonal communication is a process that gives chance to the person to understand, share ideas and thoughts. According to this process, similarities and differences between two people can be observed. This process will be supported by mass communication, which is effective on the social life of people in their daily lives. "Interpersonal Communication refers to one of the most important functions of language. It is what one uses with either spoken or written words as the basis to form and maintain personal relationships with others"(http://elearndesign.org/teachspecialed/modules/ocada7081_norm2/15/glossary/glossary.html).

Activity in interpersonal communication meets three major criteria according to Tubbs and Moss (1981). The first one is *"all parties are in close proximity",* which means since usual interpersonal communication is mostly face to face that is why the distance has a significant effect on the meaning of the message. Usually, there is not considerable distance between two people when they start to communicate with each other, certainly when the distance increases it makes their meaning which they share with each other more complex. The second is *"all parties send and receive message".* For example, when two friends sit in a bar together or two co-workers in their

office or a couple when they dance together, etc. This entire situation is exchanging meaning by a sender and receiver. This sending and receiving is not something that will stop at any moment of situations even if they are silent. "Feedback" is important in sending and receiving messages. The last criterion is *"these messages include both verbal and nonverbal stimuli".* Verbal and non-verbal stimuli support each other and sometimes they do not support each other. Non-verbal stimuli means things like dressing, gestures, expressing feelings, eye contact etc. When we have interpersonal communication, gesture of body such eye contact is one of the key rules in sending message to each other (Tubbs&Moss, 1981, pp.5-7).

Wood (2010) lists the characteristics of interpersonal communication as being: "Selective", "Systemic", "Unique", "Ongoing process", "Individual", "Transactional", "Personal knowledge" and "Meaning Creating". "Selective" means that we do not choose everyone to make interpersonal communication. In other words, try to have interpersonal communication with 'selected 'people which makes us more comfortable with them. The second characteristic is being "systemic". It is take place in as system for example, if a person says to someone "I want you to know how much I care about you" then this sentence will get meaning for them by their system such as "situation", " cultural values", "relationship between them", "social class" and "belief". Every person in the world has a unique character and it happens ones which means interpersonal communication is "Unique". For instance, with a close friend, we would like to share our secrets. On the other hand, when two people share a secret, their relationship could be a different with each other from other people.

Interpersonal communication is a never-ending process. In other words, is an "ongoing process". It is affected from the past, present and future. "All our communication occurs in three temporal dimensions: Past, which affects what, happens now; present, which reflects the past and sets the stage for the future; and future, which is modeled by what occurs in this moment and past ones"(Dixson& Duck,1993; Wood, 2006a).For example, your relation with your parents in the past could not be compared to the one that is in the present or future. No doubt that they always will be called as "Your parents" but the process of our relation is always ongoing even if we have different character in different age. "Transactional" is another characteristic of interpersonal communication. It will always be called feedback because of being "transactional". For instance, when you are talking to someone he or she will smile or even misunderstand but generally they will give the feedback as the receiver. "The transactional nature of interpersonal communication implies that communicators share responsibility for effectiveness"(Wood, 2010, p.24).

When we start to share a secret with each other or building trust in the relationship with someone, this is because of "Personal Knowledge". When

humans communicate with each other, they try to learn something from each other that guide the relationship in the way they want. The last and another important feature of interpersonal of communication is "meaning Creating". The heart of interpersonal communication is shared meaning between people"(Duck, 1994a, 1994b). People communicate with each other in order to understand each other. In interpersonal communication, meaning is created at two levels. The first level is "content meaning" and the second is "relationship meaning" (Rogers, 2008; Watzlawick, Beavin& Jackson, 1967). Content meaning is figured out with denotative meaning (Wood, 2010, p.25). For example, if someone says "Get out of my room", the meaning for this sentence will be according to content meaning to go out of his or her room immediately. The "relationship meaning" is creating the meaning which arises from the relationship between communicators (Wood, 2010).In this case if someone says: "Get out of my room", does s/he have right to order that person or not? To become clearer, the "relationship meaning" should be recognized in three dimensions that Wood (2010) mentions about. The first dimension is "responsiveness", which makes the situation for communicator know how to get involved with each other."Higher responsiveness is communicated by eye contact, nodding, and feedback that indicate involvement" (Richmond &McCroskey, 2000, p. 67,pp. 85-95).

"Liking" is the second one of "relationship meaning" dimensions. It depends on positive and negative feelings that happen between two people who communicate with each other. The last dimension is "power" and it is important one. According to the previous example, if someone says "Get out of my room", who has power and control? Dosehe or she has family member relationship or boss in job or little brother or sister whom play in their room! According, to this example, the person who says "Get out of my room" has the power (Wood, 2010, p.26).

Models of Interpersonal Communication

"A model is a representation of what something is and how is working" (Wood, 2010, p.16).Wood (2010) mentions three models of interpersonal communication. The first is "Linear Model", the second one is "Interactive Model" and the third is "Transactional Model".

1. Linear Model

"Linear model" is the first model of interpersonal communication that is described by Laswell (1953). The first model is one-way view of communication. For example, when you are reading this study, it will be one-way and the message

is sent from the writer to the reader. Laswellputs forward five questions. The questions are: "Who Says What, In Which Channel, To Whom, With What Effect". It is called "5Ws" of communication (Laswell, 1953).

FIGURE 1.1 Laswell Model

(http://communicationtheory.org/lasswells-model/comment-page-1/)
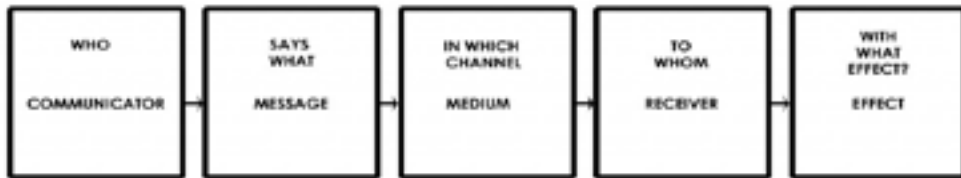
The advantage of this model is simplicity and easiness which makesit clear to understand. It is a type of model that can be used in any type of communication model as well which shows the concept of effect. But this model has disadvantages as well. It does not show feedback and noise. Without feedback, we will not be able to understand how strong communication is. In other words, it could not be called real communication without feedback. Noise can be anything that will lead to lose information of the message that is send by the sender. Anything which makes the communication between communicator hard will be noise as well. One year later, in 1949, Claude Shanon and Warrern Waver changed the model of the liner communication model by adding "Noise" to it.

FIGURE 1.2 The Claude Shanon and Warrern Waver Model

(http://www.indiaprblog.com/2007/12/future-pr-communication-models.html)
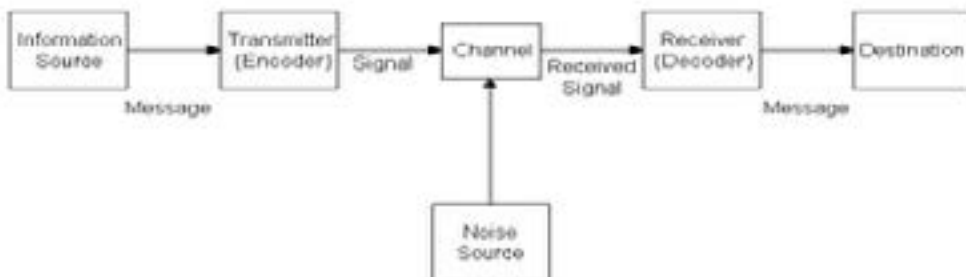
There are four types of noise; the first is "Physical noise". For instance, when people sit together in bar and the loud music plays. This is the physical noise. The second

is "physiological noise" which is "Direction caused by hunger, fatigue, medications and other factor that affect how we feel and think"(Wood, 2010, p.22). In other words, biological factors affect communication. The third is "psychological noise". It is related to biases, prejudice and feelings that communicators have towards each other. When someone speaks in another language, according to another person it bothers him or her, and then what in experienced is"Psychological noise". The last category of noise is "Semantic noise"; semantic noise is the confusion occurs why a sender and receiver apply different meaning to the message. As an example, when one person from England and one person from Iran speak English with each other, it can be misunderstood because of the accent of the language. English is the native language for person from England and second language for the other person (West&Turner, 2006, pp.13-14).Noise can have an impact on eye contact during communication. Later, context is added to the linear model. The context means the environment that message is sent from a sender to a receiver. The context can be: "historical context", "social-emotional context", "culture context" and "physical context" (West & Turner, 2006, pp.14-15).

2. Interactive Model

Feedback is one the most important facts in communication which is a respond to the sender's message. "Interactive model" is the second model of interpersonal communication. "The interactional conception goes beyond a linear model to a more complex way of thinking about communication"(Tubbs, Moss, 1981, p.9). It gives opportunity to the communicator for two-way exchanges. The sender becomes the receiver and the receiver becomes the sender; each of them exchanges meaning with each other all the time. This model changes in time and becomes stronger for saving the basic meanings which is sent by the sender. For example when two co-workers work with each other in the same room after one month they become more successful in understanding each other (Schramm, 1954, pp. 3-26).

FIGURE 1.3 Interactive Model
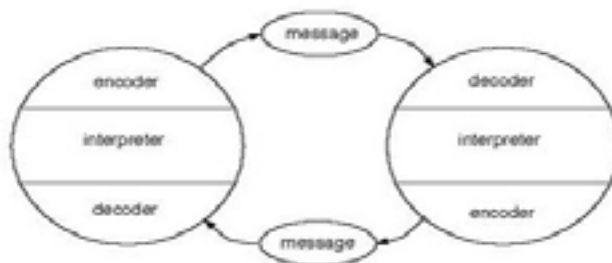
(http://corporatecommunications-divya.blogspot.com/2007_07_01_archive.html)

Sellnow (2005), the author of "Confident Public Speaking", believe that interactive model can also account for internal and external interferences. Internal interferences are "*any distraction that originates in the thought of either participant*" (Sellnow, *2005*, p.11). For instance, when two people chat with each other and one of them know another person has psychological problems and creates distraction in the mind of him/her this will be "internal interferences". External interferences are "any distraction that originates in the communication situation" (Sellnow, 2005, p.11). In the previous example for internal interferences, if a phone rings or TV's volume is high during the chat of two people and these will affect the interaction communication as "external interferences". Culture, context and feedback are the basic factors in interactive model. Yet there are disadvantage for this model. The first is, it does not mention "noise". The second is, it is just between two sources. If more than two parties send and receive message at the same time, then, this model will not be suitable for explaining the communication.

3. Transactional Model

It embraces all elements from the interactional model of communication and gathers all of them together. It gives opportunity for more than two parties' in communication. In this model one can find all elements of communication. Barnlund (1970) created transactional model. Barnlund (1970) introduces this model with six characters the first is **"continues"** which means it never finishes and it is not a static activity. The second is **"dynamic";** it is always changing as the sender and receiver change their positions. It is **"circular"** as the third characteristic. It makes turning like circular between encoder and coding. In other words, sender and receiver change their places. The fourth is **"irreversible"**, which means the message cannot disappear. The fifth one is **"unrepeatable".** It will be unique the result of this model. The last **"complex"** that shows all factors that affect communication like culture, language, power and relationship. The Transaction Model is a model that sees communication or negotiation of meaning in two or more other parties responding to their environment and other factors which effect the communication between the people (Mohan, T., McGregor, H., Saunders, S., Archee, R., 2008, pp.25).

Non-Verbal Communication

"The non-verbal part of communication is the aspect of the communication process which deals with the transmission of signs that are not part of nature language system"(Rubenstein, 1973, p.p 27-48).

Non-verbal communication means all aspects of communication except words. It does not mean only body language and gesture because non-verbal communication is based on physical aspects of communication. Usually this kind of communication is used to express feelings to other people to get a message. Non-verbal communication is another language, in which message is sent without using words as voice, in another word Non-verbal communication is everything excluding not word or less word (Guerrero & Floyd, 2006).

Verbal communication developed among the first human beings with signals, icons; gestures, facial expression, cry and grew as a language of verbal symbols, building on words and simple sentences. Parallel with verbal communication, non-verbal communication remains as an important part of communication. There are different types of non-verbal communication; the oldest one is bodily signals like emotions, feeling, and mood that format important part of human language. Joy, anger, fear, surprise, disappointment, and other types of non-verbal we still use. Non-verbal communication includes dance and music as well as imitative arts such as miming, drawing, painting, sculpture and architecture. This kind of art is seen to be as old as man. Non-verbal arts are still used to communicate meaning and sometimes are more powerful than verbal communication. Man has developed three formal languages as very powerful non-verbal communication that is: logic, mathematics, and statistics, used to present and analyze qualitative and quantitative and probalistic phenomena (Rosengren, 2000, p.38-40). Prof. Roger Brown explains non-verbal communication that is communication by facial expression, hands, feet, body and vocal quality and do communicate information inequality and connected with personal relationship. Non-verbal channel is more informative than the verbal (Brown, 1986, p.521).

Similarities and Differences
of Non-Verbal and Verbal Communication

According to Wood (2010), non-verbal communication has four common characteristics. These are "symbolic", "rule-guided", "unconscious" and "reflected by culture". Similar to verbal communication, firstly it is "symbolic", which means it uses symbols to represents other things, to explain different kind of situation. "Lowering our eyes" is an example for non-verbal communication. The second one is "Rule-Guided", which means it has rules when someone shares something, like hand shake with another person at the beginning and in the end of the meeting that is got general understanding in many countries. When someone gets dressed carefully for job interview, this can be something unconscious. This it can be a reason without planned in their mind that why

we should wear professional outfits for job interviews. Verbal and non-verbal communication has "unconscious" as a third similarity characteristic. The last common similarity is "reflecting by culture". Both verbal and non-verbal communications are shaped by cultural ideas, values, customs and history (Andersen, Hecht, Hoobler, & Small-Wood, 2002; Emmons, 1998).

Wood (2010) distinguishes verbal and non-verbal communication in three aspects. The first is non-verbal communication is more trusted than the verbal communication, in other words, non-verbal is more reliable than verbal. Anderson (1999) believes this is the major difference between them. Non-verbal is more successful in expressing feelings (Anderson, 1999).It is clear when non-verbal and verbal messages are in contradiction with each other. For instance, when someone says "I love you" and receiver could not decode message in the same way that message is decoded according to non-verbal. Maybe s/he is not successful in using the right "eye contact" when s/he says "I love you", but it shows that non-verbal complete verbal message.

The second difference is about channel. Non-verbal communications is multichannel but verbal is single channeled. When someone uses "Eye Contact" and smiling on his/her face, it shows message sending from two different channels. Multichannel gives opportunity for sending message more strong and clear for decoding the meaning in right section.

The last difference is non-verbal communication is a continuous process. Opposite verbal communication, which has a starting and ending, non-verbal communication never ends. When a person says something or writes something then it starts and end, but facial expression which is a form of non-verbal communication continues and never finishes.

Types of Non-verbal Communication

According to Ting-Toomey (1999) non-verbal communication is divided in to six categories. These are: "Haptics", "Chronemics", "Paralanguage" , "Proxemics", "Kinesics" and "Oculesics" (Ting-Toomey, S, 1999).

"Haptics" is the study of how people use touch in their daily lives related to their communication. "Haptic is relating to the sense of touch in all its forms including those"(Paterson, M, 2007, P.9). There are different types of touches in different communication like professional touch, social touch and etc. "Chronemics" is how we understand and usethe time in action and inter-action like females being late for date on purpose. In some cultures, time has great value and in some cultures, it is the opposite. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) believe that the time is highly valued in North America (Lakoff, G., &Johonson, M. 1980).

Using vocal for whispering, accent, pronunciation and volume of voice without considering the words, is called "Paralanguage". "Paralanguage is made of sounds that sometimes do not have a written form (e.g., uh-huh means Yes or I'm listening to you)" (http://www.esl-lab.com/para.htm).

"Proxemics" is related to the space and how we use the space around us (Hall, 1968,p.9, 83-108). In every culture people use space differently based on their relationships and situation according to their culture. For instance, Andersen gives an example in American culture. He points out that the child has a separate room and later, usually they have their individual office or at least an individual space for their work (Andersen, 2003, pp.239-252). The relation and type of reaction of two people towards other necessitates decisions to arrange their space (Sommer, 2002, "Personal space in a digital age" pp.647-660). For instance, sometimes people present themselves to each other face to face or side by side or back to back but all of them depend on the relation between two people.

The study of how people use their bodies and their faces is "Kinesics".It is "Body position and body motions, including those of the face"(J. T. Wood, 2010, p.333).   It includes gestures and facial expressions. In other words, it is about the whole of body study in communication. In different cultures, different meanings are attached to gestures and body language. Showing thumb finger in American and Western culture gives positive meaning but in Iran it gives the opposite meaning. In North America rolling thumb with finger means "Ok"; in Russia it means "Zero"; in Japan, it means "Money"; and in France it means "worthless". "Oculesics" is the last character that is mentioned in this section. It means the study of eye contact in communication. Eyes are the most important tools which is using in communication process (Richmond&MacCrosky, 2003).

Eye Contact

"Body language may tell you something about prospects response to your sales pitch, but eye language will tell you a lot more" (Konopacki, p.1, http://www.nlpinfocentre.com/nlpebooks/Eye%20Contact.pdf).

Oculesics is known as the study of the role of eye behavior which includes eye movement and pupil's reaction. In other words, it is the study of eye contact (Tubbs, Moss, 1981, p.174).

FIGURE 1.6 Eye Contact

(http://www.eyescontactlenses.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/eye-contact.jpg)
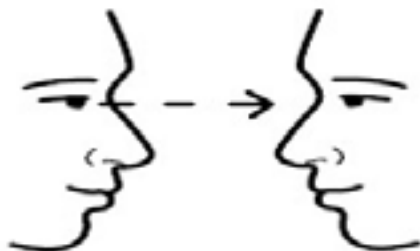
"Eye contact is a natural experience of face-to-face communication" (M.Argely&M.Cook, 1976). There are two types of definitions about it. The first is a noun, which means "When two people look at each other's eyes at the same time" (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, Retrieved May 14, 2006).Another meaning from Psychology is "a meeting of the eyes of two persons, regarded as a meaningful nonverbal form of communication"(http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/eye %20contact?fromAsk=true&o=100074).

Eye contact has two aspects; negative and positive. For example, when an engaged couple looks at each other, this is positive. On other hand, when parents teach their children not to stare at others (Hickson III/stacks, 1985), this is negative.

Ellsberg (2010) believes that dance is divided into two parts. The first, dance between the body motion and the second the dance between the eyes. If the dancer is a female, has all the techniques in dancing, but does not have good eye contact, it will give the dance a feeling of dead. But if the quality of her eye contact is good, it can create soulful, deep and joyful dance (Ellsberg, 2010, p. xxii). As Dr. Allen Konopacki argues quantity of eye contact is not important but the quality is important, this is important because a wrong type of eye contact may cause problems. Eye contact is a very social, almost intimate type of interaction. Argyle and Dean (1965, p.289) argue that without eye contact, people do not feel that they are fully engaged in communication.

Browning and Porter (2007) examine effective teaching behaviors including eye contact behavior. Browning and Porter find out that eye contact is an important component of effective instruction (p. 64). Browning and Porter argue that "Eye contact behavior in preservice music teachers was chosen for a variety of reasons. Firstly, eye contact is a simple behavior and provides positive feedback. Secondly, eye contact is an instructional behavior that is, entirely under the control of the instructor, and not dependent on the cooperation of the ensemble members. Thirdly, eye contact can be purposeful yet, unlike other instructional behaviors,

the act of changing eye gaze requires minimal instruction. "Lastly, poor eye contact behavior is a frequent occurrence during student teaching" (p. 65). In their research for collecting data Browning and Porter made two broad domains of eye contact: eye contact during student performance and eye contact during teacher instruction (p. 65). According to Milton Chen (2002), eye contact is natural and often essential element in the language of visual communication.

When people talk and have an eye contact with each other, it is a signal of listening to each other. Peters, Pelachaud, Bevacqua, Mancini and Poggi (2005) argue that through the evaluation of the level of interest, the speaker can perceive the effectiveness of the conversation and decide if it is high enough to maintain the interaction with the listener or if he should close it(p. 7). Moreover, the more people share looking behaviors, the more they are involved and coordinate the conversation. This may not necessarily involve mutual eye contact with the speaker in shared attention situations; where there is another object or entity, the listener may actually signal his/her interest in the situation by directing his/her attention away from the Speaker and at the object in question. Gaze is an especially important way of providing feedback and subtle signaling (Peters, Pelachaud, Bevacqua, Mancini and Poggi, 2005, P.7). An effect of Listener's lower level of interest in the conversation may be to put the speaker in a negative emotional state. Distractors could be applied such as making a strange noise, not gazing in a direction when expected (Peters, Pelachaud, Bevacqua, Mancini and Poggi, 2005, P.11). Catherin Lord (1974) argues that eye contact may be more important to the behavior and attitudes of the sender or initiator than to the receiver (p. 116).

According to M. Argyle and J. Dean (1965), there is more eye contact when people are listening than speaking. Especially when the discussed topic is not personal and intimates there is more eye contact from the person. They have found that women have more eye contact than men in a variety of situations (p. 289-304). Ekman (2010) as revolutionary psychologist believes that eye contact is a simple signal for attention and when people pay attention it means that they simply care for us. Eye contact is "a wholly new and unique union between two people represents the most perfect reciprocity in the entire field of human relationship" (Simmel, 1921). Feelings can be identified from eye contact. There are lots of feelings that are shared between two people such as anger, fear, surprise, happiness and etc. Argyle and Dean (1965) argue that eye contact can have a variety of subjective meanings-such as friendship, sexual attraction, hate and a struggle for dominance. They consider these subjective meanings as the main functions which eye contact may serve (p. 291). Ekman in the book "the power of eye contact" believes that most information, which is received from eyes, comes from change in aperture (p. 8-10). This information is a result of the four muscles around the eyes. Ekman mention in his interview with Ellsberg that "anger is upper eyelid is raised and

brow is lowered" and happiness has some eye signals as well (Ellseberg, 2010). According to Dr. Allen Konopacki" understanding eye contact is not difficult is just a matter of keeping an eye out for certain cues" (http://www.nlpinfocentre.com/ nlpebooks/Eye%20Contact.pdf "Making of eye contact" p.1). "Theeyes have one language everywhere" George Hebert says (1593-1633) (http://www.rightwords. eu/quotes/search/eyes/3). Hebert argues that eyes have one language everywhere, but if we talk about the eye contact in different cultures, it will be revealed that an eye does not have one language. As it has been mentioned earlier the meaning of eye contact in different cultures can be different as well. A directly eye contact with someone, in different cultures means different like offending, respect, agree, etc. Moreover, the duration of eye contact is important because in some cultures it shows that you are a rude person, it makes you a suspicious person or you should be careful.

To communicate with eyes, with people from different cultures, we have to study their cultures in order to avoid misunderstandings. Meaning of contact change from culture to culture, from different religion and from social differences as well.

Jim Johannasen (2010) as a writer and Rebecca Scudder (2009) as an editor wrote two articles about the eye contact in different cultures, in both their writings, we found similar meanings of eye contact used in different cultures. In America, a good eye contact with the person that you are talking with makes you a trustworthy person with self confidence and a positive one. When you create a low eye contact, this makes you suspicions and negative person. In Mexico when you look more than normal, too long eye contact, this makes the other think that you are a suspicions person. In Europe, looking at someone's eye while talking is a sign of respect for that person. In England, too long eye contact than normal makes people uncomfortable. When we talk about Islamic faith, young and adult Muslims are not allowed to see at the opposite sex's eye. This is a rule to make people to avoid unwanted desire, but when people from same sex looks at each other's eye gives the meaning of 'trust me'. However, they can look at teacher in class or at a female when they will get married. Different from Asia, Africa and Latin America, people like children with parents, students with teacher, inferior and superior, do not create eye contact as a sign of respect (Johannasen, J. (2010). *Eye Contact in Different Cultures.*http://EzineArticles.com/4079251. , H., R. (2011, May 19). *Eye Contact: What Does it Communicate in Various Cultures?* (R. Scudder, Ed.).This is more emphasized when that person is superior to you.

Geri Ann argues about it in many Asian countries with different cultures and attitudes that men are superior to women or teachers to students and parents to children superiority and so forth, which makes them, feel that looking directly at someone's eye is disrespectful. In Nigeria eye contact is avoided as a sign of respect.

According to Galanti (2008) in Middle Eastern countries eye contact between male and female should be avoided because it is interpreted as a sexual invitation. Thomas and Inkon are authors who believe that "a further complication is the fact that most cultures have different conventions about eye contact depending on the gender, status, and so on of those involved" (Thomas and Inkson, 2009). Although culture is one of major tools in eye contact behavior but, facial expression is playing the main role as well to decode eye contact.

Eye contact has an influence on brain activity (McCarthy, Lee, Itakura, Muir 2009). Eye contact modulates the development and activation of the social brain network, Atsushi Senju and Mark H. Johnson (2008), talk about social cognitive theory in relation with eye contact effects in brain activity. According to the authors: 'the eye contact effect is defined as the phenomenon that perceived eye contact modulates the concurrent and/or immediately following cognitive processing and/or behavioral response' (p. 127). Moreover, it is found that direct gaze affect the brain activity but it is slower than the way how the averted gaze affects it. Eye contact directly activates brain arousal system. Senju and Johnson (2008) have found two different effects of eye contact; autonomic arousal and emotional arousal. Autonomic arousal is an eye contact effect caused from a stranger's direct gaze and emotional arousal is related with facial expression and attractiveness it is related more with psychology of people (Atsushi Senju and Mark H. Johnson, 2008, p.127-134).

In eye contact and eye gaze not only social interaction, daily life, but normal communication can also be affected. Even technology plays a role in eye contact and eye gaze. Fullwood and Sneddon (2006) talk about video-mediated communication, which is used in video conferencing, distance learning, interviews, meetings. Video mediated communications are used apparatus that support gaze awareness, if the person looks directly into the camera and gives the impression that the participant is gazing in the direction of their eyes (p. 168). This kind of strategy is used in television as well "presenters give the impression that they are talking to the audience, by focusing attention at the monitor not at the camera" (p. 168). Mutual gaze comes if the users look directly into the camera. According to Fullwood and Sneddon (2006) it is also possible that the perception of gaze aversion (a consequence of the confederate not looking into the camera) had a negative impact upon memory performance (p. 171).

Conclusion

As it has been mentioned above data for the present research was collected from three different sources. The first one is semi-structured interviews where

twelve people participated; six of them are males and six of them females. They have different ages from 21-30 years. All of the participants are from different countries like Iran, Albania, Turkey, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Nigeria and Cameroon. However, all of them have something in common with each other. All of them are students of the Eastern Mediterranean University; all of them live in Famagusta in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. However they are students of different departments like Public Relations and Advertising, Astrophysics, Visual Arts, Master in Banking and Finance, Master of Arts in Communication and Media Studies. Moreover, they are people that are used to living a life in Famagusta that is different from their lives in their own countries. In Famagusta know each other. Famagusta is a city that you live a life as if you are a member of the community.

The second one is focus group interviews. Ten people participated in these interviews: Five of them are male and five are female, with ages ranging from 19-29 years. These groups of participants were different from the first group. All these students are from different cities of Turkey. They all have different backgrounds with different cultures and attitudes and their different ages makes them to look at life differently. For example, a student who lives here for more than two years behaves differently from the one who just arrived in Cyprus. Also,Turkey is a multicultural country because of Ottoman Empire who was ruling Balkan and Anatolia for more than 200 years. For this reason the people from Balkan and Anatolia kept their culture and tradition no matter where they live. For instance, Izmir is a big city but the origins of their ancestors go back to Bulgaria, Hungary, Albania, Kosova, Cekrez, etc. Izmir is so different that some Turkish people believe that it is not a part of Turkey. The people kept their culture and tradition in a way that they influenced the Turkish people as well. However, Turkey is a country which is surrounded by Europe, Asia, Balkan, etc. The third and the last one is field notes based on the researchers observations. In other words during the study the researcher kept field notes about the eye contact.

Methodological data triangulation is done and findings of the study are summarized below in order to answer research question. The first two research questions are:

> 0-2) Do males establish eye contact with females easily and do females establish eye contact with males easily?

The findings of the study suggest that, there is gender difference in establishing eye contact with the opposite sex. According to the data, females can establish eye contact easier than males but males can keep eye contact for longer time. Eye

contact shows more negative feelings than positive feelings. Females as participants in both semi-structured interviews and focus group strongly agree with negative feelings that they receive from eye contact. For the same sex, relationship is important and has direct affect to establish eye contact. They are not comfortable to establish eye contact with strangers from the opposite sex and the same sex. In addition, characteristics of person and his/her cultural background is important in establishing eye contact.

According to the answers, they decode eye contact differently. This happens because of culture, tradition and character of the person who is decoding. Gender affects the understanding of eye contacts meaning. Also, males and females learn these meanings by experience and sharing the meaning with each other. As the time passes and they have more experience about the meaning of eye contact, it becomes more common among males and females. This does not mean that the same sex understands all the feelings expressed through eye contact. Even some people from the same sex do not establish eye contact except they have relationship with each other like co-worker, friend, couple, etc.

3-4) Do males think females are interested in them socially or personally when they are looked at and do females think males are interested in them socially or personally when they are looked at?

The data suggest that there is differentiating a social interest from personal interest on the person's character and background. Females make different eye contact from males. They do not mention any special reason that helps them to read eye contact differently but they mention culture and background of the person. Moreover, the place where they gather plays an important role for eye contact. However, participants maintain that they are more interested in him/her as a sociable person. The females maintain that males are interested in them in their social lives; but on the other side, males explain that they are interested in the given personally. They explain that the relationship between the people and the eye contact created with each other depend on their character, culture and relationship.

4-6) Do males/females from different nationalities differ in establishing eye contact with the opposite sex and do males/females from different nationalities differ in decoding eye contact with opposite sex?

Out of three data collection techniques used for the study, 'culture' is agreed as the common denominator that has effect on establishing or decoding eye contact. Because of culture, eye contact language can change from one place to another

place. Culture affects the eye contact directly and can give different meaning because of different cultures. Participants from different nationalities indicate that there are some similarities and differences for decoding and getting meaning from eye contact. Scientist such as Johannasen (2010) and Scudder (2009) believe in the difference of eye contact in different cultures as well. As a result nationality background and culture has direct influence in eye contact this is based on the way how it is used and the duration of eye contact that takes up a variety of meaning in different cultures.

> 7-8-9) Does the context (bar, university cafes, house gathering, etc) where the eye contact takes place influence the decoding of eye contact and do males and females decode eye contact used in dancing, bars or public area differently?

When people talk and have an eye contact with each other, it is a signal of listening to each other according to researchers who are mentioned above like Pelachaud, Bevacqua, Mancini and Poggi (2005). Facial expression that humans understand from such as eye contact depends on many factors for judging those feelings. If someone has the same eye contact, in the same duration and position but in different places and environments, the meaning that is created can be totally different from each other. Places like bars where eye contact is established and decoded can give different meaning to the eye contact than in classroom. Participants mention a number of factors like music and alcohol that play role in giving different meanings to eye contact. They further mention that meaning given to the eye contact change from place to place based on these factors.

> 10) Do males and females decode eye contact used in media differently?

Understanding the data collected from participants suggest that, there is a difference in establishing and decoding eye contact in media. There are three reasons that decoding eye contact take place in the media directly affects understanding from eye contact. The findings suggest that the first is background and culture of the media text, the second is the bridge between the media text and the audience; and the third one is the background and culture of the audience.

In summary, the three data collection techniques used for the present study reveal that eye contact is a personal body language. Establishing eye contact changes from place to place; in other words, according to the context like bars, university cafés, restaurants, house gatherings, etc. Females can establish easy eye contact with males. Culture, media, context, relationship, etc are important factors as well in the way how eye contact is established and decoded by people. Participants agree that eye contact is introduced as the bridge of creating relationship and

flirting between people. It has a very important role to show if s/he is interested in someone. Eyes can be success director when two people dance with each other; in other words, eyes can lead other parts of body to make dance a success. It is the source of energy.

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Analysis on the use of different techniques based on three learning styles: visual, listening, and kinesthetic _

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Abstract

This article seeks to provide data on how well the learning styles are known and how they are used in teaching methods and techniques by teachers as well as how much student learning styles are identified, a factor that leads to motivation, development of knowledge, skills and building student attitudes or improving attained results. One of the characteristics of learning related with the observation, processing and transmission of information in different ways coincides with the learning styles utilized by the student and that is identified and should be used by teachers. Their identification leads to a quality learning, which motivates every student to have positive academic and artistic achievements. The article undertakes to bring a qualitative descriptive research, where the subjects are teachers and students of the Figurative Arts and Music Department of the Jordan Misja High Art School. To validate the conclusions of this article, two questionnaires were developed and employed, which were completed by research subjects (about 100 students and 25 school teachers). Responses obtained through questionnaires validated the results obtained and the analysis performed shed light on the deficient knowledge of the teachers regarding the three learning styles. An interpretation of the responses reveals that 32.5% of teachers employ the most evident styles including other teaching techniques. Responses received through student questionnaires and interpretations made from the results of the analysis show the three styles including: a) listening learning style (62.5%), b)

visual learning style (37.5%), and c) kinesthetic style (0.70%). In conclusion, the article highlights the need to know the characteristics of the learning styles, the basis for improving student achievement as well as the quality of teaching by the using diverse teaching techniques.

Keywords: *Learning styles, characteristics of learning styles, teaching techniques, motivation, positive achievement*

Introduction

The changes that occur in today's society bring new needs and relationships in society, but also in the labor market, technological innovation, new human aspirations, new strategies for development, etc. (Curriculum Framework, 2014)[1]. Based on this quote where many different ideas and approaches are related to the learning process emphasize the active role of students in building new knowledge, developing skills and using them throughout life. They are school institutions that help students acquire and acquire the skills, tools and processes needed to become more agile in learning and to use existing knowledge to help them acquire new knowledge. (O.C.Allan, Hunkins.P.Francis 2003)[2]. Only in this way, students will be able to structure and organize knowledge, skills, values and attitudes, enabling their use during the learning process. This obviously requires changing the role of teachers by being more creative in the development of the process, placing the learner at the center and recognizing, adapting and using different learning styles, which should be based on different teaching strategies and methods.

Knowing and using learning styles helps the teacher to identify and highlight different ways of learning students. Also, identifying learning styles and developing them through different teaching methods and techniques would motivate them to achieve their expectations. There are many ways of learning, because what works for one student is not always effective for another, as the ways of learning and the patterns of thinking (which are partly related to sex, class, culture and intelligence, etc.).) are numerous and varied. Thinking patterns help in dealing with issues or problem solving, models that require skills that match a different style of learning, which has to do with how they receive, process and remember information received or even the way how they develop it in another situation.

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[1] Curriculum Framework of Pre-University Education of Albania IZHA, 2014.
[2] O.C.Allan, Hunkins.P.Francis. "Curricula, foundations, principles and issues". ISP, Mother Theresa Publishing House 2003.

Teachers are an inexhaustible resource in enriching the ideas and materials they use with their students, offering different alternatives and ways of mastering knowledge and learning. The planning of the teaching work and the teaching process is a phase which seeks to give the right knowledge to the students, to encourage and motivate them to be close to their needs, interests through learning styles. The learning process will be successful if the students are motivated and where each student learns in a certain way or known in the pedagogical literature as learning styles. Some students learn through perception, others learn by analyzing or reflecting, some through seeing and hearing, some learn alone, others learn in groups, some learn the whole learning content, while others break it down into smaller pieces. logic.

In addition to the above definitions for learning, there are teachers who when using strategies and techniques in the learning process, highlight their art and mastery, but also implement through learning styles different teaching techniques by approximating and combining styles of groups of students in their class. In order to achieve success in the learning process, the teacher must apply the learning styles, knowing in advance the ways in which students learn, the basis for planning the teaching work, the compatibility of learning styles and the use of teaching methods or techniques teaching depending on the styles used.

Theoretical framework

According to researchers, the classroom learning process is permeated by five elements that can contribute to student motivation which are student, teacher, content, methodology and environment (Williams and Williams, 2011)[3]. During this process we notice how the information is distributed in the classroom and how the same information given is then related to the students. The way of giving and receiving this information that is used continuously and regularly, and that is used to communicate with students during the learning process is called 'Teaching style' (Grasha, 1996)[4]. Learning styles are created by referring to multiple theories that seek to validate their responses on different learning in different persons. Various researchers have defined learning styles as cognitive, emotional, and psychological traits of students when they interact in the classroom environment. Students with different styles try to solve problems in different ways. Studies have proven that each of us has our own learning style, style or way to receive process, remember and apply information as easily as

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[3] Williams, K., & Williams, C. (2011). Five key ingredients for improving motivation. Research in Higher Education Journal, 11.http://aabri.com/manuscripts/11834.pdf

[4] Grasha, A. F.. & Reichmann H. (1996). Teaching Style Inventory (Survey). Accessible from http:// longleaf.net/teachingstyle.html

possible. Every teacher should first identify in their classroom the learning styles that their students possess. Among the most dominant styles are the styles of visual learning or learning learn through what they see, auditory learn through what they hear and kinesthetically learn through movement and touch.

Learning styles by different authors are named as the ways through which data, knowledge, information is obtained which are acquired and processed by the student individually. Learning styles in themselves have the element of perception (seeing, hearing, touching), feeling, thinking (acting). Therefore each student has his own way of learning. It should always be borne in mind that the best learning is done when the student learns based on interests, needs, desires and without obligations and burdens. Learning is fruitful if speaking, talking, are associated with actions, exercises and working, acting, etc. (Willingham, 2005)[5]

Characteristics of learning styles

Some of our senses help to learn, store, remember and recall information. Eyes, ears, and the impact of touch play an important role in how each of us communicates, perceives, and makes connections with others. The way we perceive, perceive, listen and act influences collaboration and communication with those we identify with the same learning style. Each student's individual learning styles are different. Every student is not only inclined to one learning style, but may need to combine styles giving them the opportunity to unfold the skills they carry.

Visual learning style is when the student acquires the learning content through the sense of sight. In this case the lesson is concretized, using teaching tools such as: pictures, graphics, paintings, colors, illustrations, dvd (where the listening style is combined). Our brain processes visual information efficiently. Thus students find it easier to recall a vivid image as a photograph than to recall what someone said or wrote. (R. J. Sternberg, 1994)[6]. Learning through sight develops from activities organized by the teacher where students are required to focus on a) observing materials set to memorize or recall an event, an event, a certain situation in the context of the learning topic, b) observation of materials set out to stimulate discussion or to verify previously acquired knowledge.

Listening learning style is when the student assimilates the learning content better and easier through the sense of hearing. Learning by listening is developed by activities organized by the teacher where students are required to be involved in a) listening to literary, musical fragments, etc., stimulating conversations or

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[5] Willingham, D. T. (2005). Do Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic Learners Need Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic Instruction? *American Educator*

[6] RJ.Sternberg. (1994). Allowing for thinking styles. Education Leadership , pg. 36-40

discussions about the musical fragment they are listening to. Forms of work through listening or listening style , refers to listening to information, directing frequently asked questions or using discussion to clarify or understand the material provided. Listening style students are most successful when given the opportunity to hear information presented to them aloud. (E, E.M 1996)[7]. They choose not to keep notes and listen attentively, an action sometimes thought by teachers that they participate less than their classmates. (A, C. 1992)[8]

Students who have developed listening style are considered students who have success in group activities, where they discuss learning materials aloud with their classmates, while they benefit from reading their written work aloud. (Felder RM, 1988)[9].Another type of learning is the inclusion of physical movements during the learning moment. Students who are part of this learning style stand out as practical students participate in learning activities, but also play a physically active role in the learning process in order to achieve the best educational outcomes.

Kinesthetic learning style is when the student assimilates learning contents actively, acting, playing, writing, drawing, etc. These students are more successful if: They act according to the learning content, b) they use body parts, they use sign language. Through learning styles, students develop different tendencies and skills, for example: interaction in different games, or group activities, artistic performance, conversations related to the topic of the lesson, etc. All three of these styles harmonize and help each teacher plan a variety of learning activities, selecting different teaching techniques. The teaching methods and techniques that are selected to meet the learning styles in are numerous, and give each student the opportunity to display and develop the potential he / she possesses within himself / herself. Good organization of the learning process means that students are placed in concrete and practical situations, where they discover, understand, create and perform through the use of diverse artistic tools.

Methodology

The article undertakes to provide answers, not exhaustive, relying on the analysis of concrete data. The study included teachers of the School with Artistic Orientation and the 9-Year School "Misto Mame" in Tirana. The questionnaires aimed to collect data and information that were answered by about 100 students of different cycles and 25 teachers of different profiles of general culture (three Albanian language teachers, three citizen teachers, one mathematics teacher,

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[7] E, E. M. (1996). Understanding Second Language Learning Difficultie. American Education, 12-20

[8] A, C. (1992). Canfield Learning Styles Inventory Manual. Western Psychological Services, 10-13

[9] Felder RM, S. L. (1988). Learning and teaching styles in engineering education. Eng Educ, 34-54

one physical education, five primary education , a French) as well as teachers of artistic culture figurative art branch (two graphics, two paintings, a stone-wood carving, a photograph), music teachers (a piano, a violin, a canto, an accordion). The teaching experience of the surveyed teachers varies from 5 to 25 years of teaching. The study also takes into account over 100 teaching hours observed in this school. The results that emerged from this paper will help teachers better understand the teaching style they possess and use in their classrooms. They can change or improve their learning styles, which must be adapted through different teaching techniques, create a positive climate for the learning process and for students in the classroom. Also, this paper can serve as a starting point for a more extensive study of styles that can help more in motivating students, but also a diverse application of teaching techniques by adapting to students' learning styles. The research questions we asked to be answered through the interpretation of the questionnaires were:

1. *What is the style (s) of the teacher in the study?*
2. *What learning styles do they use in their classrooms, motivating students for the most positive results?*

The data were collected through two questionnaires for teachers and students. we categorize them into 3 teaching styles. The data that were collected were collected through a questionnaire, which was created online on the Free Online Surveys page and the period in which this questionnaire was active is October. The questionnaire was completed by volunteer teachers. The collected answers were turned into styles, then these styles were analyzed through descriptive analysis. After determining the style for each participant, descriptive analysis was used once again, dividing the number and percentage of these participants into the style to which they belonged.

This paper respected the principle of anonymity because the participants who became part of this paper remained unknown in terms of their identity data. It was also respected, ensuring that no personal information about them would be made public and they were informed that the questionnaire was only intended to reveal the teaching style they used in their classroom

Findings and results

The purpose of this paper was to determine the teaching style used by the teachers of the two schools taken in the study. When asked by teachers which style of learning they belong to, grouping them based on the profile or cycle
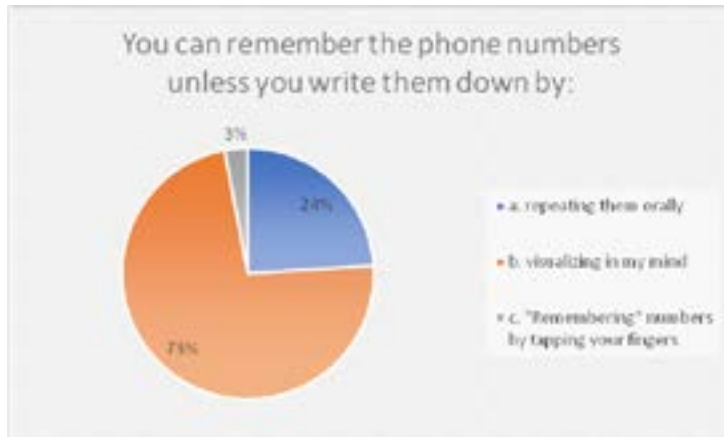
in which he / she works, it turns out that 8 teachers (32%) answered that they belong to the listening style, 14 teachers (56%) visual style and 3 teachers (12%) kinesthetic style. To the question where the most used style of learning with students is revealed in the subject that he / she gives 16 teachers (or 64%) answer that the listening style, then comes the visual style 9 teachers (36%) and none of the participants know nor do they use kinesthetic style. Development of diverse techniques, where teachers adapt teaching techniques based on learning style, 19 of them (or 76%) answer that they use different teaching techniques but not related to students' learning styles, 3 teachers (12%) think that they adapt the teaching techniques according to the learning style that they have identified in their generally auditory and visual classes, 3 participants (12%) did not answer the question.

Based on the survey developed with students of different cycles but also different musical and figurative profiles the answers are varied and quite interesting. These results showed that depending on the situations asked they mostly used the two styles of auditory and visual learning, for example, in the question "When explaining the lesson do you remember more when?" about 55% of students belong to the listening style, then about 24% are ranked visual style students

Another interesting question that about 73% of the respondents indicated that they prefer visual learning style. This data clearly shows us that depending on the subject, questions or learning situations, students function according to different styles.

You can remember the phone numbers unless you write them down by:

- a. repeating them orally
- b. visualizing in my mind
- c. "Remembering" numbers by tapping your fingers

The next question is how they solve different situations or problems, about 56% of students answer that the visual tools help them, so they are moreinclined to use visual learning style.

You usually solve problems by:

- a. talking to yourself or a friend
- b. using an organized, systematic approach with lists, schedules, etc.
- c. going at a pace or engaging in other physical activity

When trying to remember something you:

- a. try to visualize it in your mind
- b. hear/memorize it by audio
- c. recall your emotional reactions
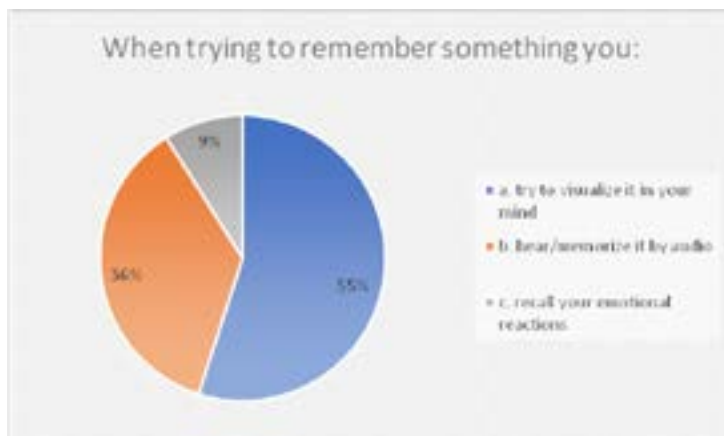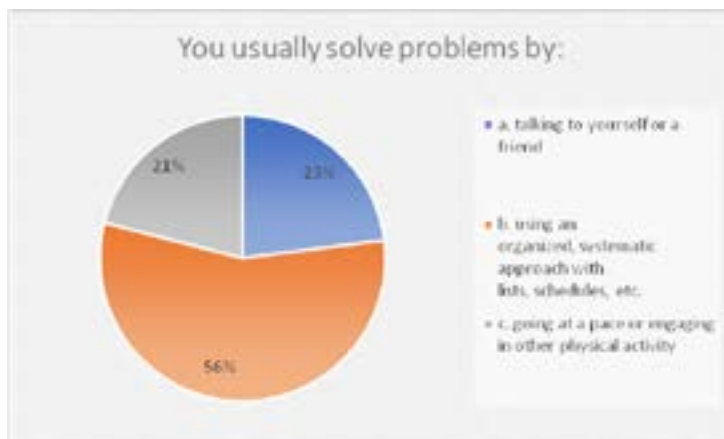
Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to determine the styles that the teachers possess who teach in different cycles and subjects of pre-university education, in two public schools "Misto Mame" and "Jordan Misja", Tirana. The results showed that 32.5% knew and identified learning styles not only in themselves but also in their students, where the visual learning style generally dominated. While 67.5% of participants were confused and failed to adapt teaching techniques in favor of learning styles. We answered the first research question by indicating that the main teaching style used by teachers was visual style. The second research question which asked whether they used or combined learning styles in their classrooms, motivating students for the most positive results. The results of the survey showed that about 67.5% of teachers were not clear about using teaching techniques conforming to learning styles for students in their class. This fact can serve as an argument for MES to provide training for teachers so that they are trained to develop knowledge about learning styles, their combination for students in the classes where they teach, making it more motivating for positive achievement through the use of different teaching techniques.

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The importance of physical education and classroom profiling in primary school

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_____ **Dorjan ISUFAJ** _____

_____ **Marjo SHABANAJ** _____

Abstract

The purpose of the study is that physical education and profiling is so important because it provides information to each individual of which they are not aware of, and determines which goal-oriented play activity leads to the improvement of motor skills. In this paper we aim to address the issue of physical education classes in school in the current European context to better understand different perspectives that are explained by cultural, economic, social, as well as by tradition. Deeply human physical education is a particularly complex activity that systematically capitalizes on all forms of physical exercise in order to primarily increase human biological potential in accordance with social requirements. Targeted biological potential includes effects in multiple planes: optimization of physical development, demand for large functions that support physical effort, and increased ability implications of effort, improvement of motor skills, etc. At the same time, the paper includes a sociological survey based on a questionnaire, from which we wanted to learn about the perception of teachers, about different specializations, about the importance of physical education in school, about the place, schedules, factors influencing the design and benefits of physical education classes. From the analysis of specialized literature, there has been a growing awareness of the importance of school physical education classes in our country, but it should be given even more attention. Over the last three decades, sport has become much more scientific. While our advanced physiological

and technical knowledge has produced great advances and physical performances unattainable before the biggest problem, today has become passivity. Therefore, every child should understand that physical activity not only improves health, but also gives him joy, socializes but also makes him more capable in daily life. The lesson includes theoretical and practical parts. Therefore profiling is an efficient and effective way to develop the skills of advanced children in sports because every child has a tendency and finds himself in a certain sport.

Keywords: *Physical Education, Motor Skills, Coordination, Balance*

Introduction

The problem of low physical activity of children and adolescents has never been less so than today. This is due to many factors, but the most common is the students' lifestyle for computer games and communication on social networks. The time that parents of modern children spent on outdoor games, the current younger generation sits at the computer. At the same time, the deficit of physical activity is so great that 2-3 lessons of physical education per week may seem like a drop in the ocean, unable to affect the physical development of school students. And if we recall even the most frequent tragic cases when we exceed the standards, then the question arises: why do we need physical education in school? Maybe it is better to exclude this subject from the school curriculum at all? Such a radical approach to solving this problem cannot be considered reasonable; it is equivalent to offering guillotine as a remedy for headaches. It is necessary not to exclude physical education, but to ensure that it brings maximum benefit and becomes an integral part of the lifestyle for children. This will require a fundamental change in the teaching of this vital subject. With the onset of school life, children's significant natural physical activity is very limited. Instead of outdoor games, they should sit for a long time, first in the classroom in the stuffy classrooms, and then at home, doing homework. Active movements during breaks between classes and weekends help to compensate for the damage from an extended stay in a static position. However, modern realities are such that most children in their spare time sit still, preferring passive leisure activities. The reason for the massiveness of this phenomenon is, first of all, insufficient parental control. Unfortunately, not all parents realize how strongly the physical development of children and adolescents depends on regular physical activity. Many parents prefer to watch their child at home on the computer rather than worry about his safety, letting him go play in the yard. Not everyone has the ability and desire to take children to sports sections. Malnutrition in children,

which leads to overweight, is also a major problem. This exacerbates their delay in physical development. But parents are not the only ones to blame for their children's physical weakness. Most of the blame lies with the school. Above all, the low level of physical culture of the majority of the population is a consequence of the attitude towards teaching this subject in schools. Parents who have learned since childhood that a lesson in physical culture is something trivial, secondary and to their children they will bring a contemptuous attitude towards "physical exercise". However, the primary value for a person - his health - cannot be trivial and secondary. Few people after graduation will need knowledge of integrals or chemical formulas, but awareness of the need for regular physical activity and the use of healthy living skills will help make each person's life healthier, longer and more fruitful.

To date, teaching physical education in school has many problems, these are:

- *Outdated teaching methods;*
- *Lack of professional, conscientious specialists;*
- *Insufficient funding*

If worrying about the health of the younger generation is not an empty phrase, then the problems of teaching physical education in schools should be resolved as soon as possible. Outdated programs and methods are one of the main problems of teaching physical education in school. With a minimum set of hours for physical education lessons in school, students are required to pass standards that few can meet. Presumably, it is assumed that school students should train themselves after school hours to improve their athletic performance. But this approach is utopian, especially given the current obsession among students for computers and the internet. The task of physical education should not be to assess the physical development of children, but this development itself. The requirement to pass the standards by untrained children does not bring any benefit, it can only cause harm to health, up to tragic cases, which, unfortunately, occur more often. The solution to this problem can be an individual approach to each child, taking into account his level of physical development. Classes should not cause overload and negative emotions; only in such conditions can positive dynamics be expected from them. It is not the students who should be compared to each other, but the achievements of each child compared to their past performance.

Given the lack of time allotted in the schedule for physical education classes, it is necessary to actively develop sports in school and to include students in school sports clubs, in optional classes. Sports sections are not available to everyone, moreover, sports aimed at achieving the highest results are not always

good for health. Optional physical education in schools can make an important contribution to the physical development and health of children.

The issue of professionals

Professionalism and a responsible attitude towards their work are important for all school teachers, and especially for physical education teachers. Above all, they are entrusted with the most precious thing - the health and life of children. Being passionate about their profession and the ability to arouse students' interest in physical education are valuable, but, unfortunately, rarely seen qualities. Lack of enthusiasm and a formal attitude towards work is characteristic of many school physical education teachers. One of the main reasons for this is the low salary and lack of prestige of the teaching profession. By increasing the salary of school physical education teachers to a decent level, it would be possible to attract good specialists in this profession and increase their interest in the results of their work.

Material basis

Today, most schools do not meet modern requirements in terms of its equipment. Most schools face the following problems due to lack of funding:

- *Lack of lockers in schools for storing sportswear;*
- *Lack of showers;*
- *Obsolete gym equipment;*
- *Lack of a variety of sports equipment*

Opportunities to introduce students to the various sports they may be interested in are often missed due to insufficient supply of sports equipment in schools. The availability of skis, skates, tennis rackets, kayaks and strength training equipment would significantly expand the circle of students who want to get involved in physical education. The same goes for their pool, which for most schools remains in the category of their dreams.

The reasons why parents seek to exclude their child from physical education at school can be various: from concern for his health to unwillingness to break the certificate with a low grade. But at the heart of each of these reasons is poor physical development and health problems that do not allow students to enjoy their classes and their success in physical education lessons. But in fact, for such students, physical activity is even more necessary and for those who have

such problems. Systematic, well-chosen physical exercises, along with proper nutrition, can do wonders. This statement is true for everyone, but especially for children, because a growing organism is more sensitive to the beneficial effects of physical education. Instead of getting the coveted help that allows you to avoid physical activity, it is better to agree with the teacher about classes in a health group or remedial gymnastics and make physical education an integral part of your child's life. If the parents show perseverance, making efforts in this direction, then in the graduation class, a student who had previously remained in physical development will receive an excellent grade deserved in the certificate. And along with it - good health and excellent physical shape, which is an extremely valuable reward. All of the above applies especially to parents of overweight children. It is understood that the desire of mothers to free their children from physical education in order to protect them from the ridicule of their classmates, but for the child this can be"harm". Regular physical activity, outdoor games in physical education classes are essential for full school students like no other. A child being overweight is a huge detriment to his health and self-esteem. And this is a big mistake of parents, which you should definitely try to correct with the help of physical education, lifestyle changes and eating habits.

In our time, society does not pay due attention to physical education classes in school. Someone thinks that in school there is nothing interesting and useful in physical education lessons and it is better for the child to do extra lessons, while someone is just lazy and he / she does not go to these lessons in principle. An even more frightening trend is the fact that the promotion of a lifestyle in which sport has been given an important and fundamental role has virtually disappeared in our country. This is why it is necessary to understand and comprehend what is the benefit of physical education classes in school. Physical education classes in schools can be held in facilities available in almost every school, in an area specially equipped for training or physical activity. In the gym and on the field, training conditions must be created in accordance with established standards. They determine how many students can attend at the same time, and what should be the height of the ceilings in the room and the standards determine the mandatory presence of ventilation and heating, the necessary lighting, the number of utility rooms and changing rooms, showers and sports equipment.

Physical education lessons in school, as a rule, consist of three parts: introductory, main and final. The introductory part, or warm-up, helps prepare the baby's body for the next stress. In the main part, children learn new things physical exercises they run, jump, jump, climb a tightrope, play outdoor games, and hold relay races. And in the last part, the school students are invited to rest so that the heartbeat and pulse return to normal, and the body has time to rest.

It has been observed that physical education classes in schools are usually

tedious for children if they are not built strictly according to the curriculum. Therefore, during such lessons, children are often offered independent physical activity. The teacher conducts such classes either in the gym or outside, with or without sports equipment. It is also very useful to perform a certain system of exercises in music; it relieves children's stress, helps to develop a sense of rhythm, coordination and attention in them. The concept of "physical education in schools" also includes sports or activities in the form of games because the child is very important to have fun at the same time but also to be educated in sports knowing the importance and value of physical activity. If the teacher sees that the children are tired and do not absorb the material well, you can give them the opportunity for a few minutes to complete simple exercises, squats and bends, this helps relieve mental stress.

Primary school education is mainly aimed at improving the overall health and physical development of students, as well as the development of independent and creative thinking of primary school students. Physical education in grades 1-3 is necessary for children, as it helps to develop endurance, helps to develop dexterity, flexibility, coordination of movements and initial skills in team games. A physical education lesson in elementary school is very important. Physical education in primary school helps children to keep their bodies in good physical condition from an early age, forms a respectful attitude towards their own health and the health of others, promotes collectivism in future citizens, willingness to help, courage , reaction and zeal.

What exactly do elementary school children do in physical education classes? Physical education lessons in primary classes are mainly devoted to sports games, various competitions and competitions. Theoretical lessons usually last 3-5 minutes at the beginning of the lesson - the teacher tell the children the topic of the current lesson. In addition to relay games and competitions, a lot of attention is paid to training exercises, running, walking, jumping, climbing and throwing, and acrobatic movements.

Physical activity protects children from chronic diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes and osteoporosis. Evidence-based data are also appropriate to conclude that physical activity has beneficial effects on plasma lipid levels and lipoprotein levels, on non-traditional cardiovascular risk factors (endothelial function), and on some health components, mental (self-concept, anxiety and depression). Lack of physical activity in children is a risk factor for many health problems, such as high blood pressure, weight gain, increased body fat, bad cholesterol (LDL cholesterol) which is a risk factor for heart disease, respiratory problems (respiratory), cardiovascular disease, and bone health problems. Bone strengthening activities make bones stronger; therefore, they are especially important for children, as these activities produce a strength in the bones that

promotes bone growth and strength. Balancing and stretching activities increase physical stability and flexibility, which reduces the risk of injury. Moreover, the health benefits of physical activity extend beyond physical health; it also has a positive impact in the areas of motor skills, psychological well-being, cognitive development, social competence and emotional maturity. Children who are more physically active demonstrate more concentration, faster cognitive processing, and perform better on standardized academic tests. Physical activity gives children opportunities to have fun, be with friends and family, and improve their skills to participate in more intense physical sports or sporting events. It can also improve social skills that can result in academic results: children learn to cooperate and obey rules and thus feel more connected to school and the community.

It also provides opportunities to enjoy activity in a social environment, improves sleep quality, reduces the feeling of lack of energy, helps children meet new friends, become flexible, improves physical skills, improves physical self-esteem, enhances relaxation and enables healthy growth and development. Physical activity can reduce stress, change mood, affect wakefulness and attention and as a result improve school achievement. The ability of physical activity to "activate" and produce more positive mood has been widely reported. Exercise enables children to feel good. Studies show that frequent participation in sports after school hours in childhood and adolescence is associated with a high level of participation in physical activities even in adulthood.

Performance profiling can be an effective tool in raising individual awareness of their current ability and increasing adherence to various intervention programs (Butler et al. 1993; Jones, 1993). The flexibility of their performance profile has previously helped coaches and sports psychologists better understand their athlete's vision for a champion performer, monitor athlete progress, discrepancies between coach and athlete, and improved performance analysis after a events (Butler et al. 1992). To work effectively together, it is important that opinion mismatch is reduced. The latest research; including Study 2015 The Canadian Olympic Study conclusively shows that the two main contributors to medal-winning sports performances at the top level of elite sports are; the quality of the teacher-student relationship and the student's awareness. These are not physical factors, they are human factors. Being aware, by undertaking sport-specific behavior profiling, is the safest way for teachers to develop a comprehensive understanding of both themselves and each of their students. Teachers become aware by learning about their coaching style, communication style, strengths and limitations. When students complete a behavioral profile, teachers know for sure their students' individual personalities, motivators, preferred communication style, most effective training environments, and much more.

Why does profiling make important contributions to balance and coordination?

Many parents do not always understand how balance and coordination are related to their child's learning process. Most of these skills come naturally to many children, but, for those who are left behind, they can have a direct impact on the classroom. Children who experience problems with body awareness, balance and coordination tend to struggle with focus and attention in school. Balance is an essential tool needed for controlled positions, such as sitting in a chair, so children tend to have difficulty concentrating on academic tasks when these skills are not properly developed. These children often demonstrate more nervousness, poor attitude and lack of fact-finding while listening to the teacher. Many times, the teacher or parent finds it difficult to give instructions or instructions to the child and has to repeat himself / herself before the tasks are completed. The child has to focus so much on keeping his body calm and "quiet" while sitting at his desk that his brain does not have the "space" available to learn. In addition to mental and social health benefits, taking up sports from an early age has been shown to be associated with greater benefits in elite sports because some parameters develop at this age which is very difficult after a certain age to capture these qualities technical.

Sport is a common form of leisure physical activity which has been shown to result in many health benefits. Recent systematic reviews have found that there are many psychological and social health benefits associated especially with participating in sports for children. There is consistent evidence that those who participate in club-based and / or team-based sports participation may have better psychological and social health outcomes than those who do not engage in any type of physical activity. The social nature of sport is suggested to mediate these health outcomes, although the psychological and social health benefits of participating in sport vary between children, adolescents, and adults. For children and adolescents, social health benefits are more prominent, such as the development of social skills through opportunities for social interaction and improved self-confidence. Proper age balance and coordination allows the child to engage in sports participation with a reasonable degree of success as it helps fluid body movement for the performance of physical abilities (e.g. walking in a balance beam or playing soccer). Involvement in sports is beneficial for maintaining self-regulation for daily tasks, as well as developing a social network and achieving a sense of belonging in a community or social environment. It also helps children develop and maintain proper controlled body movement while performing the task, which, when effective, limits the energy required thus minimizing fatigue. With good balance and coordination it is less likely to

injure as the child is likely to have the right postural responses when needed (e.g. opening his arms to protect himself when falling off the bicycle). The physical attributes of balance and coordination also allow for proper posture for desk tasks and subsequent success in excellent motor tasks.

The connection that profiling brings to develop balance and coordination?

Attention and concentration: The ability to hold attention to a specific task for a long period of time as core strength is not challenged.

Body Awareness: Knowing body parts and understanding body movement in space in relation to limbs and other objects to negotiate the environment or skills of the ball and bicycle. Bilateral integration: Using both hands together with one hand leading to: e.g. holding a tennis racket with the dominant hand and the non-dominant 'auxiliary' hand holding and stabilizing only between strokes. Crossing the midline: The ability to cross the imaginary line that runs from the baby's nose to the pelvis that separates the body on the left and right sides, which also affects the dominance of the hands. Hand-eye coordination: The ability to process information received from the eyes to control, direct, and direct the hands in performing a specific task such as handwriting or catching a ball. Hand dominance: Continuous use of one (usually the same) hand to perform the task, which is necessary to allow the development of refined skills. Muscular strength: A ability of a muscle to exert force against resistance (e.g. when climbing a tree to push or pull up).

Muscular endurance: The ability of a single muscle or group of muscles to exert force repeatedly against resistance to allow sustained engagement of physical task. Self-regulation: The ability to take, maintain, and change the level of alertness appropriate to a task or situation which then allows for better attention to the task. Postural control: The ability to stabilize the trunk and neck to enable limb coordination to perform a controlled task.

Body Awareness: The information that the brain receives from muscles and joints to make us aware of body position and body movement, which in turn allows abilities to become "automatic". Sensory processing: Precise processing of sensory stimulation in the environment as well as in our body for rapid and physically appropriate responses to movement. Isolated movement: The ability to move an arm or leg while still holding the rest of the body needed for refined movements (e.g. throwing the ball by hand or swimming in freestyle).

What other problems can occur when a child has difficulty in balance and coordination? When a child has difficulty with balance and coordination, you may also see difficulty with:

Motor (muscular) planning of how to perform a physical task (e.g. they can start in the third step and not the first). 'Rigid' muscle tone: Rigid muscles make limbs look lame or overly 'tight' muscles.

Spatial awareness of how they use or position their body (e.g. so that they inadvertently invade other people's personal space without knowing it). Low endurance for physical tasks (fine and gross motor). Develop prior writing skills: slow or incredibly heavy pencil strokes involving most of the letters, numbers, and early drawing.

Pencil grip: The efficiency and manner in which the pencil is held while drawing and writing is often compromised (too loose or too tight and too heavy to press). Pencil control: The accuracy with which the child moves the pencil for drawing and writing. Left-right discrimination: Conceiving a change of direction so that the child 'knows' the difference between the left and right sides of the body. Hand dominance: Continuous use of one (usually the same) hand to perform the task, which is necessary to allow the development of refined skills. Articulation: Clarification of spoken sounds and spoken language. Taking care of you: Dressing independently, holding and using the toothbrush are just a few examples. Sensory processing: Recording, interpreting and responding accurately to sensory stimulation in the environment and in their body.

What activities can help improve balance and coordination?

Unstable surfaces: Walking on unstable surfaces (eg cushions, bags, beans or blankets on the floor) that make the trunk work hard to maintain an upright position. Unstable swings and moving games, including climbing stairs and gyms on makeshift terrain. When the oscillations move in unexpected ways, it forces the trunk muscles to work harder.

Stroller walking (child 'walking' in hands while an adult holds his feet off the floor). Swimming: Involves the body to work against water resistance, thus providing a better awareness of where the body is in space. Kneeling (without touching the floor with your hands) to hit a balloon at another person. Children's dance game: Requires the child to change movement patterns often and quickly.

Games with big jumps (i.e. without steps between the "stones") challenge a child's balance. Bicycle and scooter: Both activities require the child to constantly make postural adjustments to maintain balance.

Conclusions

Finally, education and profiling in primary school is mainly aimed at improving the overall health and physical development of students, as well as the development of independent and creative thinking of primary school students. Physical education in grades 1-3 is necessary for children, as it helps to develop endurance, helps to develop skills, flexibility, coordination of movements, initial

skills in team games but also for children who have a tendency to continue the elite sport is good opportunity to capture some skills at this age, which are then impossible to achieve. Physical education develops students' competence and confidence to participate in a range of physical activities that become a central part of their lives, both inside and outside school. A high quality Physical Education curriculum enables all students to enjoy and succeed in many types of physical activity. They develop a wide range of skills and abilities to use compositional tactics, strategies and ideas to perform successfully. When they perform, they think about what they are doing, analyze the situation, and make decisions. They also reflect on their own and others' performances and find ways to improve them. As a result, they develop the confidence to participate in various physical activities and learn about the value of a healthy and active lifestyle.

They work as individuals, in groups and in teams, developing the concepts of justice and personal and social responsibility. Through the range of experiences that physical education offers, they learn how to be effective in competitive, creative and challenging situations. This teamwork teaches the importance of working together, learning students' strengths and weaknesses and how to work within the parameters of the team concept. These important benefits help lifelong learners work with others to achieve the desired result both individually and within the group. Physical education programs can only offer these benefits if they are well planned and implemented. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends that children have at least one hour of physical activity each day, which should include strengthening muscles and bones because it is the most fundamental part of an individual's overall development. Supporting schools to establish physical education on a daily basis can provide students with the ability and confidence to be physically active throughout life. Therefore, it is very important that physical education and profiling are seen with great importance by state institutions!

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The importance of improving the education and singular-child-focuced services by the support/assistant teachers for increasing the inclusiveness of the special need children, especially the children with autism, in the preschool and primary education system

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_____ **M.Sc. M.A. Elona HASKO**_____

Abstract

The support/assistant teachers, who work with special needs children in preschool and primary education, play an important function in the integration and inclusion of these children in the mainstream education system. Last years the number of these support/assistant teachers has been growing, especially in the preschool institutions of Tirana. When recruiting in the service, assistant teachers some issues would be raised by the principals, administrators, psycho-social staff in the preschool institutions, education experts, etc: "Are there enough support/ assistant teachers to provide support and services for all the children with disabilities? Are they trained as well as to be prepared for in-service working? How they offer they services and which are the results of their work?"

Key words: child education, assessment, abilities

Introduction

The professionalism of support/assistant teachers is determined by the ability to adapt to four challenges: (1) Personal interest in professional development, (2) Assessing/ Accepting children's diversity, (3) Supporting the child (4) Working with others. (European Agency, 2012)[1]. Based in the manual of the Pre-university Quality Assurance Agency (ASCAP) (2020)[2] the role of the inclusive teachers, duties, and responsibilities are clearly defined. According to him, the inclusive teachers should provide advice and resources for the class teacher which will help them in the assessment process. Some of the tasks for support/assistant teachers in the classroom are:

- Assess the skills and requirements of the child in the education process.
- Builds the individual plan together with the other actors
- Collaborates with parents and pedagogical staff to carefully check the child's progress.
- Evaluate the child's abilities
- Builds didactic tools adapted to the needs of the child.
- Keeps notes and data on the child's progress
- Monitors the child's behavior and builds an intervention plan if he/she considers it reasonable.
- Finds different activities to teach children skills such as (drawing, drama, etc.)
- Manages crises in the classroom and resolves conflicts.
- Prepares students for the transition to the next grade.
- Informs parents about the child's performance and potential.
- Collaborates with other professionals who work with children with special needs.
- Collaborates with the class teacher and the principal of the institution.

In the report published by ASCAP, "Needs for professional development of support/assistant teachers in education" they note that 60% of support/assistant teachers work and support 1-2 children with disabilities. About 25% of these teachers support and work with more than three children with disabilities/ children with special needs in schools. We observed that support/assistant teachers attend a higher number of children with disabilities than the teachers that work in schools. In kindergartens, an support/assistant teacher offer his/her service for 1

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[1] European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2012. Teacher Education for Inclusion. Profile of Inclusive Teachers.

[2] ASCAP, 2020, The need for professional development of inclusive teachers in pre-university education.

hour or 1 hour 30 minutes for a child with developmental disabilities and supports 4 to 5 children each day. From the data provided by ASCAP about 50% of the support/assistant teachers are novices in the profession and have less than 3 years of experience as teachers, 8% of them had less than one year of work.

Another problem till now underestimated is that in kindergarten a few of support/assistant teachers have completed bachelor studies for pedagogy plus a master in special pedagogy or psychology, while most of them have completed studies in pedagogy and have not previously working experience with children with disabilities or special needs. We also noted that only a few of them attend training related to the field of development and disability, while the rest do not have opportunities and information about such training in their city. They are trained in areas related to education and curricula and not in disabilities or difficulties in learning, for symptomes and interventions for autism, etc. Some of the support/assistant teachers due to lack of experience have shown difficulties in establishing relationships and interactions with special needs children or even felt incapable for helping these children adjust and learn.

The interventions of the support/assistant teachers to children with special needs in tirana's public kindergartens as a good practice

The statistics collected by the Municipality of Tirana show that the number of children with special needs in 2020[3] was 110 children of whom 55% (61 children) diagnosed or suspected with autism spectrum disorder, 20% of them have hearing, vision, physical and language problems. 12% (13 children) have a diagnosis in mental retardation. In the year 20214, the number of children with disabilities reported in kindergartens of the municipality of Tirana has increased compared to 2020 in 123 children who have a diagnosis or manifest a difficulty or disability. In 2021 the number of children who have a diagnosis of autism/ suspected of autism was 74 (60%), the number of children with hearing, sight, physical, and language problems/difficulties was 19%, and 9% (12 children) had a diagnosis/suspected for mental retardation. This descriptive evidence is based on statistical data reported monthly by kindergarten principals but is important to point out that the attendance of children with disabilities in the preschool and primary education institutions changes continuously. The support/assistant teachers in public kindergartens of Tirana attend and offer their support to 4-5 children with disabilities. They regularly follow a PEI (individual educational plan), which is developed by the teachers in collaboration with the institution's psychologist, inclusive teachers, and parents.

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[3] Children with special needs in kindergartens, Municipality of Tirana, open data,2020
[4] Children with special needs in kindergartens, Municipality of Tirana, open data,2021

The presence of support/assistant teachers in kindergartens is a necessity due to the high number of children in the class and also for good consequences of early interventions in the children's development. It also seems necessary for support/assistant teachers to be further trained and qualified in the areas of development, disability and autism. Experience has shown that a child diagnosed with third-degree autism needs the support of support/assistant teachers for more than two hours a day.   The intervention of the support/assistant teachers is necessary for the adjustment, the integration of the child with the class, for attending the educational program, playtime, and activities that take place in the classroom.

The support/assistant teachers in kindergarten do not work individually with the child by separating him/her from the class but they try to integrate and stimulate the child to interact with peers. The support/assistant teachers work individually with the child only in a specific situation based on the traits of the disorder. The approach of interventions with the child in Tirana's kindergartens is focused on analyzing, knowing the needs and interests of children and respecting them by: achieving trust and a positive relationship with the children, understanding the interests of the child and his favorite play/objects, intervenes in behavior and cognition using the interests of the child, improving socialization with peers, integrating the child with the schedules, routines, rules, and curriculum that teachers implement in the classroom.

It is important to build a positive relationship during work with special needs children. In children diagnosed with autism, affection is an important element to consolidate this relationship. From the statistical data mentioned above, we noticed that more than half of the children with disabilities who attend public kindergartens are diagnosed (or suspected) with autism spectrum disorder; therefore it is important for support/assistant teachers to be trained and get the necessary information about this disorder. The work of support/assistant teachers is constantly monitored and supervised by psychologists and social workers in kindergarten; however, there is a need for deeper knowledge in this field. Inclusive teachers who heaved no previous experience with children with disabilities find it difficult to develop a positive relationship with these children. The build of affective relationships with children usually takes more than three weeks. Teachers, psychologists, and social workers can help support/assistant teachers building this relationship. There is a difference between the support/assistant teachers who have the appropriated education or have previous experiences with children compared with the support/assistant teachers who have no previous experience in this work and just the training from the universities. More experienced teachers find it easier to gain the child's trust, establish healthy relationships with them, manage children's crises and emotional outbursts, and prevent the generation of inappropriate situations that a child's crisis can lead to.

In the first few weeks, the support/assistant teachers are asked to develop a healthy affective relationship with the child. They should intervene with the child step by step so he does not get frustrated or anxious or frightened. The intervention of the support/assistant teachers for the child should be focused on the play and the child should feel satisfied during it and not as an activity that the child should do. During the building of this relationship and the observation of the child in the classroom, the support/assistant teachers keep notes for and understand which are the activities/ objects of interest for the child. The support/assistant teachers, following the training by the psychologists, use these privileged objects to approach the child.

When we talk about the interests of the child we are talking about those activities that the child does in the classroom and through which he gains a special pleasure (especially in autism subjects). These objects can be a toy, an activity, a song, books, etc, which we can use later to intervene and stimulate the child's development. We intervene with the child through this object. The inclusive teachers should keep systematic notes while observing the child in the classroom to understand what his/her interests are. We must keep in mind that the developmental characteristics of children are unique and also the interests and privileged objects are *singular* for each of them.

Kindergarten intervention in children is setted in the classroom, the environment where the child performs a large part of daily activities. An individual work plan is built for the children and is unique and special for each of them. This plan is compiled by the institution's psychologists in collaboration with the group teachers, the parent, and the support/assistant teacher. The intervention is focused on the child and his interests. Always support/assistant teachers should be adapted to the needs and features of the child, they make sure that the environment where the child stays suits his interests. When they notice that the child followsthe teacher then they can try to integrate child behavior with the rules and routines of the class. Every process happens step by step, and you can make sure that the child has enough time that he needs to fulfill a task.

Do not give instructions that will lead to situations that you are not able to manage (for example: make him sit down, try to maintain eye contact, make him say hello and goodbye). In other words, do not ask anything if you are not prepared to manage the situation that could lead to the need for physical intervention. "Hurly-Burly (2012)[5].

In a situation where inclusive teachers force the child to do an unwanted activity, then outbursts of anger and aggressive behaviors may occur. It is important to avoid situations that lead the child to such outbursts, especially when we are in the classroom and do not know how to manage them.

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[5] Hurly-Burly, the International Lacanian Journal of Psychoanalysis, May 2012, pg 180-185.

Recommendations

Even that the number of support/assistant teachers has been raised is the right time for the Ministry of Education and Sport to improve the policies and training for in-service and pre-service support/assistant teachers.

Although in public education institutions we can evidenced a grown number of support/assistant teachers, a better coordination and collaboration between school staff, parents, children and other stakeholders, there is a need to review and redesign the way the support/assistant teachers work and help children with special needs to turn the role of support teacher from a caregiver-to-special need child to a teacher that is part of the system teacher-parents-school psychologist-physician-principals that help the children in need, approaching this way the European experience in supporting and including the children with special need in mainstream education system.

Also, improving the pre-service education curricula/training/internship and unifying the curricula that trains the support/assistant teachers is another must step for improving the training of the teachers that enter in the service education system. The university curricula must include further information about mental, emotional difficulties and autism aiming to prepare better the support/assistant teachers. Summer schools, enhancing professional networks with clinical psychologists, psychiatrist, and pediatricians with help enhance their knowledge and skills. Emphasizing the singularity of children, their interests and needs is the best way to improve the adjustment and learning interest of children with special needs especially those with autism and this is the topic that the universities curricula/training has to develop for the support teachers in the pre-service preparation.

Strengthening the network of support/assistant teachers including the psychologists/social workers/nurse or physician of the kindergarten/principals and creating groups for discussing singular cases is one of the best practice to exchange knowledge and skills from experienced teachers and other mental health professionals and the best place to discuss the cases of children the support teachers help in the classrooms or schools.

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The need for social services at home for the elderly, an idea conceived in the education system as a necessity of modern times

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_____ **Dr. Dorina XHANI** _____

Abstract

Aging can be considered not only from the perspective of the individual as it is also a phenomenon of the whole population. The role of the family as the main institution of care for the elderly is coming and going, this is related to the loss of family tradition and the embrace of individualistic values offered by today's modern society. In Albania, the problems of care for the elderly will increase. And this conclusion is reached taking into account the very bad situation of the elderly nowadays. In this context, the number of elderly people receiving care outside the family is increasing significantly, while the residential capacities are the same. This article aims to find out the most preferred services for elderly nowadays, which enable them to continue living in their community, not necessarily by being accommodated in residential services.The working methodology consists of combining qualitative and quantitative analysis based on primary and secondary data, which create the possibility of multidimensional analysis and provide robust conclusions related to the research question. (for quantitative approach)In order to maximize the comparability of the data, the essential conditions of the study were applied in the most similar way possible in all ESS participating countries, (for qualitative approach) consisted of practicing the interview - pre-test - with individuals over the age of 65 in a suburban area of Tirana. Based on interviews conducted and other studies, it turned out that

home services are the preferred choice of elders, which enables them to continue living in their family environment. The service can be provided in different environments which include institutions or home environments.

Key words: *elderly, aging, home services*

Introduction

The world's population is aging in all regions of the world. Huge developments in technology, medicine, and public hygiene over the last 100 years have resulted in an increase in people living longer than ever before, with good health and the perspective of a more active long life in old age. (Asghar Zaidi November 2015). This trend coupled with a decline in fertility is resulting in a rapidly growing population of individuals older than 60 years old, in many parts of the world. Currently, individuals over 60 years old outnumber children under the age of five. By 2050, the number of these individuals will have increased and exceeded those under the age of 15.Active aging includes the continuation of present life in family and society, preventing age inequalities, which shows that according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, human rights are rights attributed to every individual regardless of age, nationality, race, language, gender, sexuality or ability. The increase of the demographic perspective of the elderly in our country is always making more evident the start of the phenomenon of "population aging". In these conditions, the need for access and integration of care services for the elderly is raised. Albania in 2011 continued to have the youngest population on the European continent, except for Turkey, Ireland, and Iceland. The rate of aging of the Albanian population during the last decade has been the highest on the continent except for Lithuania. Compared to 28 EU countries, the population of Albania had an average age of 35.3 years old, in 2011; while the average of 28 EU countries was 41.2 years old. While in 2001 in Albania the average age was 30.6 years old, EU countries had an average age of 38.3 years old. Throughout this decade, the population as a whole has aged on average 4.7 years in Albania, while in EU countries by 2.9 year. In our society care for the elderly is generally seen as a family matter. The family has been the institution which has been seen as the best alternative to care for the elderly, in special cases or lack of family the second alternative for the care of the elderly has been the asylum or today called the "Home for the Elderly" ". The role of the family as the main institution of care for the elderly is coming and going, this is related to the loss of family tradition and the embrace of individualistic values offered by today's modern society. In this context, the number of elderly people

receiving care outside the family is increasing significantly, while the residential capacities are the same. Social protection structures and service structures for the elderly, in conditions when the aging population is on the growing trend are facing difficulties. Coping with them in these social protection systems, with their current capacities, is impossible. In all EU countries, the responsibility for providing and spending on long-term care is divided into four sectors:

- Family and informal care sectors
- State or public sector
- The sector of voluntary and non-governmental organizations
- Private sector or care market

In France, residential service is seen as a good alternative for the elderly who need constant medical care, while the number of elderly people receiving home care has increased. Most of the elderly prefer to stay in their homes, where they get to know their neighbours and can associate memories with every part of the accommodation and facilities around them, rather than going to a residential institution.

There are large differences in the use of long-term care services in Germany, depending on social status, ethnicity, and gender. Those in a higher social position are more likely to use home-based services provided by private institutions, while those in a lower social position are more likely to use cash compensation. Although in Germany the network of private service providers for the elderly is expanding more and more, where the most preferred service remains the home service. Formulated in 2008 for this purpose it is noted as follows: "To ensure that for persons with chronic disorders of a physical, intellectual or psychological nature for a long time, a high-quality care is available and that the cost of this care is socially acceptable. " In the Netherlands, a long-term public care insurance system has been in place since 1968, focusing not only on care for the elderly but on all citizens in need of such complex services.

Another help for the elderly who choose to live in their own homes can come from Local Agencies for the Elderly, where the elderly themselves can call for needed help. On this basis, this paper aims to propose and evaluate the following alternatives:

1. *Home services for the elderly living alone as a good alternative to delaying or avoiding institutional residential care.*
2. *Home assistant service for the elderly living alone, which provides assistance in daily activities such as washing / cleaning the environment and clothes or other personal items of the elderly, food, assistance in monthly payments such as water, electricity, friendly visits, etc.*

In these suggestions and alternatives the questions that are presented for discussion throughout the paper are:
   - How can institutional residential care for the elderly be postponed or minimized?

Study objectives and research question

By strengthening the role of family and home services, as well as applying other alternative services such as home services, home assistant service, assisted living, it is possible to relocate the residential service as a last resort for the care of the elderly. In Albania due to the traditional culture of providing "forced" parental care, although the percentage of older people living alone in Albania is lower than in many western countries (UN, 2009), the impact of living alone on the elderly is most clearly reflected in society. However, with changes in lifestyle and family values, improvements in living conditions, the trend towards nuclear families and growing population departures at a young age, changing lifestyle arrangements and the number of older people living it is only growing. Thus from the census in 2001 to that of 2011, the number of elderly people living alone has increased from 5 to 8 percent expressed this in absolute numbers from 16.8 thousand in 2001 to 24.3 thousand in 2011. As previously explained, as a result of the change in the lower age of marriage and the higher life expectancy of females, older women are more likely to live longer alone. Thus 77 percent of the elderly living alone are female. The paper then focuses on identifying those social protection services that can be easily applied in our country. In response to this, the paper is directed based on the search for:
   Is the application of integrated services a desirable service by the elderly?

Methodological platform

The methodology of this paper will be based on the three-dimensional research approach using qualitative and quantitative research techniques. Quantitative research will be based on primary and secondary data. Thus the main axes of research will be:

-   Desk Analysis/literature review for quantitative secondary data analysis. Based on the existing "Micro-Level" data sources of the "Quality of Life" (CeJ) of the elderly by creating an "Inventory of existing data" in function of the work. Thus we can mention the data which can be considered as the main axis that have as source the Responsible Statistical Authority in Albania, the National Institute of Statistics (INSTAT).

- Analysis derived from primary data obtained from the European Social Survey Database (ESS), (2014). ESS Round 6 of the main questionnaire conducted by the Center for Comparative Social Studies, City University London. Analysis of primary qualitative data for CeJ targeting the elderly in social service institutions as well as analysis of primary qualitative data based on the ZMET method. The research of this paper focuses on the service beneficiary/customer. According to this view, the beneficiary of customer service is the human being with hope, dreams, boredom, fear, desire, and hope. Designing research centered on the human being is not a new phenomenon. Many methods and techniques have been developed precisely to keep the service recipient at the center of development processes (Kano, 1984), (Vogiazou et al., 2006), (Hutchinson et al., 2003).
- Qualitative analysis through ZMET Technique. This analysis is based on a new technique developed by Gerald Zaltman - professor emeritus at Harvard University. ZMET is based on the hypothesis that all human beings think in the form of metaphor and this leads to a deep structure of culture in order to understand and influence behavior.

Sample: The individual sample taken for this study was determined to consist of 60 elderly people currently in service institutions for the elderly. Of these 29 were male and 31 female. The selected sample (60) flows as a result of the sensitivity of the topic under study. The literature on services market studies and analysis argues and suggests that very small samples, even in the case of countries with large and heterogeneous populations, provide a variance of over 85% in content and emotion related to the variables required, associated with the product (Zaltman 2003). In order to conduct the interview, the heads of the institutions and the respective service employees introduced the interviewers to the beneficiaries of the institution. The staff significantly facilitated the construction of the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. This is as a result of respectful relationships built by service recipients for service. The staff also made it possible to create conditions for confidential space throughout the interview.

Study participants

The study included key people of the social protection system for the elderly, as well as interviews with elderly persons who are currently beneficiaries in this system:

1. Elderly part of residential service.
2. Leaders of residential social protection institutions in the country.

3. Representatives from the Directorate of drafting social policies for this field, at the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth.
4. Leader and specialist in the field at the State Social Service

Results and discussions

Within the context of the aging world population and the fragmentation of the family due to migration and emigration of young people, the elderly in Albania are more likely to face new challenges. Although family ties and devotion to caring delivery are still culturally supported, older people may face an increased risk of low CJ and the need for long-term health services as well as social care, especially for those living alone. Implementation of action plans of sectoral and cross-sectoral social protection strategies is a need and priority. The quantitative and qualitative analysis performed in this paper the data showed that elders prefer to live in their own home, so integrated social services, such as home service, are the most preferred but also offer a better quality of life for them. The results of the analysis show that it is necessary to improve overall satisfaction as a key indicator of assessing CJ perception, as well as approaches to improve seniors' satisfaction with general, family, economic and social conditions. In this context, the focus of policymakers should be on improving their incomes, increasing available resources, enabling them in social life, in transport and services, in social activities, and making the issue of aging a community issue affect the improvement of their CJ. At the individual level, most of the elderly in the age group 60-70 are active and want and can participate in various profitable activities, including agriculture, environmental protection, etc. As another indicator identified with a significant impact on the CJ, the self-reported health situation is another specific element that needs to be addressed. Providing services dedicated to needs, such as providing home care, services such as free health examinations, in-home delivery of medications, education programs for self-care and healthy living and disease prevention, as well as providing basic training to improve health perceptions are strategic interventions to improve CJ of the elderly.

Recommendations

- In the implementation of the Social Service reforms in Albania, the aim is to provide alternative services, up to the personalized home service, as an antidote against residentialism. Elderly social care programs should be

integrated with other rights programs such as those for poverty alleviation, women's empowerment, people with disabilities, and empowerment programs for marginalized groups.

- Family members are the leading providers of care for the elderly. Giving proper care to an elderly person at home requires special knowledge and skills. Therefore, short training for family members on "Caring for the Elderly at Home" can be planned. Health centers and health care providers can be trained to train coaches' (ToT) who can further train elderly family members in the community.

- National policies on aging, supported by home-based care, would highlight the importance of enabling the elderly to live close to the community, thus taking an important qualitative step in improving the elderly. What is required in this situation is a model that would enable aging through economic efficiency and sustainability.

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Leadership and its impact on the challenges of higher education

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Abstract

Leadership can be defined as the ability of a leader to influence his employees, in such a way that they cooperate and contribute to the efforts oriented towards the realization of the goals of the educational institution. One of the challenges of the institutions, implemented in the market, is the selection of leaders who will represent the mission and vision of the educational institution.

The vision and mission of an institution should be represented by a leader with a contemporary outlook, who conveys to employees an inspiring and collaborative organizational behavior.

One of the concerns of institutions in recent years is the inefficient and inefficient organization of work. Therefore, the current leaders, who enjoy this status, must leave these wrong structures, in order to create harmony and organization among their subordinates. Organizing work with deadlines and division of tasks according to the specializations of the employee, will bring productivity and achieve objectives in a timely manner.

In the conditions of comprehensive changes of society, economy and politics, throughout the process of democratization and the prospects of EU membership, higher education in Albania is in constant transformation and reform from a state-controlled system to a liberalized higher education.

Key words: *work, leadership, team, Europe 2020 Strategy*

Introduction

Leadership and its characteristics

Leadership or leadership is the process of influencing an individual over a certain group of people, in achieving common goals.

By this is meant, the creation of mutual relations between the leader and the group, influencing the realization of the goals of an institution through joint actions.

For an organization, leadership is very important when it comes to the process of organizing and managing situations, development or well-being of work in that institution.

A leader must be visionary, have a vision of achieving common goals but also be open to the group (his followers) and accept the views of group members. The leadership process should not exclude even one member of the group to display his / her visions and way of achieving goals.

Early understanding of leadership relies primarily on identifying persons who possess special personal qualities and abilities.

Leadership and management

In recent decades there has been an intense debate over the relationship between leadership and management. Leadership, in many ways is similar to management. The leader, like the manager, is faced with achieving the goal, working with different individuals, and many managerial functions are the same as defining leadership. But these two concepts are not identical.

Other scholars also point out in their research that there are fundamental differences between management and leadership. The role of the Manager is to plan, organize and coordinate. The role of the Leader is to inspire and motivate.

Differences between leader and manager

- The manager focuses on control
- The leader inspires to increase trust in him
- The manager prioritizes the short-term perspective- The leader takes care of the long-term perspective
- The manager deals with the How and When questions while the leader deals with the What and Why questions
- The manager accepts the status quo- The leader challenges him
- The manager represents the good soldier- The leader has his UNI

Effective Leadership

Essentially, prominent leaders become a fine balance between traits, abilities, behaviors, sources of power, and aspects of the situation.

These become determinants of the ability to influence followers and achieve group goals.

The most effective measure of a leader and his / her competence is the degree to which the group achieves its goals. Effective leadership begins with developing a vision, a desire or a picture of what an institution / school will look like in the future. Effective leadership begins with the basic skill that is self-confidence, including a maturity, conviction, and expertise, which translates into a goal and direction. It is this clarity of vision that gives leaders great confidence to embrace the role of instilling motivation, self-esteem, and teamwork.

Effective leaders fully understand their environment and can transform situations, to achieve a reinforced vision.

To understand the behavior and traits of an effective leader you need to look at their innate characteristics. The most important are energy level, physical endurance and stress tolerance.

Positive energy and stress tolerance help to deal with the fast pace and frequent chaotic events of the institution.

Effective leadership brings unwavering demands, which require physical vitality and a high degree of emotional resilience. Requires the ability, to solve the problem and to solve short-term or long-term problems. An effective leader must be flexible with ideas and open to a variety of solutions and views.

Practical cases of effective leadership

We have mentioned above that leadership learns, forms, and develops from long life experience, and the impact of practices on well-structured leadership is numerous.

Leadership Modeling- Leaders set the principles, regarding how people should be treated and how goals should be pursued. They set standards of excellence and then set an example for others to follow. The prospect of complex change can confuse employees and stifle action, so they set temporary goals so that people can achieve small victories, which lead them to big goals.

Inspiration in vision communication- Leaders strongly believe they can make a difference. They envision the future, creating an ideal and unique image of what the institution or school can be a model of success. Through their implementation and persuasion, leaders invite others into their dreams. They breathe life into the life of the institution, into their visions and create spaces to conceive of the future.

Process Challenge - Leaders seek opportunities to change the status quo. In doing so they experiment and take risks, even though they know that taking risks involves mistakes and failures, they accept inevitable disappointments as opportunities to learn.

Enabling others to take action- Leaders foster collaboration and build vibrant teams. They actively involve others. Leaders understand that mutual respect is what keeps extraordinary efforts, creating a warm and motivating environment. They empower others, making each person feel capable and powerful.

Encourage employees- Fulfilling extraordinary things in the institution is hard work. To keep hope and determination alive, leaders recognize the contributions individuals make. In each winning team, members must participate in the respective awards, to be as motivated and effective as possible.

Challenges of higher education in Albania within the priorities of the 'Europe 2020' Strategy

The draft of the new National Strategy for Development and Integration (2014-2020) reconfirms this role of higher education and defines as priorities the quality of higher education;

- Profiling of universities according to the development needs of the country and the labor market;
- Re-evaluating the sharing of the cost of higher education with students as well as improving the internal governance of universities by combining autonomy, accountability with good governance.

In the conditions of comprehensive changes of society, economy and politics, throughout the process of democratization and the prospects of EU membership, higher education in Albania is in constant transformation and reform from a state-controlled system to a liberalized higher education.

Two of the most important developments in this transformation process have been:

- Implementation of the Bologna Process and efforts to become part of the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area;
- Liberalization of higher education and licensing of private universities as an alternative to state ones

Europa 2020 Strategy

The EUROPA 2020 strategy specifically addresses five key areas: employment, innovation, education, poverty alleviation and climate / energy. Achieving the objectives is closely linked not only to efforts at EU level, but also to their translation into concrete policies in the member states as well as aspirations to become part of the EU.

An important dimension of the EUROPA 2020 growth strategy is also higher education, research and innovation.

In order to achieve a more qualitative, sustainable and inclusive growth, EUROPA needs more graduates equipped with the right knowledge and skills to meet the challenges of the labor market and contemporary society.

The modernization of higher education, the further development of research and innovation are seen as dimensions that will contribute to university education,

making it possible to adapt to the pandemic situation, given that teaching did not take place in classrooms, but through online platforms.

Improving the quality of higher education

- Adaptation of teaching and learning methodology according to student diversity;
- Utilizing the potential of information and communication technologies;
- Study programs that are based on and adapt to the demands of the labor market;
- Quality assurance;
- Business connections;
- Employment of graduates

Conclusions

- An effective leader needs to be flexible with ideas and open to a variety of solutions and views.
- Effective communication within the institution is very important both for the realization of change, as well as for the support and protection of a policy, or a certain way of management.
- Senior executives should build "communication bridges" with the external environment to facilitate contacts and resolve potential problems.
- In the conditions of comprehensive changes of society, economy and politics, throughout the process of democratization and prospects of EU membership, higher education in Albania is in constant transformation and reform from a state-controlled system to a liberalized system of higher education.

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