



## ART AND CULTURE IN A TRANSFORMATIVE WORLD

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## EDITORIAL

# *Art and culture in a transformative world*

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*Associate Professor Dr. Belina BUDINI*

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This issue of *Polis*, the academic journal of the Faculty of Humanities, Education and Liberal Arts at EUT, focuses on Art and Culture in a transformative world. Volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous are among the most ubiquitous adjectives describing the challenges and urgencies we are facing nowadays. While we are still dealing with the consequences of a world pandemic after COVID19, other dynamics have taken place, leading to further disruptions and a lack of stability, but also bringing transformations and potential for change. Amidst this turnaround, it is of special relevance to reflect on potential consequences from different perspectives when trying to consider the developments, growth, or reductions in the field of arts and culture, but also in the media systems, education, as well as in the entertainment industries and in the society at large. The main aim is to understand how cultural values and practices are changing in terms of production, dissemination and reception among creators and audiences.

The current issue of *Polis* opens therefore a discussion on the applications of arts and cultural initiatives in various contexts, trying to relate with technological settings, communication practices and greater issues of politics and society.

The first article of the issue deals with the social media forms of arts and the so-called phenomenon of media-influencers. From memes to podcasts and the tyranny of reels, the internet is now the new public sphere flourishing as an entertainment industry, but also as a platform for art manifestations, bringing therefore transformations to the traditional forms of art and culture, as well as impacting today institutions and creating potential for change. Among other perspectives, in this issue a special place takes therefore the evaluation of the Social Media Influencers in Albania, in an article of our scholar Irena Myzeqari. Her systematic re-evaluation, updating the data from a previous group-study on the Albanian social media influencers, then goes on further elaborating the

dilemma of a hyper-machine phenomenon or a self-promotion engine, or both. While in the previous study conducted by the Department of Humanities and Communication at the European University of Tirana, entitled “Online Albania”, aimed to conduct a descriptive analysis of the most followed social media profiles in Albania, this study endeavors to take things one step further and builds an analytical model on the reasons why people, especially younger generation, tend to follow and appreciate their online presence. The purpose of this study is therefore to understand why the younger generation tends to follow social media influencers in the first place and its methodology is based on the data collection through a questionnaire, spread out to students at the European University of Tirana. When trying to understand the reasons that motivate younger generation in following a social media influencer, Dr. Myzeqari finds out that from all four theoretical features such as, attractiveness, trust, authenticity and similarities, attractiveness stands out as the most noticeable feature that drives them in choosing their SMI-s, whereas authenticity and similarity seem to be highly valuable as well with 70 respondents taking them into consideration when following someone online. As the author concluded, being famous is however enough reason to draw genuine interest.

In addition, arts have started to become integral parts of school curricula and it would have been of special interest to analyze its effects on individual growth and success as well as evaluate its role and impact on the educational system in Albania. However, more contributions on those terms are expected in the future, especially from the Departments of Arts and of Education. Instead, researchers from the Department of Education, Psychology and Sports at the EUT, are focusing more on the effects of the pandemic situation to wellbeing, technological implications in the educational systems related to coding and critical thinking, as well as multiple intelligence and its implications in education, and finally a presentation of the current state of the Fitness centers in terms of their management and marketing in accordance with the socio-economic changes that our country is going through.

Closer to the topic of this issue, related to arts and education, the first contribution in this section comes from a group of researchers in the fields of clinical psychology and film directing. In this article, authors Albana Xhemali, Elkjana Gjipali, and Elona Hasko set to analyze the impact of Albanian cartoon films on the learning process, stimulating thought, imagination, and their use as an instructional tool for improving and facilitating the implementation of the preschool curriculum. Based on an experiment realized with children 4-6 years in 4 public and private preschools in Tirana, while showing cartoon films for children in Albanian language and produced by public artistic institutions during the years '80, '90, it was noticed that the children were more interested and engaged in discussing about the topics of the cartoon films content.

In the article “The implications of obsessive-compulsive disorder due to Covid 19 Pandemic situation” by Dr. Dorina Xhani, MSc. Joida Porozaj, Dr. Brunilda Hoxhaj, Dr. Elsidia Sinaj, Stela Kapo and Eneida Sala, the authors aim to explore how obsessive-compulsive disorder affects various aspects of quality of life such as family life, social relationships, and activities of daily living. Their study is based on a case study model of a clinical population of persons diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive disorder in Tirana and shows that obsessive-compulsive disorder has major impacts on areas such as family life and activities of daily living and a significant impact on social relationships.

In the article “Critical thinking development in students during coding in the subject of “Information and Communication Technology”; A Case Study at “Harif Halil Sulaj” high school, Mamurras, by M.Sc. Pranvera Krasniqi, AP. PhD. Tomi Treska , Doc.Anduela Lile, M.Sc. Andromeda (Keci) Lalaj, the group of authors explore the possibilities and perspectives of the interaction between coding and encouraging and how they also help developing critical thinking among students in the 15-18 age group. A field survey was carried out through questionnaires and focus groups, both for teachers and for students at an Albanian local school, and it was finally observed that the introduction of coding in the school curriculum in higher secondary education has a very positive impact on students, even on ones with a below average level, and helped in increasing the involvement of students and encouraging critical thinking. The authors give a few recommendations to extend the curriculum in general to encompass coding hours and algorithms, as well as increasing the ICT hours pertaining to the 11th grade.

In the article about “Multiple intelligence and its implications in education”, PhD(c). Etleva Haxhihseni and PhD. Briseida Andoni aim at giving a definition and meaning to multiple intelligence and identify its implications in good manners and education. The article is literature research in the form of a meta-analysis in pedagogical and psychological studies.

A contribution by Dorian Isufaj focuses on “Efficient management of fitness centers, an important link of sport for all”, that is a descriptive article presenting the current state of Fitness Centers in Albania, their management and marketing in accordance with the socio-economic changes that our country is going through.

The article, “The road to nowhere: Loer Kume’s “Snowman’ a Rhetorical Analysis”, Dr. Klementin Mile applies the method of rhetorical analysis to critically assess the story “Snowman” from the book Amygdala Mandala of the Albanian writer Loer Kume., winner of the prestigious prize in literature, ‘Kadare Prize’ 2019. The acclaimed purpose of this this article is “to analyze the reasons for failing to fulfil the literary ambition of the author Kume, as well as to clearly delineate the contribution of such works in their mission as literary narratives”. Mile suggests that the story “Snowman” fails to convince the readers when offered with too much



guidance and becomes an aesthetic liability. He emphasizes that overall, this tale represents an ambitious attempt to enter the debate on morality, but this very thematic interest has not managed to move the authorial audience in the direction desired by the author, since aesthetically it has created more problems than it has managed to solve.

In the same vein, that of the critical essay, in the article “Art in small circles,” author Evi Veliu critically assesses the current state of arts in Albania, especially located in the city’s space. However, her quest is more of an essentialist and conceptual endeavor in trying to discover truthfulness and the inner emotional power through art, in a creative context.

In his article on “Views of Albanian Literature for Children”, author Dr. Ermir Nika offers a descriptive retrospective view of the period after the New Age when oral traditions and fairy tales became a primary source of subjects. Regarding the Albanian literature for children during the period of the National Renaissance, in the wake of the numerous social, political, and cultural contributions undertaken by the protagonists of this movement, Nika affirms that a very useful work was done for the drafting of textbooks for Albanian schools. He further claims that the renaissance saw the creation of books for the younger generations as a major obligation, and in this way, the number of writings dedicated to children increased significantly.

In this section about literature and art, the final article, that of Dr. Denis Bizhga brings a contribution on the legendary epic songs in the Homeric tradition of epic poetry and its intertwining in the literature of the most prominent Albanian writer Ismail Kadare. His article further goes on to describe the rhapsodes of the Albanian mountains and especially the Epic of “Cikli i Kreshnikëve” as one of the most important artistic pillars of the spiritual culture of Albanians.

Articles from young researchers, Master of Science Students, constitute an important section of this issue of Polis in the best tradition of collaboration between students and their supervisors. Therefore, the researcher Xhois Kuta in her article, “Hate Speech and its Impact on Albanian Youth”, previously submitted as a Master thesis in the Department of Humanities and Communication at the European University of Tirana, under the supervision of Dr. Irena Myzeqari, focuses on how hate speech affects young Albanians. The research is based on a survey conducted with students of the EUT aged 18-24 years old. The author identifies a lack of information on hate speech, and how young people (students) do not know how to identify what can be hate speech or not, and consequently they are not aware of how to manage cases of hate speech and how much this affects their emotional well-being and their daily lives.

In the article, “Online media and broadcasting ethics,” researcher Xhejson Zogu brings a synthesis of his thesis in ethics related to the online media and

broadcasting. His study attempts to analyze the unethical content broadcasted or online through a quantitative and qualitative approach.

In this section dedicated to students' research, we have included a paper by Eriklenta Ymeri on "Public diplomacy as political communication in Albania". This topic was her master thesis at the Department of Humanities and Communication at EUT, and the results of her study demonstrate a low genuine recognition of public diplomacy in the country, as well as the way of engagement of the Albanian state in public diplomacy initiatives, whereas she emphasizes that public diplomacy is in the steps of its development and consolidation.

In the book reviews' section author Dritan Idrizi brings to discussion "Metamorphosis of a capital" by the Albanian renowned writer and screen play author, Ylljet Alicka. In the article, Idrizi aims to analyze the reason the topic of molded consciousness by the system and the country itself in the capital of Albania is still a current phenomenon, and literature constitutes the best narrative approach to society reveals that consciousness as a kind of reflection through the "Metamorphosis of a capital".

Reviewing the book "Three forms of thought" by the demanding author Arben Imami, the scholar Dorian Sevo (PhD), acclaims that this book is work of extremely high interest, one that has been missing from the university textbooks and especially addressed to students of philosophy. As the book deals with the evolutionary origin of thought both in the scientific and religious spectrums, it can benefit not only students, but also society, because according to the reviewer, the book presents the forms of mythological, rational, and religious thought in a noticeably clear manner.

In conclusion, for future issues, further research and analysis is necessary on a range of aspects related to new forms of art, to the critical approaches towards the media and entertainment industry, to material and non- material art heritage, as well as to art and cultural institutions *per se*. Even though research in arts and culture is not flourishing in Albania, in this issue of POLIS we have evidenced a growing attention to research and critical analysis related to literature, to the media systems and social media, as well as an increase of focus on issues related to communication in society and political institutions, in the clinical field of psychology, but also in education and finally sports, from different methodological approaches.

# *Social Media Influencers in Albania*

Self-promotion or a hyper-machine phenomenon \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ ***Dr. Irena MYZEQARI*** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Abstract**

*Background: Social media influencers are gaining special relevance in many studies related to media, communication, and advertisement. Whilst a lot of research has been conducted in several countries on possible effects on different fields, in Albania SMI-s are still considered a pure marketing tool and there is little evidence on trends related to this topic. Purpose: The purpose of this study was to understand why the younger generation tend to follow social media influencers and to identify the most notable features they are looking for when following a specific SMI. Methodology: The data collection method used for this study was a questionnaire, spread out to students at the European University of Tirana, and the sample population age range was from 18 years old up to 26 years old. Conclusion: It results that youth tend to spend more than three hours*

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<sup>1</sup> Irena Myzeqari has completed her doctoral studies in Communication Sciences and has 10 years of experience as a lecturer at the European University of Tirana. Her scientific interests are related to the study of communication, media, identity, and collective memory. During 2020, she was part of the Lead Albania program, enabled by AADF and worked as an advisor in the cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. She has won the excellence scholarship for doctoral studies, an Erasmus+ grant to teach at the University of Warsaw, as well as a DAAD scholarship to pursue a specialization in German language and culture. In July 2020 he attended a specialization course from Harvard Kennedy School, entitled “Leadership and Character in uncertain times”, while in the summer of 2016 he attended a specialization course on “News Literacy” provided by Stony Brook University. Since 2018, she is part of the regional project on “Media Literacy”. Irena has conducted a series of trainings inside and outside the country, has referred to several important scientific conferences, is part of two COST Actions on cultural dissidence in post-communist countries, and “Women on the Move”; is part of the network of young academics of the “European Fund for the Balkans” as well as a member of the international initiative “Cultural Innovators Network”. Since 2012, she has been present in the visual and written media on issues related to communication, public speaking, etc.

*on social media, and they are inclined to follow social media influencers based on the similarities they share with them. One of the most relevant findings is their tendency to strongly disagree in considering reality shows characters and politicians as social media influencers.*

**Key words:** Social Media Influencers, attractiveness, similarities, generation Z

## **Introduction**

Social networks are already an old novelty. Arguments such as: have reshaped the public sphere, have brought the world closer, have made instantaneous communication possible, have created new traits of identity or they are just being copies of who we are, are some of the most common clichés discussed in the theoretical debates in the humanities and not only. Even though, they are nothing but a communication tool, their implications have been playing considerable effects on public discourse and social development, opening new paths of research on numerous fields of studies such as advertisement, public relations, media, arts and culture, all together trying to understand the influence of these networks on the new social, economic and political dynamics.

Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, YouTube, Twitter etc, have become powerful communication platforms, where both private and public individuals have found a space to express themselves, leading the way towards three major changes such as giving to people the ability to stay connected (Mangold & Faulds 2009), providing access to technology to create and share information (Berthon et al., 2012; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010) and last but not least to facilitate the process of knowledge's democratization.

In a previous study conducted by the Department of Communication at the European University of Tirana, entitled "Online Albania", resulted that Facebook and Instagram were somehow *fabricating* famous people, who had become famous for *nothing* and from all four theoretical categorizations, the "Entertainment" category marked the highest number of followers and produced the majority of VIP in the so-called Online Albania. Whilst that study was purely numerical and aimed to conduct a descriptive analysis of the most followed social media profiles in Albania, this study wants to take things one step further and to propose and build an analytical model, which could help us draw some important conclusions of the popularity of social media influencers in Albania and the reasons why people, especially younger generation, tend to follow and appreciate their online presence.

## Theoretical framework

According to the Encyclopedia of Public Relations (2013, p.848) social networking sites can be defined as “(1) web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (Boyd & Ellison, 2008, p. 211). If we closely analyze the first definition, we could see that it is within the genesis of social network to motivate people to build this so-called public presence, which can be used for commercial or political purposes, trying to influence or convince other users who operate within the same bounded system.

With the increasing level of public trust in these new categories of opinion leaders, who operate online and given the high engagement level that these platforms tolerate, it has become extremely significant to further discuss about the rising impact of social media influencers on our personal choices. Sugiharto (2019) suggests that social media influencers have a significant effect on purchasing decisions, while other researchers such as Connolly (2012), Casalo et.al (2018) and Hughes et.al (2019), suggest that consumers are turning to social media influencers to identify products and services that comfort with their lifestyles. Ebru Uzunoglu, head of the department of Public Relation and Advertisement, at the Izmir University, says that [ social media influencers] influence others by their lifestyle, education...[and]...by their attitude and behavior (Uzonoglu 2018). With usually more than 10000 followers, Connolly (2012) says that a social media influencer is someone who engages with brands to promote them, share information and who is an expert in the given field.

Even though influencers have been here long before social networking, disguised as opinion leaders, celebrities or endorsers, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok, have brought the game into a whole new level, because as Tuten & Solomon (2012) argument, they are using self- presentation to get a sort of intimacy with their audiences. For many researchers, SMI popularity and engagement are two fundamental elements, which have turned influencer marketing into a 10 billion dollars industry in 2021. According to Sinan Aral (2020) ... “Popularity is an influencer’s reach, typically measured by the number of their followers... [ while] ... engagement is the rate of interaction that an influencer inspires in their followers, measured... [in] likes and comments and privately, by campaign managers, with click- through and conversation rates” (p.192).



When trying to understand the reasons behind the given popularity and engagement rate, scholars have agreed upon themselves, that there are some main features that followers are looking for in a social media influencer. Attractiveness, similarities, authenticity, and trust, seem to be some of the most relevant features that guide a social media user to follow someone on social media, each having specific definitions based on the type of industry/ field where the SMI is operating.

It is important to understand that each of these concepts falls under abstract categories of definitions and sometime attractiveness is related to physical appearance, sometimes to the campaign itself and sometimes to the product they are promoting. For example, Dekavalla (2019) believes that attractiveness is both related to how the followers perceive that influencer and the brand they are promoting. The same logic implies to the concept of similarities, where scholars have concluded that people tend to follow influencers with whom they identify with (Lou and Yuan, 2019). Authenticity and trust seem to be closely related to each other as followers, especially younger generations, tend to evaluate genuine content that offers a lot of personal insight.

## State of art in Albania

Even though numerous studies have been conducted in several countries, research in Social Media Influencers in Albania, is still of little relevance. According to an article published in April 2020, in Monitor journal, we are still speaking about SMI, only in economic terms and... “as a profession that gets paid quite well”, having thus less and less discussion on the possible effects on society, media and communication in general. In a study published on March by a group of researchers, it was admitted that... “No scientific publication related to social and content media usage were discovered in Albania... [and] their study provided with incremental data that [would] facilitate future research [in this field]”<sup>2</sup> ( Vukatana, et al 2022)

From the statistical data gathered online, it results that from 2,872,758 people, who live in Albania, in July 2022 there were 2,191,467 Internet users, or around 76.3% of the population had online penetration. From this percentage, 67,8% or 1,947,600 users have a Face Book profile<sup>3</sup>. Based on another statistical source, in December 2022 there were 1,127, 600 people on Instagram and most of the represented age were males from 25 up to 34 years old. <sup>4</sup> The use of Instagram seems to be growing in a higher speed, a trend which is reflected in the entire region and confirmed by the Balkan Barometer 2022, with 60 % of Balkan youth

<sup>2</sup> <https://ieeca.org/journal/index.php/JEECAR/article/view/965/450>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats4.htm#europe>

<sup>4</sup> <https://napoleoncat.com/stats/instagram-users-in-albania/2022/12/>

using Instagram. <sup>5</sup> TikTok seems to be the second social media with the highest growing rate in the last year and last statistics reveal that there are 227,974 people from Albania, who have a profile on this platform. Insights from statistical sources show that 68 % of the users are in an age range from 18- 24 and second highest group are adults of the 25- 34 age range.<sup>6</sup>

With a simple Google search, you can find numerous articles and pages who offer statistical data on the most followed Albanian influencers, but you can find very few detailed analysis on reasons why these profiles have the highest popularity and engagement rate or even more, discuss on possible role models they are creating for the people following them. If we refer to the study conducted in 2017, on the most followed social media profiles in Albania, the results are as follow:

Top Ten	
1.Ermal Mamaqi	2067285
2.Edi Rama	1124392
3.Sali Berisha	1066951
4.Bleona Qerreti	965565
5.Alban Skenderaj	931199
6.Elvana Gjata	925134
7.Xhensila Myrtezaj	886363
8.Luana Vjollca	840466
9.Angela Martini	835967
10.Eni Koci	741487

Five years later the general panorama doesn't seem to have changed dramatically. Facebook remains the most used social platform and somehow the same people are still leading the way as social media influencers. <sup>7</sup>

Top Ten		Followers	Engagement
1.Luana Vjollca	Art/ Actors/ Music/ Singer	2.1 M	1%
2.Noizy	Art	1.9 M	5.8%
3.Elvana Gjata	Art/Music/ Actor	1.8 M	
4. Xhensila Myrtezaj	Art/Music	1.8 M	
5.Marina Vjollca		1.5 M	1.9%
6.Rashel Kolaneci	Celebrity	1.4 M	3.21%
7.Elvis Naci		1.3 M	0.6%

<sup>5</sup> file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/BalkanBarometer2022\_pocket\_edition\_final\_prw.pdf

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.start.io/audience/tiktok-users-in-albania>

<sup>7</sup> [https://starngage.com/plus/dashboard/influencer/search?platform=instagram&sort\\_by=starngage&followers=1000000%2C5000000&followersIndex=7&countries=AL](https://starngage.com/plus/dashboard/influencer/search?platform=instagram&sort_by=starngage&followers=1000000%2C5000000&followersIndex=7&countries=AL)



8.Bes Kallaku	Art/ Celebrity/ Music	1.3 M	0.81%
9.Ariena Ara	Music/ Modeling	1.2 M	0.8%
10.Ermal Mamaqi	Actor	1.2 M	0.1%

It is vital to understand that this issue is both technological and ideological and that it should inspire further analysis in both these dimensions. Why the most followed social media influencers are celebrities? What do they reflect in terms of attractiveness, similarities, and trust in relation to the audience and how they can be instrumentalized by other influencing industries? All these are fundamental questions that we should pose to get some answers that could help us tackle challenges coming from this field and this study is a first step in creating a reference on further research. For Nils S. Borchers... “SMI-s...combine different roles, which, have traditionally been occupied by separate actors... [such as] intermediary, content distributor, creative content producer, community manager, testimonial, strategic counselor, and event host. The combination of these roles in just one actor opens new opportunities for strategic communication and can produce appreciated synergy effects...” (2019, p. 255). It is exactly in this synergy that we should focus our research and to better understand the dynamics of the society in the age of AI.

## Methodology

Based on the theoretical framework and similar studies conducted on this topic, the methods and instrumental tools to collect the necessary data for this paper were carefully chosen. Structured as an empirical study, this paper aimed to collect some preliminary data on the state of Social Media Influencers in Albania and to create a model for further analysis on this topic.

Given the lack of studies on the Albanian territory, the most suitable data collection method was a questionnaire, compound by 12 questions, divided in two main sections; the first session aimed to collect data on general attitudes on social media such as time spent and most used social networks, while in the second session, the sample population was expected to reflect on categories they consider as SMI-s, reasons why they follow them and in which industry they share a higher value. The questionnaire was spread out online and the target group for this study was compound by students at the European University of Tirana, in an age range from 18 years old up to 26 years old.

The main research objective of this study was to understand the perceptions of the younger generation on social media influencers and to identify which are some of the most important features they are looking for when following them



online. The questions reflect the current dynamics of the theoretical debates on this topic, especially those related to the main elements that make some followers choose their influencers. Finally, given that we were measuring perceptions, it was difficult to express our expectations in a concrete, cause effect hypothesis, but we were inclined to believe that:

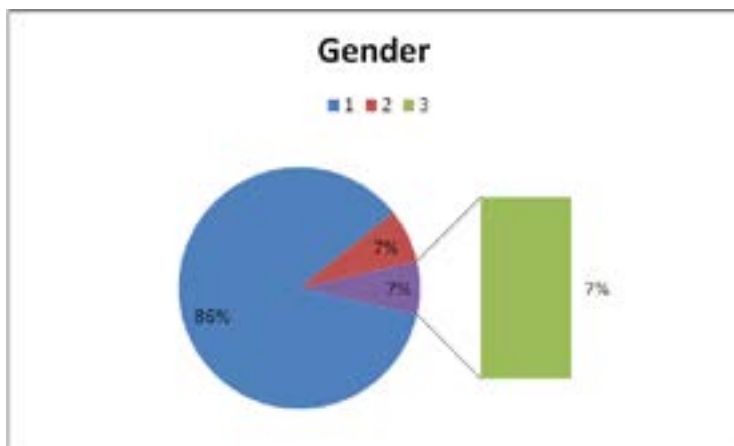
- Younger generations spend a considerable amount of time on social networks
- Younger generations tend to follow more celebrities on social media and consider them as main influencers
- Younger generations tend to select SMI-s based on similarities they share with them
- The data collected online were processed and they are further analyzed and discussed in the following session.

## Results

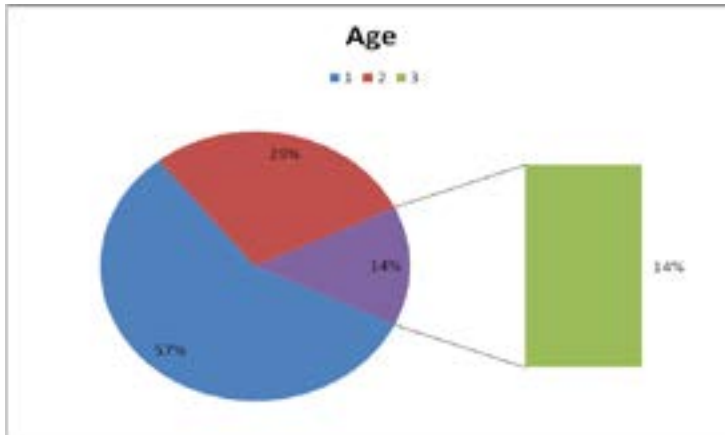
### *Daily habits*

The questionnaire reached out to a sample of 140 students and most of the respondents were females, with 86% of the total sample, 7 % were male, and 10 of the respondents denied answering to this question. When we refer to age range of the respondents, more than half of them, 57 % were 21-23 years, 29 % were 18-20 years old and the least represented age range were those of the age range from 24 up to 26 years old.

**GRAPH I.** Gender

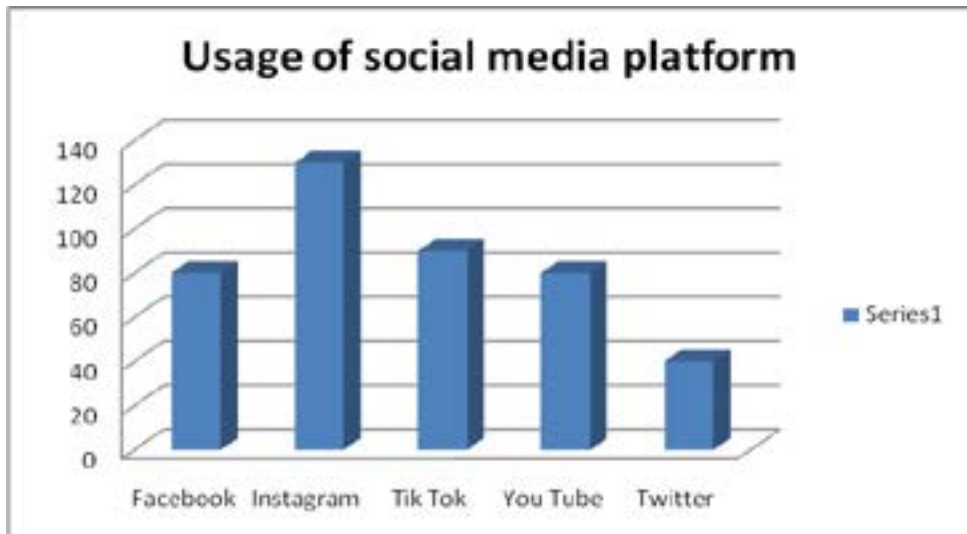


**GRAPH II. Age range**



One of the most important questions of the first session of the questionnaire was the question related to the most used social media platform. From the answers, 92 % of the sample population was using Instagram. You tube and Facebook shared similar percentage with 57 % and TikTok was used by 64 % of the sample population. Twitter was the least favorable social platform online with only 29 % of respondents.

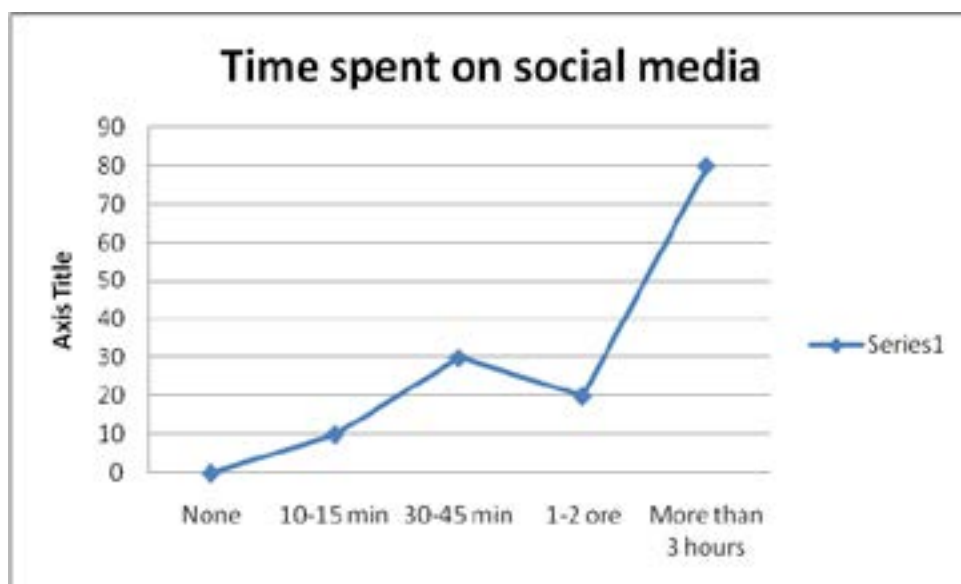
**GRAPH III. Social media platform**



The respondents in this question had the chance to give more than one answer and as we may notice from the data, most of them were active in at least three social media platforms and it would be interesting for further studies, to discuss on possible reasons why they choose one over the others.

A deep discussion happening around the topic of social media is the amount of time people, especially younger generations, tend to spend online. In the digital report published for 2022, on the daily time spent using social media, there is a noticeable growing tendency to spend more than 2 hours scrolling, sharing, and commenting on social media<sup>8</sup>. From the data we gathered from our sample population, most of the respondents use more than 3 hours on social media.

**GRAPH IV.** Time spent online



The last question of the first session wanted to shed some light on the reasons why younger generation use social media platforms. If we refer to the data gathered worldwide<sup>9</sup>, around 50% of the respondents, affirm that social media platforms help them to remain in touch with friends and family. Other mentioned reasons are: *filling spare time, reading news stories, finding content, seeing what is being talked about and finding inspiration for things to do and to buy.*

We posed the same question to our sample population and from the answers we got, the majority of the respondents perceive social media platforms as a place where they can spend their free time, while other reasons they mentioned were:

<sup>8</sup> <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-global-overview-report>

<sup>9</sup> <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-global-overview-report>

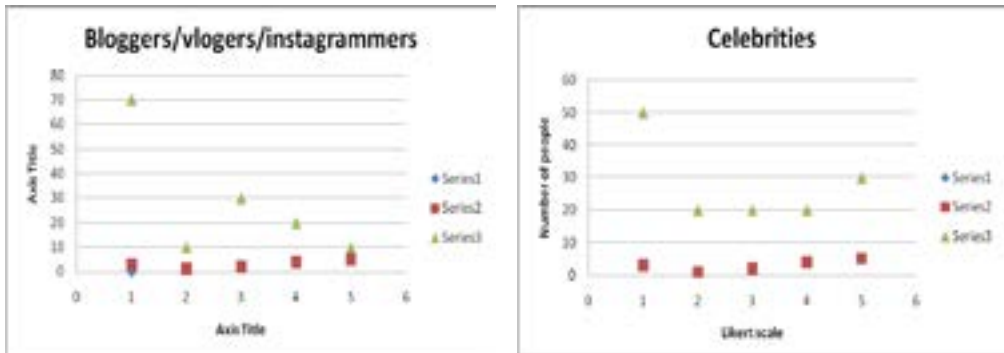
to maintain communication, to search for the latest information, to watch videos, to get acquainted with the latest trends etc. Following the trend of their answers, it is surprising to see that social media influencers for this sample are not perceived as a clear reason why they use social media, giving us an idea that SMI-s operate more as subliminal messages and they are tools integrated within the social media system.

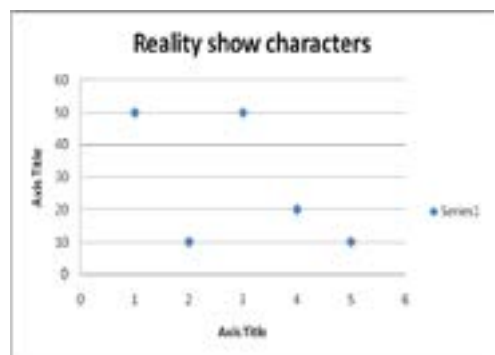
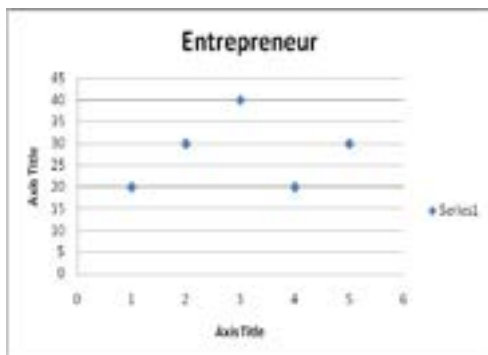
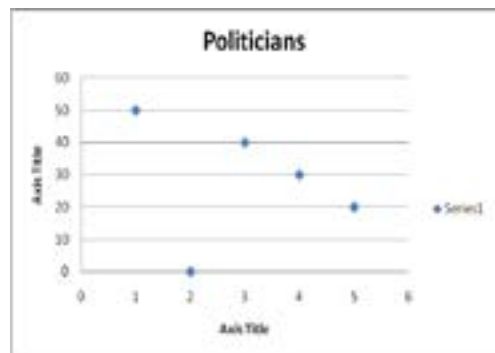
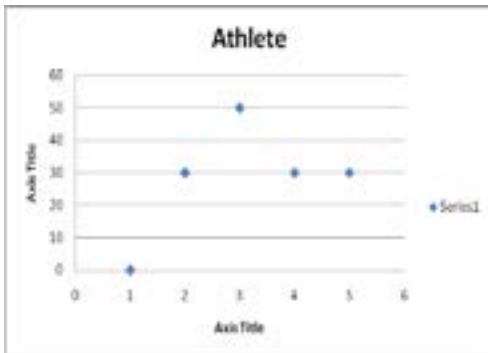
**Power of the influencers**

The second session of the questionnaire aimed to open a deeper discussion on reasons why they follow social media influencers and which categories they considered as such. When asked if they follow social media influencers on social platforms, 36 % of the sample said no and 65 % of them gave a positive answer. Given that most of the sample affirmed that they were following SMI on social media, the outcomes of the next question can offer some interesting data as they consider all categories (blogger/vlogger/instagrammer, celebrity, athlete, politician, and entrepreneur) to be fitting the theoretical description of SMI-s.

Based on a Likert scale range from 1 up to 5, respondents were asked to express the rate of approval on who can be called a SMI and from the answers, it seems that all given categories are eligible to be named/ called influencers. Below you may see all the data for all given categories. For specifications, 1 was equal to “strongly disagree”, 5 was equal to “completely agree”

**GRAPH V**





As we may notice from the graphics, most of the respondents are inclined to perceive athletes, entrepreneurs, and celebrities as social media influencers, whilst there is a tendency to strongly disagree in considering reality shows characters and politicians as social media influencers. If we refer to the data, more than 50 respondents strongly disagree with the idea of considering them as influencers and the same number affirms the same for reality show characters.

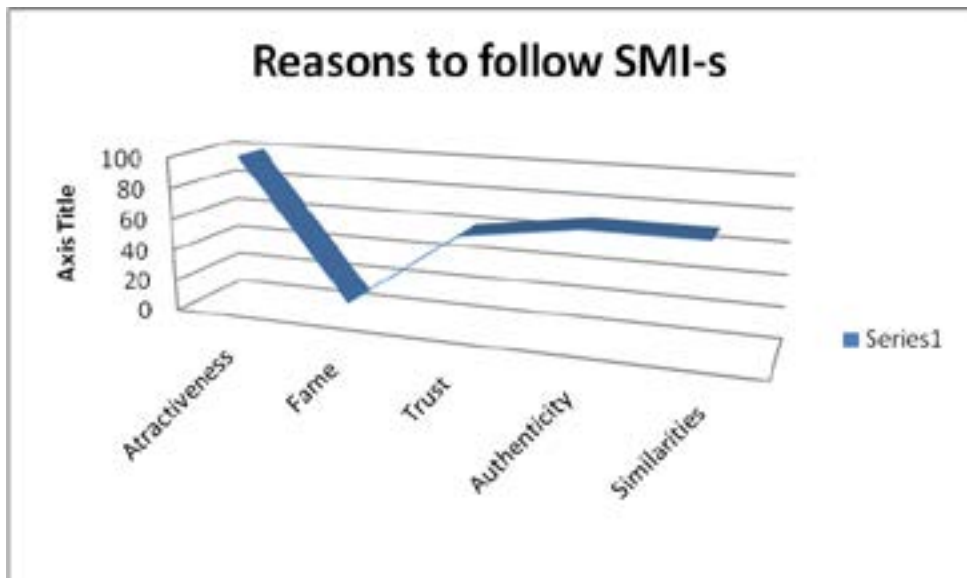
To understand more on profiles of people they follow on social media, we asked them two other relevant questions. First, we wanted to know some of the SMI-s that they follow and secondly, we wanted to know more about topics that these SMI-s post/ share on their profiles. One of the main findings related to the first question is the diversity of names that come up as social media influencers such as: *Blendi Fevziu, Aulona Musta, Angela Merkel, Chiara Ferragni, Arbana Osmani, Elvis Naci, Sara Karaj, Dojna Mema, Dorina Mema, Estela Ujka etj*. These findings bring into attention another important theoretical statement related to the social media platforms, which has to do with the scale of the influence.

Even though all this debate is still relatively new and undefined... “it seems that the industry is sorting influencers into five common levels... [which are] Nano influencers- from 10-to 1000 followers, Micro influencers from 1000 to 10000 followers, Macro influencers from 10000 to 100.000 followers, mega influencers

from 100000 to 1000000 and Celebrity influencers more than 1 million followers” (Miles 2019; p. 228) . If we search for the names given by the sample, it results that we have a representation of all five scales, but the tendency remains on Macro Influencers, as a middle category, where followers can still have a personal contact with the SMI, while flavoring the sense of being influenced by a Celebrity. Concerning topics these influencers post more on their social media profiles, Beauty, Fashion, Fit& Health, and Travel, are some of the most mentioned key words, results that reflect somehow the interests that the sample share and what they are fond of finding on social media. The result might also reflect the fact that most of the respondents were younger women, indicating that might be a need to find out if gender is a considerable variable in defining differences on this topic and social media in general.

In the last two questions we wanted to understand the reasons that motivate younger generation in following a social media influencer, and from all 4 theoretical features such as, attractiveness, trust, authenticity and similarities, attractiveness seems to be the most noticeable feature that drives them in choosing their SMI-s. Authenticity and similarity, seems to be highly valuable as well, as 70 respondents believe that they are also solid reasons that take into analysis when following someone online. In the questionnaire we put also fame as a variable, but as it is reflected by the date, being famous is enough reason to draw genuine interest.

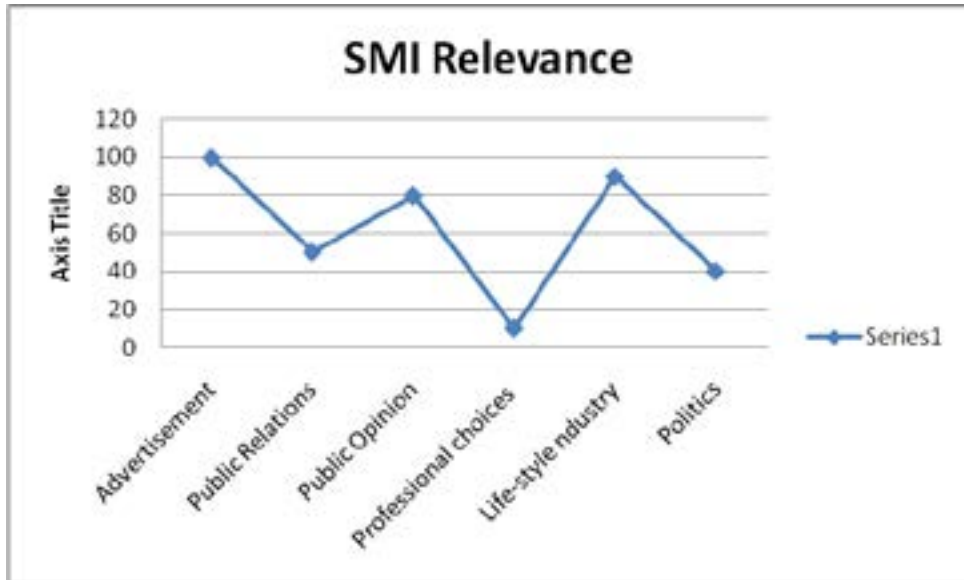
**GRAPH VI**



When asked about the industry where they believe SMI-s can be more relevant, the sample clearly states a tendency to connect them with advertisement, the

life-style industry and public opinion and less with professional choices, political campaign, and public relations. The graph below offers more detailed insight on these findings:

**GRAPH VII**



In most of the questions of the second session, respondents were allowed to give more than one answer, because we were interested in analyzing main trends and later this data can be used for more sophisticated statistical analysis, because as we may guess from the data, each variable can play an important role in better decoding the relevance of SMI-s in today's world.

## **Discussion and further research**

Internet has given a voice to everybody. It doesn't matter if it comes from a phone, from a blog or from a Facebook profile; a statement can become viral within a second and influence audiences in taking and making drastic decisions and changes. Social Media Influencers are absolutely one of the most powerful mechanisms of this system, as they can amplify audience's reach and at the same time making people believe, that they are making these choices based on their free will. Research show that audiences neglect the supremacy of algorithms and how the data we offer on Meta verse, are used to make a better profile of our own likes and dislikes.

At the beginning of this research, we stated three main believes such as:

- Younger generations spend a considerable amount of time on social networks
- Younger generations tend to follow more celebrities on social media and consider them as main influencers
- Younger generations tend to select SMI-s based on similarities with themselves.

The data gathered by the sample affirmed that youth tend to spend more than 3 hours on social media and that a considerable part of their activity on these platforms was focused on interactions with SMI-s. For them, celebrities were considered to fit best their idea of influencers and the main reason why they follow them was the similarities they shared with what the celebrities posted on their profiles. Even though, the results of this study cannot be generalized for a higher percentage of population, it opens a path of further research and to investigate the perception of the messages, age and gender similarities and differences and how this new industry can influence the nature of art, communication and even politics in the years to come.

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# *The impact of Albanian cartoon films on the learning process, stimulating thought, imagination, and their use as an instructional tool for improving and facilitating the implementation of the preschool curriculum*

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<sup>2</sup> Elkjana Gjipali has completed her academic studies for 'Film and Television' at the Academy of Arts, Tirana. After the academy she specialized in 'Film Industry' in Warsaw. Over the last 10 years, Elkjana Gjipali has worked as a producer of several short films as well as 4 feature films. In 2017, she was selected by the 'Lead Albania' program and appointed to the position of advisor at the Ministry of Culture. During this year she attended several leadership trainings in "Harvard Kennedy School" and "Center for Creative Leadership" Brussel. In 2018, she started working as a lecturer at UAMD for Film and Video Production. Since 2021 she is the workshop leader for filmmaking in TUMO Tirana. Lately she is a co-founder of Tirana Film Commission and beside film production and working as an educator she dedicates her time to creating new policies and incentives to promote the film industry in Albania. In her free time, she has launched several campaigns supporting women rights in Albania.

<sup>3</sup> Elona Hasko holds a Master of Science in Clinical Psychology by the University of Tirana and has completed a 4-years training in psychoanalysis in Torino, Italy. She holds a MA in Public Administration by the joint program of University of Tirana and University of Nebraska. She has 15 years of professional experience in leading various sectors in public administration, in the private sector, as a teacher in universities and has been engaged as a social expert in the civil society sector and as a psychoanalyst

## Abstract

*With the development of technology, teachers face the challenge of finding new and creative methods to improve the educational process in their work with preschool children and cartoon films for children can be an instructional and educational tool for using in the classrooms, preschools or other educational activities for preschool children. Using cartoon films for children could be a very interesting method, instructional and could improve children's attention, improve language and communication skills, establish relationships between subjects in the film and develop problem-solving skills, enhance their imagination and help comprehend emotions and discussions about them. In an experiment realised with children 4-6 years in 4 public and private preschools in Tirana, while showing cartoon films for children in Albanian language and produced by public artistic institutions during the years '80, '90, it was noticed that the children were interested and engaged in discussing about the topics of the cartoon films content. Showing cartoon films for children as an instructional method for explaining topics about hygiene and health, respecting rules and community, helping others and preventing bullying, resulted to be a very useful tool for implementing the activities of the basic-preschool-curricula and that facilitated the work of teachers in getting the attention of children, explaining important topics and involving children in discussions.*

**Key words:** children, cartoon, problem-solving skills, movies, language

## Introduction

With the development of technology, teachers face the challenge of finding new and creative methods to improve the educational process in their work with preschool children. It is important to develop creative and interesting activities that make learning more enjoyable and also interesting for children. The use of creative models and visual representations help the learning process by developing creative and critical discussions among children. Cartoon films are one of these methods. The presentation of cartoon films grasp children's attention and ensures the continuity of this attention reduces tension and anxiety by creating a calmer environment for learning (Heitzmann, 1998). The cartoon films using visual images became very effective in teaching children values, concepts and rules which are easily identified by them. In the process of discussing the film's content,

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in the clinical private sector. She has contributed in the field of child protection, youth education and the mental health protection by directing projects supported by Albanian public institutions, by the European Union and international organizations operating in the child protection defense.

children give ideas about each detail, comment and develop the story by making easily the connections between the objects and figures they see. Children thus develop creative and critical thinking (Özalp, 2006). In order to see the impact of cartoon films in the process of learning and development of conceptual thinking in preschool children, we decided to bring back 20 old Albanian cartoon-films through the screen, because the language of films is in Albanian and their content is appropriate for the children 4-6 years and the topics could be useful for treating helpful and educational topics and thematic. The films were divided into categories according to the topics and messages they conveyed as: -films that announce the topic of protection and care for the environment and health: (The swing, Zana dhe Miri, Elkana and the swallow, Fight for life, The worm); - bullying: (For a nut, The snowboy, Çufo, Two feasts, Te adventures of Piku); -health and hygiene: Fight for life -helping others, implementing the rules in the community and empathy,(The bear searching for his father, Genti's clocks, The scribble, Erinda and the doll, etc).

## Methodology

The participants were the children of preschool groups in 4 public and private kindergartens in Tirana Municipality. Children aged 4-5-6 years were shown films based on the selected topics. While watching the films, the children generated various discussions and comments. The children were left free to discuss and then asked about what they saw. From the discussions and questions raised by them, it is noticed that through the presentation of the cartoons, the children brought ideas about the concrete objects and events they saw in the film, developed imagination and creative thinking, proposed solutions to specific situations and generated question-answer discussions between each other.

Cartoons can promote learning and for this reason very useful as an instructional tool in the education activities and programs. The use of comics and visual activities during the educational process resulted to be more effective in learning skills and abilities in children, improve language and writing skills, develop problem-solving skills, increase attention, develop critical thinking and understanding, improve the memory, improve communication skills (Kleeman, 2006, Eker, Karadeniz, 2014;)

## Results

During the presentation of the cartoon films, we noticed that the children developed the following skills:

Such short-cartoon films help the children to develop what is called comic speech,

which allows them to learn. It was noticed that while watching the films the children were more focused and involved in the discussion process, also the presence of humour stimulated their interest and they found it easier to remember the subject of the film. During the activity, the children were involved in discussions about the content of the films. “How did the squirrels get the nut?”, “Do you help each other in the garden?”; -”yes”; “sometimes”;- Did the squirrels share the nut with each other? Who took the nut? - “The Bear took the nut, the squirrels were left with nothing”. (For a nut.)

“What does the boy have?”, “He will not eat”; - “The boy will find an appetite to sweep because mom told him to sweep the house.”; “Wood is not for eating, it is for taking home to warm up”.;- “He was tired, he has a little more and ran out of wood.” (Lost appetite)

“The grandparents dressed Loli with so much clothes. Loli became white”; “He became like a snowman”. (Snow Boy).

“They are both playing with a ball”; - “The ball fell on the flowers”; - “The flower was plucked.” The other flowers were upset.” (Zana and Miri).

“That old man is working, the boys are playing”?; -”They are working the land. What are they looking for”?; -”Were they tired”?; -”They planted the earth”?; -”There is no pipe”? (Work is gold).

Children are easily distracted during an activity and also bored if it is only narrative in nature. The cartoons we presented to them had duration of 5-10 minutes, so they were not distracted while watching it and their attention was higher. Children have the opportunity to express creative ideas and stimulate imagination through watching movies.

-”Microbe is a king. Microbes are hunting”.(Fight for life),

- “The flowers helped the children and they took care of the flowers”. (Zana and Miri).

The cartoon films make an important contribution to the development of thinking and understanding skills in children; develop the child’s ability to comment and improve critical skills. Children’s perspectives and interpretations of what happens in the film will be different regarding the same subject, in this way they would face a variety of ideas, and improve the learning results. Through the cartoon films, children establish relationships between subjects in the film and develop problem-solving skills. By showing the film, asking the children about what they saw, it is easier for the teacher to get their attention and involve them actively in the lesson. Children also develop good writing and speaking skills, learn concepts, rules and values by describing and discussing in groups the images and events they see in the films.

“Microbes make us sick when we don’t wash our hands.” “Here at the kindergarten we play with the toys, then we go to wash our hands before sitting at the table for eating the lunch”. (Fight for life).

“Once when I was in the elevator, I lost my grandfather... but then I found him.” We don’t leave without our parents’ permission, because then we get lost.” (The bear who was looking for his father).

“The tree was broken by the wind and the worm.” The tree grew, those things that came (here the child is talking about the wind, the goat and the worm) destroyed the tree, he was trying to protect it but the tree was broken.” (The worm).

“Loli dressed a lot of clothes, because the grandmother was worried about him getting sick.” ; “Loli didn’t play and can’t move because he’s wearing a lot, a lot of clothes.”; “They are bullying Loli, we don’t joke with our friends.” (Snow Boy).

“The little ant won the race because he didn’t cheat.” (The ants race).

The visual presentation of images promotes communication and helps memorize the message related to the learning objectives. Learning through cartoons is not about rote memorization. As long as the movies are made up of images and symbols, they can stay in the memory for a longer time; therefore it is easier to bring back the learned knowledge.

“When we kill the arm, we put bandages on it.” (Woodworking).

“The leaves of the tree fell because the wind blows.”; “The mice dug up the bricks”. (The worm).

“The boy did the chores because he had no appetite, he helped his mother and then he ate all the dishes”; “When my sister makes a mess, I clean the house too.” “I help my mother with the broom”. (Lost appetite).

Cartoons also help children to understand and talk about emotions. The children involved in this experiment used a lot of words or tried to find them for expressing what they saw.

“That girl is upset.”; “She is waiting for the swallow”. (Elkana and the swallow).

“The bear is crying”? - “He lost his father”. (The bear that was looking for its father).

“Wow, the tree is crying, the tree’s arm broke, it was killed”. - “The tree is awake”?!,- “The children are petting the tree”. (The swing).

Also, the use of films according to the proposed topics helped the teachers use the films as an interesting and instructional tool to discuss those topics for the purpose of the implementation of the preschool curriculum.

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# *The implications of obsessive-compulsive disorder due to Covid 19 Pandemic situation* \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_ ***Dr. Brunilda HOXHAIJ***<sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ ***Dr. Elsida SINAJ***<sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>2</sup> Joida Porozaj is a clinical psychologist. She currently works in the Public Administration sector at the National Registering Centre. Joida completed her bachelor's studies in Psychology at the University of Tirana and received a master's degree in clinical psychology from European University of Tirana. Her research interests focus on Clinical Psychology, Psychotherapy, Personality Psychology and Social Functioning.

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## **Abstract**

*Background: Obsessive-compulsive disorder is one of the anxiety disorders that directly affects many areas of life and its quality. Purpose: This study aims to explore how obsessive-compulsive disorder affects various aspects of quality of life such as family life, social relationships, and activities of daily living. Its focus is also on exploring personal beliefs and social support.*

*Method: The quality method is based on a case study model, the subject of which was part of the clinical population of persons diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive disorder in Tirana.*

*The study showed that obsessive-compulsive disorder has major impacts on areas such as family life and activities of daily living and a significant impact on social relationships. Conclusion: The result showed that personal beliefs and social support were important factors during and after therapeutic treatment. It is recommended that the study should be applied on larger samples to gain more data for Albania.*

**Keywords:** *obsessive-compulsive disorder, case study, quality of life, social support, personal beliefs.*

## **Introduction**

Obsessive-compulsive disorder is one of the most discussed issues in recent years in the field of psychology. For years, experiments and studies have been conducted on anxiety disorders, a category which also includes obsessive-compulsive disorder. The reason science is paying increased attention to this group of neuroses is that it has noticed the most common problems that the

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individual faces today. In everyday life we can often hear someone described as ‘obsessed with his job’ or expressions like ‘he is obsessed with that girl’, ‘he is obsessed with football’ and so on. It is deemed necessary to make the difference between the use of this term (obsession, obsessive thinking) in everyday life and in the science of psychology. When used in everyday life it relates to someone’s tremendous interest in someone else or something. This person can spend a lot of time thinking about the person or situation / activity they like. Unlike a person suffering from obsessive-compulsive disorder, these thoughts are desirable and acceptable to the person, unlike the obsessions that a person with obsessive-compulsive disorder tries to stop. Based on these changes, a distinction is made between the daily use of the term ‘obsession’ and its use in the clinic. The person who goes to the clinic suffers because of the presence of these unwanted thoughts and experiences, constant anxiety, the levels of which he can reduce by performing compulsive actions.

Obsessions and compulsions constitute a cycle that is constantly repeated and that affects the routine of the individual (American Psychiatric Association., 2000). They become problematic for its normal functioning as they take time and interfere with daily activities. Individuals become hostage to strange thoughts that constantly ‘occupy’ their minds and make them feel strange, anxious, and scared. There are people who know themselves well and whether they pose a danger to society or not, yet they live in fear and suspicion that they may hurt a relative or someone innocent. There are other people who feel the need to constantly make sure that they have closed the door after leaving the house, if they have turned off the stove, if they have turned off the gas, etc. and do repetitive actions to check and confirm that everything is as it should be because if they don’t do this something terrible will happen (Al Khalifa & Al Ansari, 2018). People who suffer from OCD are characterized by emotional problems. They have difficulty regulating and controlling emotions because they are involved in the cycle of obsessions and compulsions, which generates inevitable anxiety. Under the pressure of anxiety and trying to get rid of it, people with OCD are forced to perform several repetitive actions (Rachman & De Silva, 2009). The latter are as undesirable as obsessions and can be considered by the person himself as vain and irrational as obsessive thoughts. Therefore, they have an extreme desire to avoid danger or situations that provoke obsessive thoughts.

In developed countries, more and more attention are given to the studies conducted in connection with this disorder. The purpose of worldwide studies and experiments is to discover the causes that lead to OCD and further find the most adequate treatments depending on the factors that have prompted the problem. Despite efforts, so far science has managed to discover only risk factors, but not concrete causes that serve as initiators of the disorder. Among the risk factors for



obsessive-compulsive disorder are organic causes, related to the dysfunction of the neurotransmitter serotonin in the brain and this has been proven after patients with OCD have responded positively to antidepressant medications (Hamad & Al-Mudhhi, 2017). On the other hand, brain imaging studies have shown that there is a link between certain abnormalities in the brain and symptoms of obsessive-compulsive disorder. Genetic causes are also an explanation because people who have a parent, brother, sister or other relative who suffers from OCD are much more likely to be affected by the same problem compared to a person who has no relatives with symptoms of the disorder (Masoudi, 2015). On the other hand, the traumas one may go through during childhood may have their impact on increasing the probability of suffering from obsessive-compulsive disorder in the future.

People with *OCD* may feel ashamed and refuse to seek help, even if the condition is serious and the problems that come because of the disorder are numerous (Marie Humble, 2020). However, it should be born in mind that there are other cases who do not go to the clinic due to the stigma that exists in society regarding this mental health issue.

In Albania there is no data to show the prevalence of this problem in the population. Moreover, even scientific research in the field of psychology in our country is not focused on research and exploration of this issue. The consequences that *OCD* have on the lives of people suffering from it are numerous and affect many areas of life. Therefore, the need arises to study the relationship between obsessive-compulsive disorder and quality of life. Quality of life is a broad field that encompasses many aspects of overall functioning. Some of them that will be considered in this study are the activities of daily life, social relationships, emotional state and how elements such as individual beliefs, social support and ideas of perfectionism affect obsessive-compulsive disorder.

## Methodology

This study was undertaken to study the relationship between obsessive-compulsive disorder and quality of life. This type of topic is little studied in our country and research is needed in terms of addressing the issues associated with the disorder. The study was conceived to be an exploratory type, which are common in psychological research. The approach that has been followed for the realization of this study is the qualitative one. The qualitative method aims to produce a deliberate exploratory sample, and this gives the researcher the opportunity to research in detail the issues that are of interest to him. This is achieved through open-ended questions that enable the participant to

express themselves freely and give the researcher the necessary information. The purpose of this study is to explore the individual experiences of a person who has been diagnosed with OCD and the consequences of this problem in his life. In this study, interviews with semi-structured questions, designed by the researcher and the Twenty Affirmations Test that were used in it. The population from which the champion was chosen are individuals with OCD in the city of Tirana. This is a delicate issue and not easily identifiable. The sample of this study consists of a clinical case. The subject is a girl, 29 years old, currently engaged. She was diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive disorder 2 years ago. Sampling is without probability and belongs to the exploratory type, and it was intentional. The interviews contain closed-ended questions and open-ended questions. They started with open and general questions to initially establish the relationship between the two parties. The interviewer occasionally used the summary and exploratory questions about the issues being discussed. The Twenty Affirmations Test (TNJP) was the second instrument used for data collection. It was developed by Baumann, Mitchell & Persell in 1989 (Baumann, Mitchell, & Persel, 1989) and is an instrument that asks participants to give twenty answers to the question: 'Who am I?' He also asks not to pay attention to the order in which the statements come to mind or to the person you may want to complete, but simply write them as if you were telling yourself. Through it, important data are collected that are closely related to the concept of self.

## **Analysis**

Data analysis was performed based on the rules of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a process that uses raw data to identify key topics. The raw data in this study were collected through semi-structured interview and through the Twenty Affirmations Test. Analysis involves segmenting and categorizing data and finally re-linking them to make their final interpretation (Matthews & Ross, 2010). The analysis was performed using conceptualization techniques, critical thinking, etc.

The subject of this study is a 29-year-old female with the initials I.M. She was born and lives in Tirana with her family. Her family consists of mom and two sisters who are younger than her. Her father passed away 15 years ago because of an incurable disease. She has been engaged for three years; and her fiancé lives in the city of Durrës. The participant has completed higher studies in the laboratory department and currently works in an analysis laboratory in Tirana.

The first signs of obsessive-compulsive disorder in the participant were noticed by her mother at an early age. She explains that when she was little, she refused

to wear the same clothes twice if they weren't washed. The mother, due to her daughter's behavior, was forced to wash her clothes every day. I.M. mentions this detail as one of the first signs of obsessive-compulsive disorder.

At different periods of life, at I.M. obsessions and compulsions of various kinds have prevailed. During the interview with her, the researcher collected data that showed which obsessions and compulsions were most common. The obsessive thoughts that caused her the most anxiety was fear of pollution from impurities or other substances of the environment; fear of injury, accident, or death to her loved ones; thoughts and scenes about possible accidents that could happen to her closest people.

Among her most frequent compulsions, she mentions: the compulsions of cleanliness and washing, mainly of the house and the environment where she worked, as the places where she spent most of her time; washing clothes and bedding; repetitive rituals of different phrases for a certain number of times in cases of obsessive thoughts about accidents or the possible death of people close to her.

The second category of obsessions and compulsions that I.M. related to the fear of death or accidents that could happen to people close to her. These thoughts had started shortly after she had lost her father when she was 15 years old. Throughout the interview, this was the only moment when the participant was reluctant to speak. Despite the difficulty of sharing the event with a stranger, she says that period coincides with the time when she started having 'some weird thoughts', as she calls them.

The start of the pandemic has been a real challenge for I.M. as it was an event that came shortly after the participant had completed the therapy for OCD, which had proved very effective for her. In the period when Covid19 started, I.M. has been improving, as she explains during the interview, she had mastered the ways in which she managed to control her compulsions and was improving increasingly. It was at that time that she began to fear again that the virus would affect her or her relatives. As a result, she reverted to some old compulsive behaviors, which she struggled to control over time. At first, she says she started spending time cleaning as before. She had learned to be careful 'as much as she should', even though it does not have a unit of measurement. As I.M. also mentions, she respected the measures that everyone should take against Covid19, which was clearly seen even during the interview with her. She never took off her mask, respected social distance and wore gloves. In addition to the help, he has received from the therapist, it should also be mentioned the fact that I.M. is a 'strong' person, a term by which she describes herself, saying this in the sense that she has the will and if she really wants something, she achieves her goal. She describes her obsessions as strange because they caused her confusion as she knew they were not real but nevertheless

she believed them and went further, performing compulsive actions. However, the thoughts and actions that are triggered by the coronavirus should not be seen only in the context of obsessive-compulsive disorder but should be judged as a real fear based on the probability of being affected by the coronavirus.

## Results

Daily life is very dynamic. It includes a range of activities with which the individual engages and devotes most of his time and energies. Activities can be of different natures: paid work, volunteer work, maternal care for children, housework, school, training, etc. For the individual to perform well in these activities, he must be physically, emotionally, and psychologically healthy. Achieving healthy balances in these areas of life is a real challenge for people suffering from OCD.

In this study I.M. was diagnosed with OCD two years ago, the consequences of which it has suffered for years. She currently works in an analysis laboratory and has shown how OCD has influenced her work and other important activities she conducts during a typical day. 'Home' and 'work' are two of the environments which are described by the participant as those places where she most often displayed her compulsive behaviors. She explains that her obsession with cleaning and fear of bacteria was so present in her life that it made her lose focus in her work as a lab technician or in other work at home.

While at work, the situation presents itself even more problematic for I.M. The main cause of this is pandemic. She explains that during this time, many patients come to the laboratory where she works to perform tests to find out if they are affected by Covid19 and this causes her fear. This was also expressed during the interview through non-verbal language observation. While she was talking about the conditions in her work, her hands were touching each other, and this was an action that was noticed in the cases when she talked about the symptoms of OCD that appeared most often to her. The tone of voice also changed in these parts of the interview. He was a little louder than the rest of the interview, more potent, which could be interpreted as if the participant was trying to convince you that what she was saying was true and not fabricated by her.

From the analysis of the data, we understand that the experiences of OCD, in the conditions of the pandemic have been intense and that she has been forced to take actions that affect her performance at work. This was especially pronounced at a time when Covid19 was just beginning to spread and when the virus began to cause loss of life. This has been a key period, as it came after a significant improvement in the life of I.M. Before that happened, I.M. had adapted some new patterns of thinking and behaving in moments when confronted with an obsessive thought.



The therapy she had followed two years ago had resulted in high effectiveness and her life seemed to be undergoing a positive change gradually, which included not only home and work but also other important aspects.

Obsessive-compulsive disorder also affects the social life of the individual. Relationship is any relationship that the individual creates with the outside world. This may include family, relatives, friends, co-workers, etc. In this case study, the social circle of the subject included her family members, mother and two sisters, fiancé, work colleagues and close friends, who were not numerous in number.

From the data collected by the interview with I.M, it showed that the obsessive-compulsive disorder negatively affected all its relationships with others. If we start from the test that the participant completed at the end of the interview, we will notice that she first talks about her family saying that she loves her sisters very much, that she cares for her mother and she wants to make people feel proud of her. Their ranking at first is not unintentional, as it shows how important they are in the life of I.M. However, on the other hand, this makes her family members more affected by the negative consequences that OCD has in the life of the participant of this study.

I.M. shows at one point in the interview that there have been debates, the cause of which has been her fear of impurities. I.M. has also expressed in the Twenty Affirmations Test that she loved her sisters very much, even though she sometimes upset them. So, if we are to make a connection between these two facts, in the house of I.M. debates have taken place from time to time. These debates relate to the obsessions of I.M. with cleaning. Since she mentions several times what her concept of house cleaning was, this would normally bring resentment towards other family members who are not as careful about keeping the house as clean as I.M. Although, this may seem like something that does not affect I.M. with other family members, this judgment is wrong because the participant suffers from obsessive-compulsive disorder for a very long period already. This means that home disputes over cleanliness have also been present for a long time, thus damaging the relationship of I.M. with each family member.

Another important report for I.M. is also with her fiancé. They have known each other for four years and have been engaged for three years. From the way the participant expresses herself about him, it is understood that they have a healthy relationship.

The relationships (with mother, sisters, and fiancé) are the most important ones in the life of I.M. According to the participant, she thinks that she 'bothers' them a lot, so she worries them, but at the same time they are the people she talks to most about her problems. Speaking, it discharges some of the anxiety and distress and other non-positive feelings. Despite what she calls 'annoying' the fact that she shares with the people closest to her some things that she shares with no one else, I.M. has them the main 'pillar' where she finds support and strength.

After that, she points out that other people, including her colleagues and friends, do not understand the reasons why she participates in compulsive behavior. According to her, they judge only what appears on the outside and therefore ask her to change as if this were a simple thing. Asked if she had ever tried to explain the truth to them, I.M. says she does not feel comfortable discussing these topics with others and therefore does not talk much about her disorder.

So, she feels very depressed in the presence of her friends or colleagues and tries to hide some of the things that are most disturbing in order not to be judged by them. While in a normal relationship with friends it is supposed to share with them the problems of daily life. In addition, friends share tips with each other on how to deal with problems they may have encountered during their lifetime. Thus, in this bilateral relationship, they benefit from each other by exchanging experiences and empowering each other.

I.M. says she has very few close friends, though she does not talk about any of them specifically. She shares her problems only with her mother, sisters, and fiancé. From this analysis, it turns out that these are the people who offer her unconditional love, social support and do not judge her based on the disorder from which she suffers. The fact that she has only a few close friends is more than understandable in this case. By not getting the support she needs, she may have chosen that it is more reasonable to maintain a close relationship only with those who feel better.

In the last part of the interview, the interviewer addressed some questions which were related to the characteristics of a person with obsessive-compulsive personality disorder. From the responses received, it turned out that I.M. was not a perfectionist. The only area where she considered herself such was when she talked about the obsessions and compulsions she had had about pollution or impurity.

## Discussions

Studies that have explored the relationship between OCD and quality of life agree that OCD affect the overall functioning of the individual, although different studies rely on different aspects to explain this. In this study, aspects such as activities of daily living, social relationships and emotional state were considered. It has also explored how factors such as personal beliefs, social support relates to individual experiences of obsessive-compulsive disorder, and whether there is a link between OCD and perfectionist ideas.

Studies that have focused on quality of life in patients with OCD compared to the non-clinical population have shown that individuals suffering from OCD have a lower quality of life in physical, psychological, and social terms. There are many variables that affect the findings of these studies because they depend especially



on specific individual factors such as patients' own perception of the disease, perception of social support, side effects of medications, etc.

At the end of this study, it turned out that the subject's compulsive behaviors negatively affected various activities at home and at work. Evidence has shown that patients with OCD perform more compulsive behaviors in the home environment than in environments where they may be observed by others. In this study, this is partly true, as the subject tried to hide the symptoms of the disorder outdoors. However, the severity of the disorder caused them to appear frequently especially at work, where the participant spent a considerable part of the day. This was accompanied by debates with the persons responsible for its work. Debates also took place with family members and other people she had more contact daily.

Comparative studies have been conducted that have considered the quality of life of patients with OCD and those with other anxiety disorders and it has been observed that the degree of negative consequences that caused this group of disorders is similar in all aspects of quality of life, but patients with OCD had more impairments in family life and activities of daily living. Compared to other disorders, evidence shows that quality of life was lower in patients who had more severe symptoms of obsessions, comorbid depression, low social support, and low social status. It has been found that patients with OCD have a lower quality of life compared to other groups such as patients with depression, schizophrenia, heroin addiction, patients who have had a kidney transplant, etc. These studies should be viewed critically as the data extracted from them may also depend on the context in which the study was conducted.

In terms of social relations, it turned out that they were one of the principal areas in which the negative consequences of the disorder were reflected. From previous studies the disorder has a major negative impact on the family and social relationships of patients. Evidence shows that social support and family members' reactions to patients with obsessive-compulsive disorder played a significant role in the effectiveness of the behavioral therapies that these patients followed. Positive interactions with others helped maintain the behaviors learned during therapy, while negative interactions such as criticism and anger were identified as variables that predict relapse. In the case study, I.M. admits that there were prejudices about her behavior and that she did not talk about her disorder with others, which explains why she had very few close friends and consequently low social support. This may be related to the fact that there is still a complex in Albania that being vulnerable shows weakness or that the assertion of something that deviates from the norm is considered unacceptable.

Another result of this study is that the ideas of perfectionism, which are characteristic of obsessive-compulsive personality disorder are not present in the subject under study. Researchers have often published evidence that obsessive-



compulsive disorder is not necessarily related to obsessive-compulsive disorder. Despite the similarity of the terms, one of them belongs to the group of personality disorders and the other to emotional disorders. This means that the presence of one disorder in a clinical case does not mean that the other disorder exists.

The novelty of this study is that the problems caused by OCD have been examined in the context of the current Covid19 pandemic situation. It has resulted that the subject has had an increase in the intensity of OCD symptoms especially in the initial period of virus spread. As this is only one case study, further studies are needed to be done in the future regarding the impact that Covid19 has on the lives of patients suffering from OCD. It would also be of interest the study of the probability of relapse in patients who have previously received psychological help and have had positive behavioral changes over a period.

As the identification of clinical cases with OCD was difficult, a larger-scale study would be valuable to investigate OCD in the Albanian cultural context. This does not mean that the reliability and robustness of this study is low, as all working procedures were performed according to research standards.

## Conclusions

The study of quality of life is a useful issue to understand the impact that psychological disorders have on the mental health of the individual. Obsessive-compulsive disorder is an issue that needs to be addressed more often in both scientific research and psychological clinics as a problem that affects various areas of human functioning and makes it dysfunctional in society. Based on the data analysis, in this study it resulted that:

- OCD causes damage to activities of daily living such as work and family life.
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder affects the relationship of the individual, especially with the people with whom he interacts the most during his daily life.
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder generates constant feelings of fear, guilt, confusion, and shame.
- Personal beliefs play a significant role in the management of obsessions and compulsions and in the effectiveness of therapy.
- Social support play a key role in receiving psychological help and in the effectiveness of therapy.
- The idea of being perfect or doing things perfectly was not necessarily related to obsessive-compulsive disorder.



Referring to the above conclusions, it is recommended conducting further studies by selecting the largest sample to see whether the results obtained from this qualitative study are representative of the clinical population or not. Another recommendation is that the symptoms of obsessive-compulsive disorder in the non-clinical population become the focus of further studies in our country, as it is an area still unexplored.

Researchers focus on the standardization of instruments that measure the relationship between OCD and quality of life; to explore the relationship between OCD and quality of life indicators, as a way of measuring the satisfaction and happiness that the individual experiences in life. In addition, exploring the link between OCD and quality of life can contribute as an asset to the day-to-day work of the clinical psychologist.

This paper suggests studying the age factor extensively in relation to OCD, as this would enable understanding of how the disorder is experienced and its effects on individuals belonging to various stages of cognitive development. I recommend that in future studies the gender variable to be considered, to explore if there are gender differences related to this issue. The concept of quality of life should be studied in more depth by researchers with experience in the field of scientific research, to improve the mental health of the individual, and to prepare preventive therapeutic programs to improve health care.

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# *Critical thinking development in students during coding in the subject of “information and communication technology”*

Case study at “Harif Halil Sulaj” high school, Mamurras \_\_\_

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## Abstract

*Background: Coding is solving problems while working. In coding, you must visualize and create map minds of your task or issue and break down the problem into smaller and more manageable parts, so that you can solve them more effectively and efficiently. So overall, coding includes the same process as critical thinking, and that of critical thinking process can be used very well and effectively in coding. Purpose: Exploring the possibilities and perspectives of the interaction between coding and encouraging, also developing critical thinking among students in the 15-18 age group. Evidence of students' help in diversifying the ways of gaining knowledge and practical skills, as well as enabling young people to be more involved, among the approaches to education in the contemporary educational process. Method: This study is conducted at the "Arif Halil Sulaj" high school, Mamurras. To achieve the study objectives, a field survey was conducted through questionnaires and focus groups, both for teachers and for students of the "Arif Halil Sulaj" high school, Mamurras. Conclusion: Based on the searched results, it was evidenced that coding has a significant impact on increasing the involvement of students in the most active lessons and encouraging critical thinking, enabling them to solve problem situations independently, especially in the subjects of exact sciences. The recommendations determine the need to extend the curriculum in general with coding hours and algorithms as well as the addition of ICT hours in the 11th grade.*

**Keywords:** *Critical thinking, coding, programming language, ICT, curriculum*

## Introduction

The learning process is a long process that lasts throughout life and school has a decisive role in training the individual and making him capable of solving problems practically. To reach such a level, during the years of schooling, the teacher has the duty to encourage the student's ability to think critically.

Critical thinking includes the ability to analyze, argue and draw conclusions using inductive or deductive reasoning, judging, and evaluating various problems leading to their solution. The knowledge that the student has from earlier learning is important, but not a sufficient condition to develop critical thinking within a given subject. The main reason we chose to carry out such a study is that studies of this nature are missing in the field of national studies and this work can be

considered as a pioneer of its kind. Critical thinking is of vital importance since we live in an age of information technology where individuals are confronted with a large amount of information every day and therefore need to know how to distinguish between truths and falsehoods. (Lorenzo & Dziuban,2006).

### *Aim/ Research question*

2.1 How much does programming affect the promotion and development of critical thinking in high school students?

The main object of this study is to identify in a general plan the main aspects of the coding impact coding on the activation and promotion of critical thinking. How much do the use of coding exercises motivate the student, how does this way of education affect interdisciplinary connections and in accordance with the philosophy of lifelong learning. Another aspect of the study is the efforts to measure how many effects each line of algorithms and programming has in promoting critical thinking, as well as inclusiveness and improvement in the ICT subject, with the aim of the efficient development of the entire teaching-educational process.

2.2 The hypothesis of the study

The determination of the hypothesis, the research question and the variables constitute the basis of the study. The treatment of the literature, the experience of our team and the individuals who contributed to this study, as well as the implementation of the combined approach, has enabled the treatment of the problem of viewing the ICT school curriculum in grades 11, as well as the part of the coding in a detailed form.

The hypothesis of the study is:

H0: The implementation of programming in the classroom has no impact on the development of critical thinking in students.

Ha: The implementation of programming in the classroom promotes the development of critical thinking in students

## **Methodology**

Questionnaire and interview questions design was done with the aim of coming out as a result of the compatibility between the coding and the students' interest in this field, being in coherence with the chosen topic and other elements such as: the hypothesis, the research question "How Does programming affect the promotion and development of critical thinking in high school students?", to conclusions and recommendations.

The questionnaires were compiled, relying on the review of the relevant literature, adhering to the nominal Likert scale, which expresses the assessment of

five points, from 1-5, where consisting: 1- I do not agree at all; 2- I do not agree; 3- Undecided; 4- I agree; 5- Completely agree.

Based on the scaled assessment given by the respondents, it is possible to measure the level of agreement or disagreement with the question in question, which focuses on the interest students have in coding and how it encourages critical thinking. The Likert scale is constructed according to an order where higher numbers indicate the degree of pronouncement related to the question. The questionnaires were completed by students and teachers at the “Harif Halil Sulaj” school. Meanwhile, during the contact with the interviewees, care was taken to be clear and give their opinions as if they really believed them. How to maintain anonymity in accordance with all ethical rules.

Regarding the characteristics of subjects, students, teachers as described in the first part of the questionnaire, we focused on their algorithms and coding skills, classes and gender. The questions of the questionnaires as well as those of the interviews are formulated based on our experience and knowledge, because in the field of our work there are no standardized questionnaires nor similar studies that we could base ourselves on. The respondents had spaces to express themselves regarding each question, by means of the Likert scale. To determine the level of reliability, the questionnaire was initially piloted with 5 students and 1 ICT teacher at the secondary school of the city of Mamurras. The head of the school was interviewed for the in-depth interview.

### *Population and sample*

The population consists of students, ICT teachers and school leaders. The maximum number of the population is 349 students in total, of which 163 are males and 186 are females. The study population is a number of 349 students from which a sampling of 60 students from grades 10, 11 and 12 were randomly selected. Of which 41 are females and 19 are males. Questionnaires were sent to all students of 10,11,12 grades, while 12 students and 2 ICT teachers were selected for the focus group interviews.

The champion was taken from “Harif Halil Sulaj” high school, Mamurras. The analysis of the secondary data in this study consisted of the review of the existing literature. The selection of interviewees was conducted purposefully.

The teacher’s interview contains 4 sessions: 1. Evaluation of the ICT Program which contains 4 questions; 2. Strengths of the ICT Program which also contains 4 questions; 3. Weak points of the ICT Program which contains 3 questions and 4. Opportunities for Improvement of the ICT Program which contains 5 questions. The interview with the focus group students contains 3 sessions: 1. The ICT program strengths which contains 3 questions; 2. The ICT program weaknesses

which contains 3 questions and 3. Opportunities for improvement of the ICT program which also contains 3 questions.

The in-depth interview contains 6 questions focusing on the school curriculum and its scope, number increase of ICT lessons in 11th grade. As for the questionnaires, they were electronically distributed to all the classes of the school where the study was carried out. This questionnaire was conducted through Google Forms and it is divided into 3 sessions; Session one contains 10 questions focusing on the use and mastery of technological devices by students; Session 2 contains 6 questions focusing on knowledge and communication skills through technology; Session 3 contains 9 questions focusing on coding skills.

### *Sample description*

2 ICT teachers, one female and one male, with a university degree and of over 10 years of work experience were selected in the sampling process. 12 students were intentionally selected based on 10, 11, 12 classes and also the school principal took part in the sampling process.

General data for the teachers who took part in the study:

In the semi-structured individual interview, there participated; 1 female and 1 male.

- The teachers who were interviewed were from the municipality of Kurbin, Mamurras high school.
- The age of the interviewees varied between 35-55 years.
- The level of the interviewees is high post-graduate.
- Their experience as a teacher over 10 years of work in education in the fields of ICT and Physics
- Regarding civil status: married - both interviewees married.
- General data for the students who took part in the study.
- The age of the respondents varied between 15 - 18 years.
- The total participants in this study were (n=113)
- From the total number of teacher participants, (n-1) is female, and (n-2) is male, while the average age of interview participants is (over 35 years old).
- None of the participants in the questionnaires has completed higher secondary education (n=110).

**TABLE 1.** Structure of teacher participants

	Total 3	N	%
Gender			
	Male	1	33,33
	Female	2	66.66
Education level			
	University	3	100
	Bachelor degree	3	100
	Master degree	3	100
	Years of teaching experience	Mbi 10	100
Age			
	Male	Mbi 48	33.33
	Female	Mbi 35	66.66
	Civil Status	Te martuar	100

**TABLE 2.** Structure of student participants

	Total 3	N	%
		110	100
Gender			
	Male	45	40,90
	Female	65	59.09
Education level			
	High school	110	100
Age			
	Male	15 -18 vjec	40,90
	Female	15 – 18 vjec	59,09



The student selection in the school was based on the random number principle. Based on the school principal attitudes we selected a deliberate sample for this study.

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Valid	Completely Disagree	2	1.7
	Disagree	4	3.3
	Neutral	20	16.7
	Agree	42	35.0
	Completely Agree	42	35.0
	Total	110	91.7

## Results/ Focus - Group Interviews & In-Depth Interviews Analysis

### *Quantitative data analysis*

Differences and comparison of student attitudes depending on the dependent variables.

Research question: How much does programming affect the promotion and development of critical thinking in high school students?

The hypothesis of the study is:

H0: The implementation of programming in the classroom has no impact on the development of critical thinking in students.

Ha: The implementation of programming in the classroom promotes the development of critical thinking in students

Below we present the standard deviation table and the average that connects the independent variable with exact sciences subject.

Regarding the question of whether coding helps students better absorb other subjects, especially science subjects, the average response is 4, which means that the students think that coding helps them in science subjects such as Mathematics and Physics.

**TAB.2** Coding helps in science subjects (such as physics, math, etc.)

	N	Mean	Standard deviation
Coding helps in science subjects (such as physics, mathematics, etc.)	110	4.0727	1.93563
Valid N (list)	110		100.0



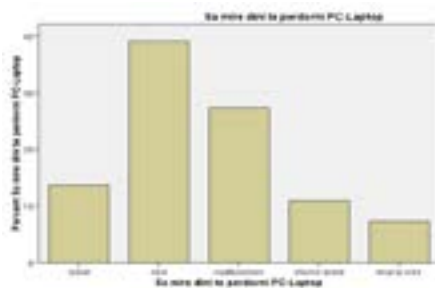
N	Valid	110
Mean		4.0727
Median		4.0000
Standard Deviation		1.93563

**CHART 1.** Coding helps in science subjects



**TABLE 2.** How well you know to use a laptop or PC

		Frequencies	Percentage (%)
Valid		2	1.8
	bad	15	13.6
	well	43	39.1
	enough	30	27.3
	very bad	12	10.9
	very well	8	7.3
	Total	110	100.0

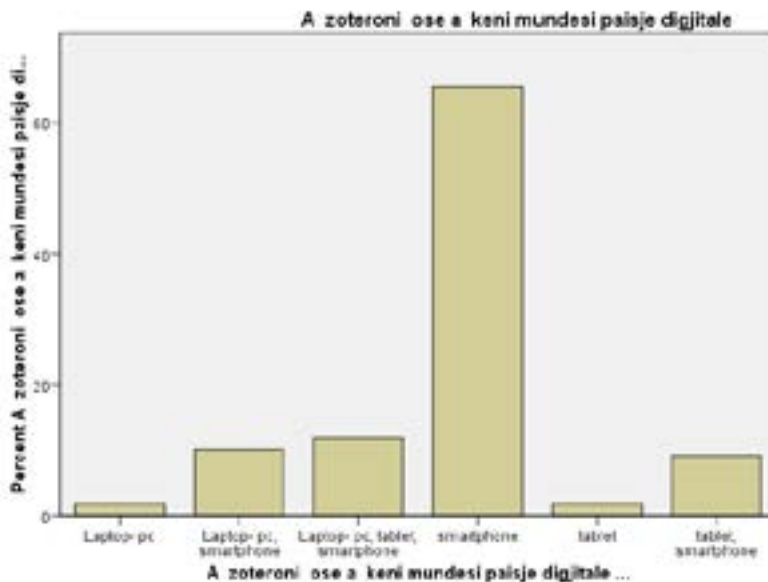


Regarding the students' abilities to use a laptop or PC, the analysis of frequencies and percentages presented in table 2 shows that we have a percentage of 7.3% very good and 1.8% poor, on the 5- very good and 1- weak t. In the evaluation scales 3- enough (27, 3 %) not at all and 2- well, we have a higher percentage of students who do not know how to use a PC or laptop. The results of this analysis highlight a problem that shows the lack of computers at home for the students and the lack of enough hours of laboratory practice at school.

Do you own or have access to digital devices such as (choose more than 1 alternative)

**TABLE 3.** Do you own or have access to digital equipment

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
alid	Laptop- pc	2	1.8
	Laptop- pc, smartphone	11	10.0
	Laptop- pc, tablet, smartphone	13	11.8
	smartphone	72	65.5
	tablet	2	1.8
	tablet, smartphone	10	9.1
	Total	110	100.0



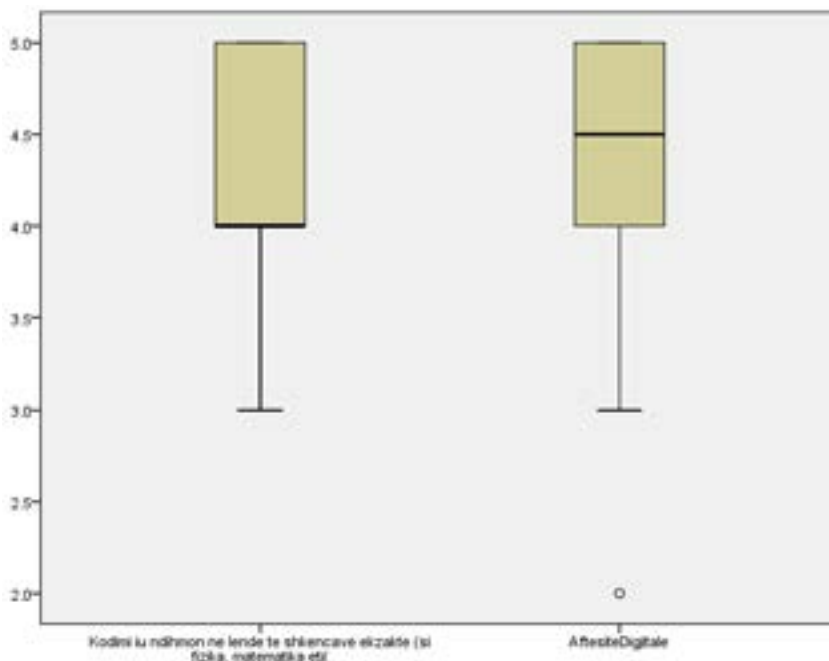
Another point of the quantitative analysis was the question of whether the students of the Harif Halil Sulaj school own digital devices such as laptops, PCs, smartphones, etc. From the results presented in the Table and in the graph above, it is estimated that only 1.8% were able to have a PC, Laptop or tablet, this result is also presented in 5.5 Table, while 65.5% of the respondents claimed that they protect a smartphone. Only 11.8% claim that they own three technological devices such as PC, tablet and smartphone. These indicators are not very positive in terms of improving their digital skills, since in some ways the lack of equipment limits their practice beyond the classroom. Based on these data, the laboratory practice hours at school in the ICT subject should be added to students of higher secondary education.

### Correlation Analysis

**TABLE 9.** Coding helps in science subjects (such as physics, mathematics, etc.)

		Coding helps in science subjects (such as physics, mathematics, etc.)	Digital Skills
Spearman's rho	Coding helps in science subjects (such as physics, mathematics, etc.)	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.
		N	110
	Digital Skills	Correlation Coefficient	.654**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	110
** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Spearman's Rho was used as a technique for evaluating the correlation between the variables "Digital Skills" and "Coding, it is helpful in subjects of exact sciences (such as physics, mathematics, etc.)" since the variables were measured on an ordinal scale (Likert 1=very weak, 2= weak, 3=neutral, 4=good, 5=very good). The correlation analysis with the Spearman's Rho method evidenced a moderate to strong relationship between the "Digital Skills" variable and "Coding variable which is helpful in the exact science subjects (such as physics, mathematics, etc.)". The results according to the table "" indicate a positive and statistically significant Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient between the 2 variables ( $r = .654$ ,  $n = 110$ ,  $p < .0005$ ). The distribution of values for the "Digital Skills" and "Coding variables helps in the exact science subjects (such as physics, mathematics, etc.)". It is presented through the boxplot below:



The reliability analysis of the questionnaire was carried out by calculating the reliability coefficient of the Cronbach's alpha questionnaire. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was =0.083, passing the acceptable reliability threshold.

Furthermore, the results of the reliability analysis showed that the removal of any of the questions did not increase the reliability (thus increasing Cronbach's alpha). For this reason, the questionnaire was not changed further. Statistical analysis was performed using statistical processing software "IBM SPSS Statistics 26". The statistical techniques used include: Descriptive Analysis through statistical indicators, frequency analysis, visualization through graphs.

### *Qualitative data analysis*

The participating teachers in the study have an experience of over 10 years in the teaching field, specifically in the ICT subject, as well as in computer networks and web developers, certified as CISCO instructors. During the preliminary pilot, based on the experience of the teachers, it was considered to build the interviews, with a focus on extending the curriculum with hours of coding. The impact of coding on fostering critical thinking in students, as well as how interdisciplinary coordination is developed and how problem situations can be solved through coding in both exact and social science subjects.

Their answers to most of the questions were in unison as the problems faced with the extension of coding hours are the same. Based on the questionnaire analysis, not only from the questions presented in the tables, but the detailed analysis of the complete questionnaires and the answers of the interviewed teachers, we conclude there are two main problems:

First: Coding lessons directly affect the stimulation of critical thinking among students, making them more involved. For this reason, their number should be increased and extended along the lines, starting with the line of algorithmics, which is a line that focuses on mathematical logic, making in this way an interdisciplinary interaction between the solutions to the exercises and math problems expressed in digital form. Also, HTML, CSS, Java Script influence the stimulation of creativity among students, making them skilled in group work. An important conclusion for this case study is the addition of laboratory practices, since ICT is a subject that is a practice in itself.

Second: two of the interviewed subjects presented a problem encountered in the curriculum of 11th grade. The hours of ICT 11 must be doubled because they judged it insufficient by looking at the topics of the program. While one of the subjects for the above-mentioned matter does not agree with the other two subjects, he considers that the number of hours in the 11th grade is sufficient.

Another problem that was addressed in the form of a free conversation with the teachers was the lack of possession of digital devices in their homes, so that they could practice the new knowledge acquired at school. During the conversation, it was discussed that these types of absences, especially in the possession of a PC or laptop, among young people in general, as well as in rural areas, is a very big problem, which directly affects the reduction of learning performance in schools. That's why it became more and more difficult for the few in the Harif Halil Sulaj school, which has a functional ICT cabinet for 16 years, to put as much efficiency as possible into the classroom. But this kind of suggestion takes a larger dimension, and it would be very useful for all the students on the school site in Albania, if we would have the scope of the curriculum.

## Discussion

Technology means all types of technology, which are used to exploit and manipulate information, so we have a combination of Technology with Information and Communication. The use of technology in our schools has changed significantly in recent years. Thus, to equip students with the necessary technological skills, we must use new learning methods compared to the methods used in traditional learning (Warschauer and Matuchniak 2010; Reci, 2018).

Technology and technological tools have become part of education in schools and the aim is to use technology in classrooms as a tool that develops and furthers the learning process. The efficient use of recent technologies that supports the students' thinking process, increases the student's ability to concentrate on learning, improves understanding and transfers the content to a long-term memory (Reci, 2018). The effects of the use of technology in educational institutions have been researched many years ago by researchers in the field of education, through which it has been proven and promoted that technology can assist in various educational processes (Brown, 2012, Dermentzi et al., 2016, Hung & Yyen, 2010), have a positive impact on supporting student learning (Dyson et al., 2015), assist teachers, and help them in professional advancement and development (Manca & Raineri, 2017) (Donelan, 2016). Therefore, the integration of technology in the classroom has been promoted and supported for many years now in different countries of the world (Cope & Ward, 2002).

With the information development and communication technology and their use in learning processes, in addition to offering greater opportunities to realize flexible learning, at the same time learning becomes more open, through which the aim is for students to be more independent and self-determined, responsible for learning (Goode et al., 2007) and acquire self-regulatory skills in relation to goal setting, self-monitoring and adaptation. While, the same opportunity allows teachers to promote active learning so that learning is engaging and effective (Collis, 1998), making teachers more facilitators of the learning process (Wiki, 2019; Huang, Liu, Tlili, Yang, Wang, et al. 2020), removing them from the responsibilities to carry out the teaching as one, and also giving students responsibility (Goode, 2007). Moreover, the learner-centered approach, with the development of technology, is considered a key component of flexible learning, as it empowers students and teachers to share information with each other in a two-way manner (Lundin, 1999).

As we have presented in the above paragraphs, critical thinking includes the ability to analyze, argue and draw conclusions. An inevitably factor related to the latter is programming. (Wing, Jeannette M., 2006) suggested that students should learn Critical Thinking (through code learning) so that they can solve problems in the same way a computer does. Computer programming has always been one of the essential and compulsory modules in computer science education. It has deep connections to computing, mathematics, science, design and technology, and provides insights into both natural and artificial systems. With advanced coding tools built specifically for kids, e.g. With Scratch from MIT, teachers can now easily help students develop the core competency known as the "4Cs," which stand for "Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, Communication, Collaboration, Creativity, and Innovation," which can help developing the critical thinking skills needed to meet the challenges of the 21st century.



In an analogous way, we have used this tool in previous years and the effectiveness in critical thinking and problem solving for 11th graders which has been at quite satisfactory levels but considering that this tool is suitable for older ages. Small, it is intended that these age groups focus on learning programming languages and Data Base. As well as website security systems such as Cryptography. During the development of this research work, it was evident that the introduction of coding in school leaves in the higher secondary education has a very positive impact on the students on the site, even on the students on the site with a level below the average since this method of taking care of me is quite attractive and challenging. Programming what it is like to play and with this form makes them focus and take the tasks as challenges to be won.

Likewise, the algorithmic part which is developed in the 10th and 12th grade is a challenging line to learn on the site since this line is more directly related to mathematics and real-life situations. Also, from the data processing in SPS and focus group interviews with ICT teachers, it was found that coding has a direct impact on the promotion and development of critical thinking among students aged 15-18 years. Similar results regarding the effect of coding on problem solving and reasoning were shown by other authors such as (Choi B et al., 2013, Kordaki M et al., 2012, Numanoglu M et al., 2017)

While learning to code, students managed to present elevated levels of problem-solving skills, unlike before learning to code. On the other hand, in their study Karaduman & Emrahoglu, 2019, showed that in addition to the development of problem-solving skills, computer-based learning experiences also positively influenced the sustainability of students' learning outcomes. Similarly, to our results regarding metacognitive skills, Ong GKV et al., 2017 also concluded that education through coding promotes creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. All of this may suggest that Coding Education has a positive effect on learning performance and some 21st century skills.

During the development of the case study, one of the most surprising indicators for us was the significant social skills improvement of our students through computer science. Such results are also supported by Ozdem C& Tezer M, 2018 who showed that students who learned coding practiced their metacognitive thinking, but also social skills at elevated levels. Based on the students' views, coding teaching has a positive effect on their perceptions of subject self-efficacy.

## Conclusions

The high school curriculum in the ICT subject has undergone changes over the years, highlighting some concrete issues that have become the object of study. The problem of the lack of programming and algorithmic hours is also an open



issue that will require the attention of school curriculum specialists in the future as well. In high school, students have reached a stage of development to face and be challenging; to undertake concrete actions, based on knowledge, skills, and values for life.

The hypothesis of the paper lays out the possibility of dealing with the issue in empirical and theoretical aspects, while through the research methodology the answer is given to the posed issue. To achieve the aims and objectives, it is necessary for the actors of the school to be more informed about the contemporary demands of the Albanian market as well as the global market for young programmers, increasing the efforts to include students in the site as much as possible. We reach the conclusion that:

- The programming classes development encourages more students on the site to be more involved in the lessons, it is evident that there is a connection between coding and the subjects of exact sciences such as mathematics, physics, etc. As well as the effect that this way of teaching has on preparing young people to be able to solve problem situations.
- Furthermore, we recommend that, based on the achieved results by the study, the hours of ICT 11 should be doubled, from 36 to 72 hours per year. This would ensure a better absorption by the subject learner but would also be helpful to the teacher.

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# *Multiple intelligence and its implications in education* \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Abstract**

*Background:* Individuals learn in different ways and likely they express their strengths. Gardner's assertion, if everyone will have the same kind of mind and there would be just one type of intelligence, then we can teach everyone the same thing, in the same way; as well, we will assess them in the same way, and this would be fair. But, as soon as we understand that people have a variety of types of minds, different types of strengths, education, which treats everyone in the

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same way, is unfair education. *Purpose:* of this work is to give a definition and meaning to multiple intelligence and identify its implications in good manners and education. *Method:* will be literature research in the form of a meta-analytical analysis form and comparative including/melting the pedagogical and psychological studies.

*Key words:* Multiple intelligence, education in early childhood, temper

## Introduction

Children benefit in education from multiple ways to engage with content and demonstrate understanding. Every child has his/her own “learning style”. Some move around all the time exploring, others prefer to sit and read, some get lost in construction toys. Gardner described a *novel approach on the conception and assessment of human intelligence. According to Multiple Intelligence theory, each human being can adapt independent forms of information processing, with individuals differing from one- another in the specific intelligence profile they exhibit.* This understanding of different learning styles was early encountered in education. Plato, asserts “...do not use compulsion, but let early education be a kind of entertainment; then you will be better able to discover the natural gift” (Hutchins, 1952). Maria Montessori developed teaching systems based on techniques like MI (Armstrong T., 2009). Multiple intelligence and learning styles are supposed to be important variables that contribute to shaping pupils’ thinking, interests, and priorities and even their choices (Xhomara& Shkëmbi, 2020).

In the history of intellectual development assessment, Alfred Binet in 1904, drafted intelligencetests as an instrument to diagnose pupils “at risk” in elementary education classes. Intelligence could be tested and measured objectively, through Binet test, in a single number, “IQ”. It was Howard Gardner who challenged this belief and tried to expand the understanding of the realm of human potential beyond the limits of the IQ score. **He developed the theory of multiple intelligence, implicating the educational process in pinpointing and developing its kinds.**

*The range of human intelligence is assessed through the “fair instruments of intelligence” based on the context.*

*H. Gardner*

*Does the theory of multiple intelligence affect education?*

In 1979, Gardner, as a researcher at Harvard University, was asked to research human intellectual potential. An impetus that led to the founding of “*Harvard Project Zero*” and the birth of the theory of multiple intelligence (MI). *Three*

research projects were included in PZ, on different age groups. Project Spectrum firstly was adapted to the development of the curriculum in the years of preschool and primary education, offering alternative approaches to education. Based on Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence and David Henry Feldman's theory of non-universal development, children are closely observed, their "strengths" are identified. This creates the basis of the concept of differentiated work, for an individualized educational program. *Preliminary data provided by Project Spectrum show that even 4- and 5-year-old children exhibit distinct profiles of strengths and weaknesses in their abilities. Furthermore, assessments of different intelligences are largely independent and tap abilities other than those measured on standard IQ intelligence tests* (Wexler-Sherman, Gardner, & Feldman, 1988). Gardner identified seven intelligences and along with research he expanded it to nine intelligences; (1) linguistic, (2) musical, (3) logical-mathematical, (4) spatial, (5) bodily-kinaesthetic, (6) interpersonal and (7) intrapersonal, followed by (8) naturalistic intelligence and (9) existential intelligence (Hall, Quinn, & Gollnick, 2020).

Based on the belief that each child exhibits a unique profile due to different abilities, or the spectrum of intelligence, *Project Spectrum* offered alternative curriculum approaches in preschool and elementary education. The curriculum resource guide provided enriched activities in a wide variety of disciplines and its implementation in the classroom (Chen, Isberg, & Krechevsky, 1998).

### *Positive Effects of MI in Education*

Armstrong, in his book "Multiple Intelligences in Classroom" asks parents if their child shows any special interests or abilities that excite him/her at home. If so, does he/she have a chance to develop that talent or skill at school? (Armstrong T., *In Their Own Way: Discovering and Encouraging Your Child's Multiple Intelligences*, 2000). This is where it starts and reinforces the approach of differentiated and individual work in education. Parents usually claim that because of "completely different temperaments" they had to behave differently with their children. Therefore, temperamental traits are easily identified, but in the same way, the outstanding features, and abilities that they display in their intellectual development must be recognized, understood and taken into account in education. Is MI affected by manners and education? Are there any responsible factors in this process? Armstrong argues that the development of intelligence, depends on the three main factors:

- *Biological potential* includes inheriting or genetic factors and brain injuries before, during and after birth.



- *Personal life history*, experience with parents, teachers, peers, friends etc. “wake up” and develop intelligence or on the contrary encumber them or suppress the in an active way.
- *Cultural and historical background*, including time and place of birth and growth, nature, and status of the cultural and historical development in different fields.

*An example of the above interaction factors appears obvious in the musical skills of many children registered in the program “Suzuki Talent Education”. Despite some pupils of Suzuki Program may be born with musical genetic gifts modest, they are capable of developing their musical intelligence in a higher level through experiences in the program. (Gardner, 2004)*

The concept of *crystallization and parallelism*, brought by David H. Feldman, professor at Tufts University, was further developed in the educational context by Howard Gardner and his colleagues, being identified as two crucial processes in the development of intelligence. Personal life history brings to attention the crystallizing experiences, as “turning points” in the development of talents or skills of the person. *It is as if we can call it unusual fermentation in the early childhood; despite it can happen at any time during life. The crystallizing experiences and the paralyzing ones are considered as two influencing processes in the development of intelligence. When Albert Einstein was 4 years old, his father showed him a magnetic compass. Einstein told later that this compass filled him with the desire to understand the mysteries of the universe. This experience activated his geniality and made him go forward to the discoveries that would make him one of the most famous researchers in the scientific thinking of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Yehudi Menuhin was almost 4 years old, when his parents sent him to the San Francisco Symphonic Orchestra. The experience fascinated him that much as later he asked his parents for a violine as a birthday present. Menuhin is well-known today as a great violinist of the past century. The crystallizing experiences are the sparks that light an intelligence and start its development towards maturity. On the contrary, the paralyzing experiences “close” intelligence. Maybe the irony of a teacher, mocking by the classmates on a drawing during art class, has marked the end of an artistic development. The paralyzing experiences often are filled with shame, fault, fear, fury and other negative emotions that hamper our intelligence to grow and flourish. (Miller, 1981)*

How can we understand the prominent intelligences? Are there any ways through which they unconsciously show their intelligence?

There are “a hundred ways” through which children communicate this to us, but how much are we attentive to read these indicators?

One of the best indicators of the pupils’ gifts is observation during spare time in school. In other words, what do they do when none shows them “what to do”. Pupils

of high linguistic skills can be attracted towards books, social children towards games in group and conversations, space pupils towards drawing or building up of a project that exists in their mind, kinesthetic pupils towards physical activities and pupils of naturalist gifts towards animals or aquarium. The observation of pupils in *self-initiated activities*, can show us how they learn in a more effective way.

*Taking notes, regular registration of observations of any child, can be rewarded by a long-term plan*

- An efficient informal way to identify outstanding intelligence in pupils is to observe how they misbehave in class. The linguistically intelligent pupil will speak out of turn; a learner with spatial intelligence does not listen and daydreams, the learner with bodily kinesthetic will move all the time; someone can bring animals to class and naturally it's showing you about naturalistic intelligence. Metaphorically, through "improper" behavior, they are unconsciously telling us that "This is how I learn". They are specific displays of intelligence, a kind of call, a diagnostic indicator of how children want to be taught.
- School records, however two-dimensional and lifeless they may seem at times, are cumulative data that can provide valuable information about a student's multiple intelligences. If you look at grades over the years, if in mathematics and exact sciences, there are consistently higher grades than in literature and social sciences, this may indicate a tendency towards logical-mathematical intelligence and not linguistic intelligence. Or high grades in art and graphic design can indicate well-developed spatial intelligence, as can excellent performances in physical education, dance, etc. can show bodily kinesthetic intelligence.
- Valuable anecdotal information about a pupil's multiple intelligences are kindergarten teacher reports. She sees the child extensively using all eight intelligences. Consequently, the comments "likes to paint with fingers," "moves gracefully to music and dance," or "creates beautiful structures with blocks" may provide clues to a student's spatial, musical, or bodily-kinesthetic tendencies.
- Parents are the most accurate indicators of a child's multiple intelligences. They can see the child grow under a wide spectrum of circumstances that includes all eight intelligences. Consequently, they should be involved in trying to identify the child's strongest intelligence. They can bring any information that can help in the wider understanding of the child's multiple intelligences. The phrase "six hours late" was used for children who showed little promise in the classroom but were successful outside of school, as leaders, in sales, repair jobs, or as small business entrepreneurs.



It is important to be offered an approximate profile of strengths, cognitive points, learning style and behavior of every child. Beyond describing individual abilities and interests, building a profile suggests how each child's unique tendencies can be enhanced in the environments the child frequents in his or her development.

*It should be noted that the decontextualized nature of most testing situations can compromise the value and relevance of test results.* (Wexler-Sherman, Gardner, & Feldman, 1988).

One of the applicative features of MI theory is that it can be explained to a group of first-grade children in just five minutes, so that they can then use MI vocabulary to show how they learn in their own way. While many other learning theories contain terms and acronyms that are not easily understood by adults, let alone children (e.g. INFP in the Myers-Briggs typology, which refers to a person "Introverted, Intuitive, Feeling, Judging"), multiple intelligences are linked to concrete indicators with which young people and adults have had their own experience (use of words, numerical algorithm skills, pictures, body manipulations, sensitivity to music, interactions with people, self and nature).

Research in cognitive psychology applied to education has supported the understanding that children benefit from instructional approaches that help them reflect on their learning processes (Marzano & al., 1988). When children engage in this type of metacognitive activity, they are encouraged to choose appropriate problem-solving strategies. They can also serve as self-advocates when placed in new learning environments (Armstrong T., 2009). Several assessment projects, consistent with the underlying philosophy of MI theory, have been initiated, many of them under the leading of Gardner and colleagues at Harvard University's PZ, at the preschool, elementary, junior high, and high school levels (see Gardner 1993b, 2006a).

*Spectrum Project* as a preschool program piloted at the Eliot Pearson Children School at Tufts University (Medford, Massachusetts), used several assessment instruments that are themselves rich and engaging activities that form an integral part of the *Spectrum* curriculum. They included experiences of creative movement (bodily-kinesthetic/musical); "Dinosaur" board game that include throwing dice, counting moves, and calculating strategies (logical- mathematical); and a story activity that asks pupils to create a miniature three-dimensional world and then tell a story about it (spatial/linguistic). The program also used art portfolios and teacher observations of children engaged in activities in various centers (*e.g., story-time area, construction center, naturalist's corner*).

In addition to looking for "tendencies" in the eight intelligences, the teachers assessed the characteristic "styles" of each pupil, for example, whether they were confident or experimental, playful, or serious, reflective, or impulsive in their way of working, approaching different learning environments. (For more information,



see Gardner, Feldman, & Krechevsky, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c). If we have a free conversation with children, they can be quick and ready to label themselves and their peers as “smart”, arguing with correct answers, fast, good grades; or “notsmart”, explained as the last in assignments, who does not like to read. Adults also define the quantitative dimension of intelligence in the same way, referring to implicit evaluation schemes or test results. But intelligence is much more sophisticated than these two categories.

Part of helping them succeed in school and in life is to show individuals that there are many ways to be intelligent and that intelligence requires diligence and reflection. Over his 50 years, PZ has distributed tangible guidance on how to help individuals rethink the idea of being “smart.” This has implicated the reflection of educators, creating the understanding that people learn in diverse ways. Intelligence is multifaceted, so instead of asking, “How smart is he?”, encourage the reflection, “How smart am I?”

Individuals have a wide range of capacities and there are many ways to be “smart”. Everyone possesses all nine intelligences, but each has unique strengths and weaknesses. Some people have strong verbal and musical intelligence but poor interpersonal intelligence; others may be skilled in spatial cognition and mathematics but have difficulty with bodily-kinesthetic intelligence. Everyone is different; strength in one area does not predict lack of strength in another. Intelligences can also work together. Different tasks and roles usually require more than one type of intelligence, even if one is more clearly defined.

***For educators, the lesson here is that individuals learn in diverse ways and express themselves in diverse ways.*** Gardner’s assertion that, if we all had exactly the same kind of mind and there was only one kind of intelligence, then we could teach everyone the same thing in the same way and as well evaluate them in the same way, which would be right. But once we realize that people have quite various kinds of minds, different kinds of strengths... then education, which treats everyone the same, is actually the most unfair education.

## **Results and interpretation of MI**

Effective teaching embraces the idea that intelligence is developable and depends on our attitudes. Teachers can cultivate and develop intelligence by creating opportunities for pupils to find and solve problems, especially problems that require creative thinking at careful and well-thought-out strategies. Efforts are made on to teach children to think in different ways, to be creative.

Misunderstandings should be avoided regarding outstanding intelligences and how they are treated in the education process. Intelligences are different, but

they are also equal in their importance. No intelligence is more important than the another, they coordinate. Every learning activity relies on various intelligences, not just the most obvious ones. (Armstrong T., 2014).

Encouraging self-knowledge is one of the challenges of education. Making children feel that they are (ex.) Body Smart, even though they are not particularly good at soccer, they are excellent swimmers, is one of the benefits that increases their self-confidence and encourages them to know themselves. Strengths can be strengthened with a little work and weaknesses coherently improved. Intelligences are found in all cultures, countries, and age groups. Regardless of age or background, everyone enjoys the potential of multiple intelligences. It depends on the individual and the educational environment, the development of each of them in the best viable way.

Everyday contexts in education present an infinity of ambiguously evidenced or ill- defined cases for well-thought-out engagement on the part of educators. Opportunities to invest one's intelligence must be discovered, writes Project Zero co-founder David Perkins. And the decision whether to make that investment is not strictly based on ability, just as intelligent behavior itself is not explained by ability alone. Passions, motivations, sensitivities, and values all play a role in intelligence (Perkins, Tishman, Ritchhart, Donis, & Andrade, 2000). To define intelligence as a matter of ability without also considering the other elements that animate it is to fail to consider the human in the overall development of the individual.

Although every child possesses all eight intelligences and can develop all of them to a reasonable level of competence, children begin to show what Gardner calls a "tendency" (or tendency) toward specific intelligences at an early age. By the time children start school, they have developed ways of learning that are more in line with some distinct intelligences than others. We are talking here about a self-taught style that everyone develops in his/her own way, alongside the schemes that education offers systemically. Thus, we are dealing with a unique relationship between the individual and the model that education offers. Armstrong describes this in the chapter "Describing the intelligence of each student". *The concept of learning style defines the approach that an individual can apply in the same way to any content.* In contrast, intelligence is the capacity, with its constituent processes, to adapt to specific content in the world (such as musical sounds or spatial patterns). (Armstrong T., 2009).

Beyond the descriptions of the eight intelligences and their theoretical bases, it should be kept in mind that everyone possesses all intelligences.

MI theory is not a "type related theory" of defining an intelligence in context, it proposes that each person has capacities in all eight intelligences, which work together in ways that are unique to each person. Some people possess exceptionally elevated levels of functioning in all or most of the eight intelligences. The example of

J. W. von Goethe, German poet, statesman, scientist, naturalist, philosopher. *Most of us fall somewhere between these two poles, being advanced in some intelligences, modestly developed in others, and underdeveloped in the rest.* Most people can develop any intelligence to an appropriate level of competence. Although individuals may bemoan their deficiencies in a particular area and consider their problems innate and difficult, Gardner suggests that **everyone can develop all eight intelligences to a sufficiently high level of performance, if encouraged, enriched, and guided at the right manner.** (Armstrong T., 2009)

## Conclusions and recommendations

- Theories on multiple intelligences, especially Gardner's, despite criticism regarding its scientific authenticity, seem to be constructive and especially valuable in the process of education and finding the 'right path in life'.
- Multiple intelligences can be detected by previously built and validated instruments/tests or with others to be built in the future.
- The main indicator for the specifics of intelligence in an individual is the observational evidence of parents and primary and secondary educators.
- Early detection of specific intelligence at an individual can significantly improve the course of his/her life cycle in professional and qualitative terms.
- Early detection of specific intelligence in an individual can significantly affect the increase of his self-confidence and consequently the maximization of his potentials and performance.
- Conceptually in this study, aptitude, gift, talent and intelligence seem to be approximate notions.
- The in-depth study of this theory in different contexts and cultures would probably constitute a revolution in the field of education and personality psychology.
- Mass application of this theory in kindergartens and primary school institutions in the form of identifying trends would be a constructive process as a whole.

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# *Efficient management of fitness centers, an important link of sport for all \_\_\_\_\_*

\_\_\_\_\_ **Dorjan ISUFAJ<sup>1</sup>** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Abstract**

*Background: Fitness is widely regarded as a fundamental premise of a good state of health for all ages, offering creative and fun opportunities, it can bring a comprehensive help for individual and social development that staff needs physical exercise for his psychological balance and physiological. Purpose: The purpose of the study is to present the current state of Fitness Centers, their management and marketing in accordance with the socio-economic changes that our country is going through, in accordance with the conditions of the market economy and the needs of customers. Management should be seen as a process by which personnel contribute to the choice of leadership, so that an organization functions efficiently in achieving that for which it was created. Conclusion: The next step in managing a fitness center is partnering with commercial gym equipment providers to equip your fitness facility with the latest fitness equipment and tools. Effectively managing a health center means making sure all your fitness equipment is in good working order. Professionally managing a fitness center means taking the time to*

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*hire experienced and resolute staff dedicated to helping your fitness center thrive. Employee incentives and well-organized employee training programs can help keep all staff members engaged and committed.*

**Keywords:** *Fitness Center, Management, Physical Education, Sport*

## **Introduction**

Physical activity and sports represent the largest area in which people engage, simply because of the satisfaction of the activity. Usually, people think about physical health and beauty when they begin to feel the loss of physical abilities, but here we must emphasize that it is never too late to repair or restore some of the functions that you have lost. Today it is observed a sedentary life, excessive fatness in people as well as a decrease in physical activity, even more so when many individuals, although they are not sick, present breathing difficulties, get tired quickly, various body deformities, etc. Initially, to make a living, people looked after profit, doing various jobs, of a large or small business nature, spending a lot of mental and physical energy as well as long working hours without thinking about free time and health, forgetting that sport is part of life. The modernization of work tools from artisanal to modern ones made it possible for people to participate as leaders and observers rather than performing active physical work. At the same time, we cannot leave without mentioning that in addition to the work process, all other movements of the vital aspect are conducted with motorized means. This is how Kenyon treats attitudes towards physical education based on a multidimensional concept that includes physical activity as a social experience, as health and fitness, as a matter of enthusiasm, as an artistic experience, relaxation, and as a Spartan experience. While WANKELL concluded in his studies that many crucial factors that influence the joyful participation of sports activities are the improvement of skills, feelings of personal success from the activity. It is necessary to distinguish the line between entertainment and sport. In fact, today it is forgotten that there is a way to practice sports, simply to be in good health, a sport to have fun and integrate with dignity in society, which is a right of every individual. Sport, offering creative and fun activities, can bring a comprehensive help for individual and social development and that man needs physical exercise for his psychological and physiological balance. Especially today when society is characterized by urbanization and technological development that aims to separate man from the natural environment. If it is true that the right not to practice sport is as important as the right to practice it, knowing the values

of sport in accordance with one's wishes and possibilities, one should not be forced to give up due to the exaggerated difficulties related to the cost of the activities or the possibility of entering the sports facilities. Man, and the environment in which we live present the most important consideration in the world. The real world of a different field, organization or idea is found in what it serves people. These goals include the need for health and safety for self and family, the desire to have an education and to be employed in useful, valuable, and gainful work, and the right to engage in free society and to enjoy one's hobbies. his. It is not said that people work wonderfully together, they do not spontaneously group together to achieve common objectives. Because the group and the individual possess common goals, however, through a joint effort of theirs, they help each other to achieve goals that would be impossible if they were to do it alone. Not even one person, for example, will be able to stabilize a complete school for the education of his children, but through the cooperative efforts and support of many people, they come together to make a possible qualitative education.

Effective management of physical education requires the stabilization of strategic positions if it serves to achieve the goal. Without strategies, there is little to guide activity and ways of organizing to achieve the goal. With well-organized policies, the organization can operate efficiently and effectively, and members will better understand what is expected of them. Making strategies is a solution by making the internal managerial concern and the given limits with which decisions and behaviors are expected to be reduced. Strategies are guides that reflect the procedures, which when applied complete the best interests of the organization and the goals for which it exists. If we choose and develop policies where each member of the organization knows what tasks are to be performed, the type of behavior that will result in greater productivity for the bottom line, the best way that the goals of the organization can be realized, and the procedures with which accounting can be stabilized and evaluated. Management policies are statements of procedures that introduce the legal structures in which the organization operates. Insofar as they are not in permanent change, they nevertheless possess some sense of performance. Management policies are not developed on short drafts without the assistance of a management group and this falls under the responsibility of the organization's oversight. Because education is the responsibility of the state, the government also provides policies that must be linked according to local educational authorities.

It often happens that local policies conflict with state policies, in which case local policies are declared invalid. On the other hand, local policies may come into conflict with institutions, and it must be said that these conflicts must be resolved. Gyms, fitness centers, to work efficiently, need machines that help them work



better, to organize and execute their affairs, and to keep them working efficiently, so they need to the purposes for which they were created must be achieved. This machinery is management – the structure of the organization and the part that helps the organization to implement the goals for which they were formed, and this management is very quickly becoming a science. Management as a coordinating process and its necessity. Total quality management has its philosophy founded in the values and respect of individual contributions and in bringing together the needs of the people who use or benefit from the service or product. These managers give or authorize more responsibility and decision-making to those who implement the process and who must possess broad knowledge of both the implementation and the improvement of the program.

Total quality management includes teamwork, better communication between employees and management, more attention to customer and investor relations, and statistical analysis of performance and problems as a measure of quality and improvement. It is necessary to change the alternative system, reducing the occurrence of problems, and encouraging self-confidence in a good and dedicated staff training. These systems change and lead to openness, the central behavior in the gym in which employees seek and share new concepts and ideas, encouraging people to look outside traditional boundaries. Theoretical aspects of management and marketing of Fitness Centers.

Management exists to help individuals achieve the goals they have set for themselves to live happily, productively, healthily, and with purpose. Management exists for people and not people for management. It can justify itself only when it serves the individuals who created the organization, helping them to achieve their goals as human beings and as members of society. The surveyed managers think that they need special qualifications for those technical, human, and conceptual skills that consider different management philosophies and theories. These skills, combined with the appropriate amount of knowledge, judgment, experience, and training, will prepare the modern manager, and effectively lead any program or organization to achieve success and satisfaction. One of the components of management, where it is often and the most neglected, is the stabilization of the philosophy related to physical education and sports. Philosophy is a process of critical examination, of reason, of inner understanding to arrive at truth and reality. It promotes the development and clarification of beliefs and values that serve as a foundation for the behavior and ultimately the performance outcome of the managed group or organization.



## Methodology

For the realization of this study topic, the following were used:

1. The research method of contemporary literature was used both inside and outside the country.
2. The method of observation in natural conditions was used. Fitness centers were observed during the training process, their management and marketing.
3. The method of conversation with leaders and managers of fitness centers was used.
4. A survey method using a questionnaire for managers of fitness centers was used.
5. The data collected from the survey, observation and conversation have been statistically processed.

### *Questionnaire for fitness managers*

1. Do you think there are modern fitness centers in our city?  
True                      Partly true                      Not at all true
2. Is more help from the state needed for fitness centers?  
True                      Partly true                      Not at all true
3. Should this activity be considered a big business?  
True                      Partly true                      Not at all true
4. Manage the Fitness Center  
You                      Your Staff                      Others
5. What education do you have?  
Higher education      Relevant education      Non relevant education
6. Do you think that your fitness center has modern parameters?  
True                      Partly true                      Not at all true
7. Should fitness centers be licensed nationally?  
True                      Partly true                      Not at all true
8. Do you think that a Fitness Association or Federation should be created?  
True                      Partly true                      Not at all true
9. In your center, should the work of Physical Education specialists be improved?  
True                      Partly true                      Not at all true
10. Fees to customers vary according to ?  
Seasonal                      Numbers                      Exercise session



## **The problems of Fitness Centers and the necessity of efficient management**

After the 1990s, new social relations were created in Albania. At this time, sports activities faced new social phenomena. At the same time, there were phenomena of damage, destruction and change of destinations of many sports environments and as a result, it led to the departure of many people of different ages from physical and sports activities. On the other hand, economic changes from one system to another brought changes in the mentality of regular sports practitioners. Initially, people spent a lot of mental and physical energy as well as long working hours without thinking about free time and health, forgetting that sport is part of life. The modernization of work tools from artisanal to modern ones made it possible for people to participate as leaders and observers rather than performing active physical work. All these have led to a sedentary life, excessive fatness in people as well as a decrease in physical activity, even more so when many individuals, although they are not sick, present breathing difficulties, get tired quickly, various body deformations, etc. Without doing much comments on fitness values, since this is not the purpose of this material, we think to address the problem in a different sense. From the observation carried out only in the district of Tirana, it turns out that several real fitness centers of a private nature have been established, which have attracted a significant number of exercisers of different ages, receiving great educational and sports values. On the other hand, this mass of people finds the strength to get away from the negative vices that are noticed today. It should be emphasized that in these premises, particularly good conditions are provided with the appropriate technical and hygienic comfort. But the question naturally arises how the managers themselves think about the fitness centers they manage, whether they have modern parameters.

### **Conclusion**

The study shows that there are contemporary fitness centers and for us as citizens this is a fact, where the boom in gyms and fitness centers is considerable. So, there are millions invested for the benefit of both parties, on the one hand businesses and on the other hand citizens who are engaged in physical activity. But the greatest benefit is to society, it is in the construction of this philosophy of sport because, as is known, sport serves the nation.

The managers think that their fitness center has partially contemporary parameters and this is a considerable assessment considering the values that this

investment carries, without counting the help it gives to the philosophy of sport and Olympism. We must say that all the accessories that make up a modern gym are quite expensive and have difficulties in supplying them to our country, without mentioning here that the country itself does not have any softening policy on customs for these accessories and this is one of the requirements of this study.

The result is understandable with the pace of development of the country, with the desire for integration and to have increasingly a healthy body. This is also noticed in the girls who today frequent the gyms a lot with their desire for a body as beautiful and healthy as possible.

Help from the state is felt, and 63% of respondents think so. This was also expressed during conversations with these managers of fitness centers. This is understandable for the difficulties that the local business is going through today. Encouragement either in customs or with lower taxes, for example by not being called a big business, would give a greater breath to the whole sports life, not forgetting the benefits that accompany it.

So, half of the respondents managed it themselves, while the other half managed it with their staff. It is understood that without reducing the values of the individual, management with a qualified staff is a contemporary requirement of the market economy where we want to go. The management of fitness centers itself is not done out of great desire, but it is done for several reasons, where it is worth mentioning the positive balance of the center, the work mentality, the difficult transition that makes it difficult to work with many group members and many other factors.

It was noticed that 62% of the managers have the relevant education and only 32% have a higher education, these numbers are encouraging compared to what was seen a few years ago where the management of gyms and fitness centers were taken by individuals without relevant education. So, it is optimistic and increases the hope for a quality product from these centers. As you can see, the fees are according to the training sessions, and if you see this from a market economy point of view, it is correct and within commercialization. We can suggest to the managers of these centers that they can reduce the fees during the summer season when the clientele is less, they can also reduce the fees for the third age people who want to exercise in these fitness centers, why not also for handicaps who do not have sufficient income to pay for participation in these centers. This would increase the image of the center and would certainly increase its clientele, plus it resonates with the directives of the European community for the integration in sports of all layers and ages. This year has been declared by the UN as the year of development through sport.

The fact that half of these managers are not concerned at all about promoting their activity is negative, and I believe this is due to a lack of vision and a contemporary alternative. Therefore, qualification courses are held to further

increase the intellectual level of managers. Maybe because they are satisfied now with the clientele and do not think about tomorrow. We think this is a mistake and I believe this will be corrected in the future. A significant majority are in favor of licensing, so about 88% and 12% of them think that it is partially true. So, the opinion and aspirations are ready and united for a unification of the policies of the fitness activities throughout the country. It only takes initiative and good desire to coordinate all this work that has been started and is to be congratulated.

Lack of experience and economic transition are the two main problems that must be overcome. Of course, economic changes, transition affect all sports activities, but these features are of growth towards what is formed in order to form a more effective way to enter the path of development. Adaptation is difficult because most managers of sports activities have little or no concept of marketing in thought and action, which are essential in a market economy. The existence of this market makes the birth and development of marketing necessary. Difficulties and the decline in sports demand results in a withdrawal of the public from sports practices. Therefore, attracting people to play sports has strategic importance and reflects culture. Today, only a small percentage of the population is taken, a figure that is considered too low when compared to other developed countries. In us, first of all, the mentality must change to build a sports culture from the Ministry of Education and Sports, federations, clubs, schools, cities and local entities.

All surveyed managers express their full desire for the creation of a fitness federation that would better coordinate problems and present policies and development alternatives for the future as every European country has.

A significant majority (63%) think that the work of physical education specialists should be improved, and partially 24%. It is known that after the 90s, the work of trainers and educators is often done by people without the relevant education, and this phenomenon extended to fitness centers. It is understood that the transition, the lack of information and the desire to earn as quickly as possible and without responsibility for the client, who has trusted you, led to such phenomena. But from talking to these managers in recent years there is a noticeable change in the approach of the specialist element as it is all over the world.

The study shows that the payment is competitive, and yes, 38% of managers think that it is partially true, only 24% of them think that it is not competitive. The figures are satisfactory when paralleled with the times and the economy of the market in which we are passing, the demand and the supply that this time imposes. With the setting of competitive prices, a good bed is created for the absorption of the clientele, while at the same time adjusting the positive balance of the self-position.

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# *The road to nowhere: Loer Kume's "Snowman"*

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## **Abstract**

*Background: Ambitious narratives are being produced in Albanian literature usually by young writers who are making a name for themselves and are being honoured for their works by juries and the media alike. However, their ambition, being the drive behind their thematic works, is equally a challenge to rise to. Purpose: This article aims at analysing the reasons for failing to fulfil the literary ambition, as well as to clearly delineate the contribution of such works in their mission as literary narratives. Method: I have chosen to apply rhetorical analysis as developed principally by James Phelan on a tale by the young Albanian writer Loer Kume, for which he was honoured with a prestigious prize in literature, the "Kadare Prize" in 2019. Conclusion: Foregrounding of thematic interest in literature, such as that relating to our attitude to morality, fails to convince the readers when offered with too much guidance and becomes an aesthetic liability.*

**Key words:** *rhetoric; progression; narrative; ethics; aesthetics*

## **Introduction**

I have selected for rhetorical analysis the tale "Njeriu i Dëborës" [Snowman] from the book *Amygdala Mandala* of the young Albanian writer Loer Kume for

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several reasons. First, it is a tale of immense ambition in terms of ethics and aesthetics; second, it represents a way of writing that is becoming fashionable; and third, from the first sentence, this tale claims attention like no other. These features make it not only an interesting object of analysis, but also a challenge for testing the limits of the theory I am relying on, the rhetorical poetics of narrative. This theory is developed by James Phelan and continues the tradition of Wayne Booth (Booth, 1983) and Kenneth Burke (Burke 1969; Burke 1953) in rhetorical studies. The conceptual tools of this theory, tools that Phelan confessed to have been working with, are twelve aspects of progression, five kinds of audience, three kinds of judgment, three components of character and of readerly interest, three kinds of rhetorical ethics, two kinds of dynamics in narrative progression, six types of unreliable narration, distinctions among unreliable, restricted and suppressed narration, and a distinction between disclosure functions and narrator functions (Phelan, 2007, pp. 86-7). According to Phelan, the test of their utility is not whether they apply to every real or conceivable narrative but whether they help us achieve an understanding of the experiences offered by a good range of existing ones (Phelan, 2007, p. 87).

## **The Material for Building a “Snowman”**

In his second principle of rhetorical reading Phelan makes a difference between the raw material of a novel and its treatment. “Raw material” refers to the events, characters, setting, and other building blocks of the narrative – as well as the real people, places, and historical or autobiographical events upon which those building blocks may be based. “Treatment” refers to the author’s particular shaping of that raw material by means of her choices from the horizon of resources so that the novel accomplishes one set of purposes rather than another. This principle implies that the same material has the potential to be shaped in multiple ways (Phelan, 2013, p. 25).

“Snowman” is a combination of two stories. The first one tells about a father who is angry and violent towards his daughter for disobeying him. The characters in this story are the father, an Albanian migrant since a long time in New Jersey, his daughter, and the character narrator, another Albanian migrant that has come to the United States via Iceland. The scene between the father and the character narrator happens in 1964, since it is told that the daughter of the Albanian migrant father is punished by her father for wanting to go with her boyfriend to the first ever concert of The Rolling Stones in the US. We can call this the story of the character narrator.

In this scene the character narrator tells the father of the girl another story, which was told to him by a character named Eldur, from the time of the character

narrator's living in Iceland. This other story is about young Eldur who falls in love with a girl he was not supposed to, because it was a taboo in their community. The scene for this story is a small and isolated fishermen's countryside in Greenland.

## **Narrative Purposes**

In this tale Kume makes it clear that he wants to thematise the oppressive burden of morality, indeed, to condemn morality and liberate us from its burden. The symbol of morality is the snowman honoured from time immemorial in that Greenland community. That snowman, who for the villagers is a god, fittingly is given by the author the name of *Moorali i Madh* [Big Moorality]. This naming confirms the ironic stance of the author towards morality. This symbol, *Moorali i Madh*, appears at almost every page of the tale, providing, as Kenneth Burke would say, manner to the work (Burke, 1953, p.166). However, we know that the risk of manner is monotony (Burke, 1953, p.167). Thus, in terms of aesthetics, Kume had the problem of writing a powerful tale about morality and, simultaneously, finding a way to avoid monotony. In light of this challenge one can understand the strangeness and number of settings, the peculiarity of characters (for example we have a character that is unable to speak, another one who is a kind of adventurer, and some other characters that come from a time of heroes and heroism), and the number of stories narrated in the tale. These are means to keep at bay monotony. But, on the other hand, these resources make it more difficult for the author to manage and coordinate such diverse material in the service of his purpose.

## **Progression of “Snowman”**

An analysis of progression is better positioned for giving us a clear view of treatment of material by the author. In terms of narrative progression, I will follow here the model provided by Phelan (Phelan, 2017; Phelan, 2022), while keeping also in mind the conception of progression given by Burke. The latter distinguishes two ways for the progression of narrative, syllogistic progression that proceeds logically from certain premisses to a forced conclusion, and qualitative progression where the presence of a quality prepares us for the introduction of another (Burke, 1953, pp.124-5). This twofold progression is somehow captured by Phelan his notions of instabilities and tensions that serve to move the plot forward. Thus, instabilities, being unstable situations within the story, i.e. between characters, between a character and his world, or within



a single character, are the logical side of progression; whereas tensions, being unstable situations within the discourse, consisting typically of a discrepancy in knowledge, judgements, values, or beliefs between narrator and authorial audience or between implied author and authorial audience, represent the qualitative side of progression.

Phelan's model of narrative progression is preferable to Burke's since it gives us the means to conceptualise progression more fully as three kinds of dynamics that interrelate, combine and influence one another. These are plot dynamics, narratorial dynamics and readerly dynamics. Thus, to give an account of the beginning of "Snowman" we need to analyse it in terms of exposition and launch (plot dynamics), initiation (narratorial dynamics), and entrance (readerly dynamics).

### *The Beginning*

The exposition of the beginning part of the tale is given mainly through a dialogue scene (which is a pseudo-dialogue, since only one of the characters speaks). There we learn about the characters of the first story (the character narrator's story about the angry father), setting, and past history. We learn about two Albanian migrants, their friendship and certain adventures of one of them, the character narrator's. Also, we learn about the current situation of the angry father and the attitude of the character narrator towards him. We see a narrator that does all the talking and a father who, despite being furious, says nothing. However, exposition in the beginning does not cover only the first, but also the second, story, that of Eldur. In the tale it is named "the story of stories." The exposing part gives information about the way of life, customs and norms of the tribe from which Eldur comes in the faraway village in Greenland. Also importantly, in this part we are given first description of *Mooraali*, the villagers' original God of water and ice, to whom they prayed.

The narrative is launched rather late, towards the end of the beginning and into the middle part of the tale. This launch concerns Eldur's story, which takes central position in the tale (the "story of stories") and is given the burden to provide a formula that transcends the morality of the angry father. In that story the launch is provided by the meeting of young Eldur with the beautiful priestess, who it was prohibited to get near to, and the priestess's request that Eldur come to ask for her father for her hand in marriage. We get some other exposition to give us context, such as the priestess being the daughter of Tomori, the high priest of the community. This meeting launches the narrative since in the mind of the young man enters the idea of marrying the priestess, thus establishing a global instability in the story. From this we get a clear direction of the narrative and can be certain that it is not a "false start."

In contrast to a normal plot dynamic in the beginning, we get an unusual narratorial dynamics. According to Phelan, the combination of plot and narratorial dynamics gives us textual dynamics, which indicate internal processes by which the narratives move from beginning through the middle to ending (Phelan, 2017, p. 10). In the “Snowman” we get initiated from the first sentence which reads: “Nuk do të pranoj më pak se kaq” [I will not accept less than this] (Kume, 2019, p. 49). This sentence introduces an asymmetry in knowledge between the narrator and us as readers. The narrator seems to know it all, from the beginning, while we know nothing. Therefore, we get a kind of narrator that is not only reliable, but also very authoritative and who speaks with a solemn voice. This last remark is important, since voice is a fusion of style, tone and values (Phelan, 1996, p.45). The rest of the beginning continues to give us the same reliable narrator that guides us through reporting, interpreting and evaluating reliably. But we notice that apart from serving as guide to the narrative audience, the (pseudo)dialogue of the character narrator with the father of the girl is addressed to the authorial audience, which is a means of authorial disclosure. The father of the girl in the (pseudo)dialogue is the narratee, but the character narrator tells him certain facts that we understand he knows beforehand, and, because of that, we may infer that those facts have not told him, but us, the rhetorical readers in the authorial audience. Thus, the beginning of the tale introduces us not only to the narrator and his story about morality, but also introduces us to the implied author (Booth, 1983, p.264), while making it clear for the rhetorical readers that the narrator, the more he tells his story, the more will align itself with the values of the author.

Therefore, in terms of readerly dynamics, we enter the authorial audience as readers that lack all knowledge and that need to be guided interpretatively and ethically by the author. Also, from the exposition and launch we expect the two stories to be linked somehow, the Eldur’s story to inform and illuminate the character narrator’s story, and both of them to confirm Kume’s story about morality.

### *The middle*

The middle of the tale starts with some exposition of the psychological state in which young Eldur finds himself the night before meeting priestess’s father. From there plot dynamics gets complicated in the voyage stage, where we see Eldur’s meeting and dialogue with Tomori, the priestess’s father and the high priest and guardian of morality, serving *Mooraali i Madh*. Tomori refuses to give Eldur his daughter in marriage because it is against the rules of their community which *Mooraali i Madh* has stipulated very clearly: she would be a future priestess, while Eldur is not a priest. Tomori gets animated and very angry at Eldur’s request, while we get some other exposition via which we come

to learn that the priestess's name is Siara. Eldur's plan to marry Siara suffers a blow not only from the high priest, but also from his mother: “-Kurrw vajzwn e kryepriftit! Kurrw njw vajzw priftwreshw! Do tw prishet bota jonw. Kurrw!” [-Never the daughter of the high priest! Never a priestess girl! Our world will be destroyed. Never!] (Kume, 2019, p. 64).

The interaction phase of narratorial dynamics continues to use authorial disclosure such as in the following passage of dialogue between Eldur and Siara on the occasion of their hiding place being found by their community members:

Çdo të bësh? – e pyeta.

Çdo të bëjmë? – më pyeti.

Moorali i Madh? Priftëria? Bab...

Mjaft! Mjaft me këto! Ti je babai, priftëria, Moorali.

[- What do you want to do? – I asked her.

- What do you want us to do? – she asked me.

- The Big Mooraality? Priesthood? Your fath...

- Enough! Enough of this! You are my father, my priesthood, my Mooraality.]

More than words directed to the narratee (young Eldur), Siara's words are spoken to the narrative and authorial audience, which means that they come from the implied author, Kume. It is indeed doubtful whether Siara, socialised her entire life with the values and norms of her community, could think and say such things about her parent, her profession and her God. On the other hand, the narrator, although continuing to report reliably, shows instances of unreliable interpretation when describing the Big Mooraality. He calls it an ice monument, a monolith of ice, which is not in line with the beliefs he, Siara and all other members of their community entertained about their God.

While at the entrance we had some expectation about the influence of Eldur's story in the character narrator's story, in the intermediate configuration phase of readerly dynamics we are able to form and have more concrete expectations about the direction of the narrative. Thus we now expect to have a final clash between the two challengers of the tradition (the fugitives Eldur and Siara) on the one hand, and their community on the other, under the watch of *Moorali i Madh*. This expectation, however, is made once again unclear because the narrator says: “Plaku tregoi më tutje, e unë e dëgjova me ankth, por as që e imagjinoja atë që vinte më pas...” [The old man continued his tale, and I listened anxiously, but could never imagine what would come later...] (Kume, 2019, p. 69).

## *The Ending*

We get to the closure of the tale at a moment of revelation, when Eldur's mother reveals that Eldur and Siara are siblings, born from the same father and mother. This serves as a signal that the narrative is coming to an end. At least this holds true for Eldur's story. Another closure we get is related to the character narrator's story and is given in the last passages of the tale. This other closure describes, conclusively, the two main characters: the narrator and the Albanian migrant.

Miku im nuk merr vesh kurrë. Por në fund të fundit jemi kaq të ndryshëm unë dhe ai. Unë flisja shumë, ai s'fliste dot nga memecëria e tij e shkaktuar nga plaga në luftë. Unë aventurier në jetë, ai njeri stoik. Unë shkrimtar, ai historian, unë dredharak, ai i drejtpërdrejtë, e këto veti i kishin sjellë më shumë telashe atij se mua të këqijat e mia.

[My friend never listens. But in the end, we are so different, I and he. I used to speak a lot, he couldn't speak because of his mutism caused by a war wound. I an adventurer, he a stoic man. I a writer, he an historian, I slippery, he direct, and these qualities had brought more trouble to him than my bad habits had brought to me.]

In terms of plot dynamics, the arrival is constituted by the resolution first of the tensions in knowledge between the narrator and us, and then of the instability between the attitude of the two fugitives, Eldur and Siara, and the norms of their community. Now that we know the nature of relationship between Eldur and Siara, we can reconfigure the whole narrative. We finally understand why Siara's father, the head priest Tomori, and Eldur's mother were both vehemently against their children's marriage. We also see the end of their adventurous voyage and conflict with their community's norms resolve in favour of changing the norms that they would live by in the future. Additionally, we now see that the narrator of the tale is much more linked to Eldur's story than we supposed at first; the narrator is actually living with one of the descendants of Eldur and Siara's family, his niece Samruna. Incidentally, we learn that "Samruna" means "The Melted One", therefore taking us back to the crucial event of melting *Mooraalin e Madh*.

The farewell phase of the narratorial dynamics, as Phelan states, refers to the concluding exchanges among implied author, narrator, and audiences. In the case of "Snowman" the farewell involves a direct address to the narratee. Eldur speaks to the crowd after the revelation of his sibling relation with Siara and the melting of Big Mooraality:

Njerëz, nuk ka asgjë të përjetshme mbi këtë tokë, akulli shkrin, bëhet ujë, uji ikën e bëhet re në qiell, pastaj bie shi, gjithçka është cikël. Sot jemi këtu, nesër mbytemi në det, na hanë bishat, humbim e vdesim në akull, kur jeta është kaq e brishtë, asgjë

tjetër nuk është më e fortë se jeta.

Janë besimi. Janë idealet që trashëgojmë brez pas brezi. Sigurojnë vazhdimësinë, - ulëriti dikush.

Ku i keni idealet tani? Sot? Çfarë idealesh? Di t'u vësh një emër? Mooraalin e shkrimë! Cila është vazhdimësia?

Nga turma s'erdhi asnjë zë.

[- People, there is nothing eternal on this soil, ice melts, becomes water, water vanishes and becomes clouds in the sky, then it rains, everything is a cycle. Today we are here, tomorrow we drown in the sea, get eaten by beasts, get lost and die in the ice, when life is so fragile, nothing else is stronger than life.

- There is belief. There are the ideals we inherit over generations. They ensure continuity, - screamed someone.

- Where are your ideals now? Today? What ideals? Can you name them? We melted Mooraality! What continuity is there?

The crowd was silent.]

However, these last lines do not bring us closer to the implied author and the narrator. We, as rhetorical readers, keep our critical distance from the norms of the narrator, behind which we can now clearly see the implied Kume. In the next section we will see why there is no bond, but only estrangement between us and the narrator and author.

The completion phase of readerly dynamics in the case of “Snowman” involves a total reconfiguration of the narrative after all the tensions are resolved and so we know as much as the narrator does. But we feel estranged, we cannot adopt the attitude of the narrator, we cannot sympathise with the implied author's norms. Ethically, we respond by rejecting as premature, or as simplified the account of the narrator. We even reject the position given to us in the authorial audience, we opt out of it because we feel too much guided, too much used and even manipulated.

## Big Morality and Ethics of the Telling

“Snowman” is a tale of morality, as the symbol of Big Mooraality shows. But this is only the symbol of the narratees, as the ironic use of it by the author makes it clear. For us in the authorial audience the implied author has created a counter-symbol which, although not named, is effectuated throughout the tale. It is the symbol of anti-morality. “Ti shkrive Mooraalin, ti ke emrin Eldur, ti ndryshove rrjedhën e rregullave tona mijëvjeçare.” [You melted Mooraality, your name is Eldur, you changed the flow of our thousand years rules.] (Kume, 2019, p. 77). This anti-symbol is presented by the author so that we accept the situation

we find ourselves in the narrative, the inability of morality to solve complex situations. But the alternative presented as the solution, by being simply the denying of the worth of morality, is one that we have strong motives for denying, thus, as Burke would say in these cases, we get a revulsion against the (anti) symbol (Burke, 1953, p.155). We simply cannot accept nothing, no rules at all, no norms and laws and institutions in the place left empty from the event of “melting morality”.

Ethics of the telling, in Phelan’s theory, observes the narrator and the implied author in their dealings with the audiences they address. Leaving aside many aspects of the tale, we may focus on the fact of surprise ending in the “Snowman”. The surprise does not only refer to Eldur’s story, but also to the character narrator’s story. In the latter we find out that the girl’s father, who was angry all the time, did not speak a word because of a war wound that left him mute. For this surprise ending to ethically and aesthetically appropriate Kume should have included material in the progression that could retrospectively be understood as preparing us for the surprise. Clearly, he has not done it, and has opted for keeping total mystery about it, as it would be appropriate in a detective novel. Secondly, the surprise ending we get in the character narrator’s story should have deepened our emotional and cognitive investment in the character narrator and the girl’s father, but this surprise only undermines this investment, for example by making the girl’s father look less realistic a character than before the surprise is revealed.

As to the surprise ending in Eldur’s story, it is justified and appropriate in both above counts. We get prepared for it and can recognise that the necessary reconfiguration caused by the surprise of Siara and Eldur being siblings fits well with the beginning and the middle of the progression.

## **Aesthetic Achievement**

To discuss the aesthetic achievement of this tale we need to put it in the right frame. Is it a case of narrativity, lyricality, or portraiture? In Phelan’s words, if narrativity can be reduced to somebody telling that something happened, and lyricality can be reduced to somebody telling that something is, portraiture can be reduced to somebody telling that someone is (Phelan, 2007, p. 153). Kume has provided us with two stories in the tale, one containing the other, and by doing so he has given the tale the marks of lyricality. Although there are enough events in “Snowman” and although we are told “the story of stories”, all these belong to Eldur’s story, which, as it were, belongs to and informs the character narrator’s story. This means that the events of the tale primarily serve the purpose of expressing the speaker’s (narrator’s) thought, attitude and emotion

towards morality, they are not put in the tale for aiding the progression of the narrative. We are told a lyrical tale about morality, and as is the case in lyricality, we are invited to participate, to see what morality is, how oppressive it is upon the people, what an obstructive force it is for human life, how simplistic and naïve and rigid it is for addressing complex human situations, and finally, how better we would be without it.

But we, the rhetorical readers, are neither convinced by the participation, nor are we touched deeply in our emotions by the story we are presented. Therefore, although in this lyricality we are given a verdict that morality is not worth it, we do not agree to this verdict. The implied author guides us too much to let our feelings take hold of the characters' desperate situation and feel sympathy for them.

Another problem is the choice of interest to foreground in the tale. On the one hand we are given very many details of the stories, and on the other hand there is so much thematic stressing. The latter has undermined the former, which is noticeable in the fact that Eldur and the character narrator are indistinguishable, they have the same voice.

Overall, this tale represents an ambitious attempt to enter the debate on morality, but this thematic interest has not managed to move the authorial audience in the direction desired by the author, since aesthetically it has created more problems than it has managed to solve.

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# Art in small circles

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*Evi VELIU*<sup>1</sup>

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## **Abstract**

*As a researcher in the fields of Political Science and Intercultural Communication, my purpose here is linked with the current state of art in Albania, but only through the narratives, fables and symbolic structures that condition it. Even though art as it is now mainly composed of rigid shapes and colors thrown/scattered without much thought in it, I argue that for art to think (or work) outside this quasi-mainstream mindset, it has first to see how the latter dictates its horizons of possibility. I conclude that these are ready-made fables and concepts taken for granted in the mainstream and which very quickly create a “discursive tension” where our very space of not only artistic freedom is at stake, and for which a “discursive struggle” may be delineated.*

**Key words: Art, city, criticism**

From the external requests that come to us, we tend to take for granted their meaning as it is translated by us. In a subject as broad as art criticism, would it not be natural to assume that we understand what is being asked of us? We are asked to be critical of art in Albania. The answer would depend on the internalization we have made of the understanding of criticism, art and their context in Albania. All the information we have stored in memory about this topic would be organized and mobilized to give an answer that often defines our position in the world, the angle from which we see the world. We tend to take for granted such general meanings – which are drummed into our ears in everyday life because they are common forms of human expression – because we understand them without much effort, and we may notice an inclination

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to have an opinion on these topics even though we don't exactly know where it came from. What we probably notice even less is that our response starts off from an internal angle, it is the angle that connects the inner with the outside world, the angle from which we have the whole arsenal to give all kinds of answers, sometimes without thinking long, wondering how could we have had such answers, without stopping a while to think about what those answers really mean for us. How did we create this representation [in our minds] about the topic or question, what is our concern with the issue, how is this knowledge composed? I would assume that, at least in our country, we tend to be politically critical about this topic by expressing complaints or frustrated needs.

Isn't there in our supposed answer more information, impressions, fantasy, facts or knowledge, really? There is a broad context inherited from the dominant culture – in the case of Albania, the traditional Western culture – that provides us with ready-made judgments about big topics such as the values we share, the good and bad which, aesthetically, are related to what we consider to be beautiful or ugly, which belongs to the order of moral judgments that also determine [in this sense] aesthetic tastes and ethical attitudes. Therefore, this paper, taking for granted its shortage of expertise for a genuine criticism of art in Albania, which would require a professional approach from the artistic field, will deal not with the thing itself, but with its expression, with the fables [or narratives] we tell ourselves and that create our connection with the world, our balance in life, and how we manifest them in making a living. The present treatment will remain at the level of the conceptual analysis [and beliefs] and some of its unexamined assumptions which are at work generally in the practices of art today. I would want to show how much this topic is related to our current political attitude as individuals and vice versa. It is impossible for art, love, science and politics (to take Badiou's proposal that truths are multiple) not to intersect with each other while having different ethics appropriate to each. What connects us with these four is the idea of thought itself as a process internal to itself. And the breakdown of concepts taken for granted, readily formed or borrowed, hopefully leads us to take a particular stance in local issues and beyond, especially as concerns political ones. A *concept* is an abstract idea of the category of reason that finds use through language in order to express the essential characteristics of something that exists for the one who sees it (Oxford MiniDictionary, 2007). The *political concept* is formed in the public space where we interact and is dependent on the *prevailing cultural tradition*, inasmuch as the latter creates the conditions of its existence. As beings who do not understand themselves without the other, concepts [and languages] are what define how we bodily relate to the world and, conversely, to ourselves. Through them, we create a *common sense* that simplifies our interaction so that we don't always have to explain from scratch the terms of the way we relate. Like any abstract idea, the concept is subject

to a process of reason used by people and therefore changes along with historical developments. This process is inevitably related to *understanding*. As such, it can be *taken for granted* – that is, understanding the meaning in the sense in which we are accustomed to find the concept as it is widely *used*. The artistic product, the work of art, especially, brings forth concepts to us in our sensitivity as a pure form, a sensitivity to which we respond either by taking a stand or by reflecting. When we create or examine a work of art, we use concepts and thus new opportunities open up for us to reenter the process of the free play of reflection.

The concept in our idea of art, according to the dictionary, is “the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power” (Oxford Languages, Online). We note that this is a concept which precedes the representation of it as “subjects of study primarily concerned with human creativity and social life, such as languages, literature, and history (as contrasted with scientific or technical subjects)” (Oxford Languages, Online Dictionary). In the first sense, it is an expression from the inside out – art, expression of a creative skill in a visual form (Oxford Minidictionary, 2007); in the second it is a subject of study – the arts. Critique, on the other hand, is “a detailed analysis and assessment of something, especially a literary, philosophical, or political theory” (Oxford Languages, Online Dictionary). So, the request implied in the organizing title opens us to an issue of evaluation and detailed analysis of the state of expression or application of human creative skill and imagination in Albania. Somehow it recalls the political outlook, not so much the technique of an ethical judgement over a work of art. So we have come upon the evaluation of ethics as a set of moral principles that govern a person’s behaviour or the conducting of an activity (Oxford Languages, Online Dictionary). We may have noticed until now that we have put into question the immediate meaning of the crucial signifiers of the quest. The hypothesis is that for quests of truths, the situation is such that we mainly borrow from the West forms of expression which may be outdated even in their countries of origin. We do this so mechanically that, even though we are far from being innovators in the fields of truth as Albanians, we hardly make any step forward without thinking to catch up to the West, and we don’t even stop to think about bringing something new or authentic.

Not only is the state of art reflected in society, but art also reflects the state of society in us. This is a two-sided issue of the concept of space. On the one hand, the public space is shrinking through the cutting off of connections; on the other hand, public space is conceived as a space for installation art, i.e. an artistic genre of three-dimensional works that are often site-specific and designed to transform the perception of a space. The more the public space shrinks, the more it transforms into the image of its own concept. In a quick look taken from field work in Albania,

we see that contemporary art coexists with works like *Reja* (Fujimoto, *The Cloud*, n.d.), which has essentially no taste, always serves for something else: to sit down, to display other arts on scene, other performing arts. We find plenty of mechanical installation-art in the city. With the fall of the Theater, a part of the history of the connection with classical art also fell, in the sense that it transformed into nostalgia (Koleka, 2020). The classics are put less and less on the scattered stages, so there are increasingly independent and non-liberating art forms, rigid art. We may notice street art, especially the supervised art, foreign artists who draw on the facades of the residential buildings – still better than the loud and bright advertisements. Any other art is underground, it does not create wider connections, but with itself. As in the drawings of electric street cabs when we see our beloved characters of the past, *Lupin III*, *Tom & Jerry*, *Batman*, *South Park* characters and so on, which more often than not bogs us down in a lonely nostalgia and does not inspire us into any further kind of shared worldviews. The preservation of cultural inheritance obstructs the new way of life, and the latter endangers inheritance through disregard and recklessness. Cultural objects are put at risk by the urban and development plans, and with their expected decline they inevitably turn into nostalgia for their beauty. So a state of art that, through nostalgia, isolates and oppresses instead of calling to express and transcend oneself. This assessment reflects not only the state of art, but also of political thought: cynicism, indifference and undoing of social ties. It seems like we are faking all the ways to preserve, create and recreate, with a kind of disregard to ethics and values that we hold dear from our cultural heritage. Are we faking our way through all this?

This mindset seems to be connected with a fable or motto which I have frequently heard as an expression to help hardworking people towards any success: *Fake it until you make it*. A possible first appearance of the phrase comes from around 1973 and an early reference to a very similar saying occurs in the Simon & Garfunkel song *Fakin' It*, released in 1968 as a single and also on their Bookends album. There, Simon sings, 'And I know I'm fakin' it, I'm not really makin' it' (The Idioms, n.d.). In today's standard writings, the expression takes on another life: 'Fake it until you make it', in a standard online search under psychology category, means to consciously cultivate an attitude, feeling, or perception of competence that you don't currently have by pretending you do until it becomes true. So it is a fable to which we become attached to and that becomes a guide for survival, competition, and progress in society, a fable that comes across more and more often in younger age groups. On the face of it, it seems to be rewarding in a certain future. But one might choose to wonder: why fake something that is not there yet and how is it possible for it to bring one to some kind of closure? In case one fakes it for oneself, one may risk creating a method as to how to fake solutions until the solution happens to come as if by surprise, forcing one to think that the

outcome is one and only, and that one cannot escape one's own destiny. Hence, one must act like one already anticipates one's destiny. This attitude lacks motivation. If one is making 'it', one does not have to think about faking it. It is what one is doing about 'it' that will make 'it' happen. So where does the part of faking takes place? By faking it for one's self, one risks lying to oneself, and losing the self in the process, becoming alien to oneself – but this is all about the other. Why fake it for the other? The pressure to succeed probably crushes the motivation, but what we perceive as success are merely examples we try to follow, connected merely numbers – those who already enough of the other's attention – not the idea of the concept of success and how would that be regulated by our internal goals. We may see here how, whatever one is making, one is making 'it' – which is life in its various forms of truths. Can we arrive at all to truths through hiding? How real is something made through a series of faking-it? For whom is it real? To what degree is it possible to make a real thing through faking it? Truth is still a value of western moral tradition, or is its meaning shifting?

So we see that, the mindset, when it is a self-expression, is also a way of communicating, of relating, and a way of getting in touch with oneself. Is this not the art of living? It is a way of connecting, of coming into contact, of functioning within the parameters of the society, mostly through comparing, which is an equivalent of quality. But do we find such equivalence in art? This kind of equivalences would only be understandable within an historical and cultural frame, the one with which we are linked. When we say art, don't we think of classical art, the world masterpieces that are repeated on stage or in paintings? Let me remind you that the annual concert in Vienna is also broadcasted on the Albanian public television, as an overriding cultural value and heritage. Isn't this one of the reasons why environmental activists in the West have recently taken a series of symbolic actions choosing famous works from the *Mona Lisa* to the *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (Benzine, 2022)? Although this activity could have been accompanied by the writing 'no painting was damaged during this action', we still note with concern their [the paintings'] fragility that highlights our sensitive connection to them. But what I still fail to understand though is one of the questions put by the activists: "What is worth more, art or life?" What we risk to overlook here is precisely that which we are excluding. Art may survive us, but not without us. What we reject from this action is the fact that we feel ever closer to the real loss of those works of art but by other means, let's say environmental or human. In small circles, this opened a debate in Albania as well. Classical art is rightly perceived as inviolable [or sacred] for the significance it has for humans in the context of the continuity of civilization. On the other hand, we live in a world of wars, a good deal of heritage has been destroyed in Syria, let's say, in these recent years (Henderson, 2016). But we don't perceive it as close to our own heritage. There were not many ethical

judgments related to this issue, only pity, because what we, from Albania, perceive about the world masterpieces of art are the Western ones, from which we also get our horizon of events. So, when the catastrophe is likely to happen but has not yet taken place, like global warming, we rebel against life itself, against its insufficient expression, or its inability to express itself properly, in the context of the absence of a good enough environment to make connections, social links, like a good enough art or preservation of it.

And from this point of view it seems like we may have lost touch, contact with our self-expression. For to whom are we expressing ourselves if there is no other, and what are we expressing in the *faking-it*? We get caught in what we say and pretend, in our fictions, and something real is produced in this very inability to formalize truth in language. So it is that, when we both know it, there is manifested an ethical connection of art within humanity. So, it is not out of order to say that we become political in art precisely when it comes to the classics, to that which we have already appreciated in such detail and which reflects our values. But we exercise a moral judgement for that which we already know to be regarded as beautiful. We live in a world where hazards such as global warming are far greater than everyday local risks, yet we give it a lower priority in our collective creations due to the intractable nature of the conflict. Conflict, for its part, has been regarded as progressive when management methods have been found, but today, conflict-solutions risk being faster, a threatening by buttons which don't have time to think and plan ahead. Meanwhile, the internal conflict finds respite [or a temporary salvation] in ready-made fables which tell us how to blossom and thrive in life.

At this point we encounter an ethical question, one to which we probably think we already know the answer because 'we got the lesson'. How will we know that we have not become accomplices to what we call "evil" in the world? But from the Western moral tradition's perspective, evil cannot be just ordinary, only monstrous. Even judging of the good is not based on normality, but on the extraordinary, the wonderful, the heroic. So what is evil before it becomes monstrous? The Nazis did not have a bad reputation in their beginnings. But reputation comes after the deed and societies try to prevent the events that if repeated would bring them a good deal of troubles. Would we not affirm today that we would not have cooperated with Nazism? We know from history that the Nazis were evil, but would we have been so sure about it if they had not lost the war? Is there any rational reason which tells us that the evil always loses or do we have to do something before it acquires tragic proportions? Fables tell us that good always prevails, but not without a fight. Can evil lose if it isn't fought against or if we systematically avoid the split it causes in our consciousness as it unfolds, even before it reaches monstrous dimensions? We risk becoming indifferent to nauseating things which people may do when they don't think anymore. Each one of us may find oneself in an activity which

hampers irreversibly humanity's lives and interests as a whole, just because one has not stopped long enough to discern the fable's narrative through which we are keeping alive a certain mechanism of faking it. Such a mechanism has to be defensive because, inasmuch as anything that one might have – if one creates a link – may be extinguished more quickly than it can be recuperated. In any case, it is self-expression (and transcending) which suffers from it, it is repressed or reduced.<sup>2</sup>

Human creative skill and imagination which produces these products of emotional power and beauty, is bound to thinking, concepts and beliefs which are traits of society as well as of the individual. Now envision a concept like *discursive struggle* (Jameson, 2016, page 6). The concept refers to a process that, being relatively different from propaganda and ideology, delegitimizes the language of opponents by devaluing their motto, disarming them of their conceptual tools. The proof that Jameson gives in the book is that of the 'free market' rhetoric as a dominant and all-powerful notion, where the discursive struggle of Thatcherism succeeded in making many people today think that there is no other alternative than to think that 'the free market not only really exists, but is eternal' (Jameson, 2016). This is a dormant belief since the start the industrial revolution. From then much has changed, but always within the confines of the successes or failures of this free market as the best mechanism that will bring about the potential talent of people in a free competitive arena. There are some values, such as the good, rightness, courage, that we can hold onto and which are the words we choose in order to motivate ourselves – these are what define us politically as well (indifference is also a political position – more and more widespread I must say – just like 'darkness is the absence of light'), and is that which determines our readiness to defend a certain set of values, the readiness that determines all other connections in life in relation to art, science, love and so on. To summarize, it is in this split between the world of reason and the world of feelings that political notions also developed, and we can say from personal experience that they are still turbulent worlds without a clear soil where they may be cultivated publicly. So, we may often not be aware of the fables that guide us because of their immediate practicality to be accepted in society – the trend, the prevailing current. Because, I am saying that, this type of political orientation that we have developed, that has produced an inmixing of values according to the expediency and conditions of survival, and which prevails more on communication channels than we are able to sustainably maintain and grow, has also influenced our expressive powers. The time we give to fantasy and reflection is "money" that cannot be equated with an added attention for a short while in social networks before being forgotten. We tend not to take advantage of this time for ourselves without missing out on everything in terms of real time

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<sup>2</sup> Notice that even expression can be used as a way of repression.

from the world, a real time that always sinks us increasingly into a fantasy with no result, no product – which turns us into some kind of waste product instead of into a work of art.

Therefore, truths are not self-contained nor complete. Our quest to truths define our attitudes in the world, our vision of the world, our drive to reckon systems and to bring about changes, and art has no way to escape the construction of beliefs and attitudes that guide the individual and society in the world. But if we discern the fables we may modify the drive, and the inner emotional power may express itself without the need to collapse in itself. To pace down the rate of development, to slow down the pace of consumption, to come to the point where we allow thought to create and creatively imagine possible solutions for man as a whole, body mind and soul, in which art would have a truly creative context more than just mere recreation. We are on the same track as with the slowing of global warming, with the slowing of action so that thought may become discernable, with sustainable development measured to our global resources, in short, with a framework that can imagine us globally, beyond the universal singularity of classical art from which we do not cease to find inspiration, an inspiration which is stuck in significance.

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# *Views of albanian literature for children*

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*PhD. Ermir NIKA<sup>1</sup>*

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## **Abstract**

**Background:** *After the New Age, a period which many contemporary researchers define as the stage where the first foundations of modernity were laid in the society-wide mentality, we have another relationship with the mythical past, since they were no longer seen as figures with strength and size divine, but as creatures from which the past came through artistic whimsy. Thus, oral traditions and fairy tales had a much greater and direct influence on the literary process. They strengthened it and became a primary source of subjects, a wide gallery of*

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<sup>1</sup> His professional activity has extended to several important areas both in terms of artistic creativity and in terms of study and scientific research. In 2016 he earned the title Doctor of Philological Sciences with the topic: "The beginnings of modernity in Albanian novel prose", while in 2005 he completed the postgraduate degree for the title Master at the University of Tirana, Faculty of History - Philology, branch Language - Literature. He completed his graduate in the field of language and literature in 2000 at the University of Tirana at the Faculty of History and Philology. From 2001 to 2019 he had been working in the Ministry of Culture as an expert, Head of Sector and also as Director in the directorates of written culture and arts. Ermir Nika is the author of a series of works of literary and scholarly character, where can be mentioned: "Polyphony" study, "Beginnings of Modernity in Albanian novel prose" study, "Slave of Heights", novel, "Bohemian Quartet", poetry, Net Sinners ", stories, children's novel" Grandfather in the Frame ", publication of the poetic volume" Cold Clouds ", publication of the study work" Çajup's work and its meetings with literary currents", "Notes of a European near Buda and Hiroshima" , "The River of My Dreams" poetry. His literary and research works paper had been translated and published in several foreign languages as in English, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Russian, Japanese, Romanian, Arabic, Serbian, Macedonian, etc. From May 2019 and ongoing Dr. Ermir Nika is the Head of the Department of Applied Arts at the Faculty of Humanities and Liberal Arts at the European University of Tirana.



characters further delineating the various literary genres and genres. Regarding the Albanian literature for children, we can affirm that during the period of the National Renaissance, in the wake of the numerous social, political, and cultural contributions undertaken by the protagonists of this great movement, a very useful work was done for the drafting of texts money for Albanian schools. The renaissance saw the creation of books for the younger generations as a major obligation, and in this way, the number of writings dedicated to children increased significantly. **Purpose:** The purpose of this paper is to document the progress of Albanian children's literature in distinctive styles, forms, and norms through which this literature passed and was consolidated. **Method:** To realize this article, I relied on two basic methods; in the synchronic and diachronic one, with the aim of bringing a more complete and analytical view of the phenomena that appear in this literature. **Conclusion:** Following the tradition and enriching it with works and authors of different periods with consolidated literary styles and physiognomy, is proven through a detailed analysis where the evolutionary process of this literature is verified.

**Key words:** literature, legend, poem, novel, writer, study, children.

The humanity's image of the world, its origin and the predecessors who have possessed it, arises through memory which is liberated and reshaped through narrative. In this approach to the past, the different narrative forms have been able to build an image that has often touched places untrodden by man, creating mythical figures and legends that have been passed down from one generation to another, where in many cases, mainly in pagan peoples have also become a religious ritual.

After the New Age, a period which many contemporary researchers define as the stage where the first foundations of modernity were laid in the society-wide mentality, we have another relationship with the mythical past, since they were no longer seen as figures with strength and size divine, but as creatures from which the past came through artistic whimsy. Thus, oral traditions and fairy tales had a much greater and direct influence on the literary process. They strengthened it and became a primary source of subjects, a wide gallery of characters further delineating the various literary genres and genres.

What should be underlined in all these developments, through the literature path, has to do with the tendency of peoples to create a parallel world, with events and heroes which in many cases, quite naturally, challenge real life, contouring the latter, with the size of the usual and in its uniform rhythm. From time to time, the younger generations have been drawn to objective reality first nourished by the

tales and stories told by their grandparents. Exactly this ritual has influenced the construction of basic principles in different generations and concepts about life and all its complexity.

For this reason, children's literature, if we would try to make a precise definition, will be pushed more and more into eras immersed more and more in the "mist". As result, this literature is traced through stories, lullabies or songs, in oral traditions that adults have created and elaborated over the centuries, passing them on to children before books and publications were conceived.

The evolution of children's literature has the beginning much earlier than the first printing mechanisms appeared in everyday life. According to the research data thanks to the research of historians, children's literature has been present since the 15th century, generally carrying and conveying a message about morality or faith.

This literature was developed and became known to its readers from the past centuries to reach today, in Albania, Kosovo, but also in those countries where there is a concentration of the Albanian diaspora, such as in Montenegro, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Italy (mainly in the areas where the Arbëresh people live), Greece, Germany, France, Belgium, Ukraine, United States of America, etc., what can be labeled as, the golden age of Children's Literature lies at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, a period in which many children's books were published.

Regarding the Albanian literature for children, we can affirm that during the period of the National Renaissance, in the wake of the numerous social, political, and cultural contributions undertaken by the protagonists of this great movement, a very useful work was done for the drafting of texts money for Albanian schools. The renaissance saw the creation of books for the younger generations as a major obligation, and in this way, the number of writings dedicated to children increased significantly.

Among the first names that were engaged in this process that lasted at the turn of two centuries was the great renaissance poet Naim Frashëri. In this period, the literary work of Naim Frashëri represents one of the most important poets of Albanian literature and even today he remains the central figure of Albanian Renaissance literature.

In the multitude of works created and published by him, there is also a place for children's creativity, as we can mention the books: Poems for the first teachers, Bucharest 1886, Reading schools for boys, Bucharest 1886, E ngimit çunavet ngonjëtoreja, the second piece, Bucharest 1886. What should be highlighted in all the creativity of this colossus of Albanian Literature, is the fact that he is not only an outstanding poet and Albanian speaker, but also a great scholar and teacher.

In the above-mentioned books there are 37 poetic creations, that is, a real mosaic of proverbs structured in verses, fairy tales, some taken from the French

fabulist of the 17th century, La Fontaine, and some others created by him. One of Naim Frashër's greatest merits in the field of children's literature lies in the fact that he managed to raise children's literature to a higher artistic level, creating an example and an influential model for his renaissance descendants.

Among other things, cannot overlook a very significant indicator of the weight and change that Naim brought about in terms of Albanian letters. Just like his predecessors Naum Veqilharxhi and Kostandin Kristoforidhi, who devoted themselves with complete conscience and not at all casually to children's literature, with the aim of deeply influencing the consciousness and diverse formation of children, Naim also followed and carried on and enriched even further this writing tradition.

For this reason, in this author's children's prose, some creations convey the mastery of narration, some of fable; however, they are distinguished by the characteristics of the scientific type, by which in the world of children they display and transmit knowledge about nature, society and the universe. Then, this tradition continued with another prominent personality of the National Renaissance such as Andon Zako Çajupi who wrote and published authentic literary works for children, such as "Adapted Fairy Tales" published in 1921 and after him adapted fables are also known of Papa Christo Negovani.

At the beginning of the 20th century, namely during the 30-40s, appropriate steps were taken to create a literature for children, an initiative which was also accompanied by the activity of creating a special press for children, such as the *Heath of Youth* magazines. of Youth directed by Vasil Xhaçka or *the Childhood* by Milto Sotir Gurrë. It cannot be left without mentioning the fact that several writings by the most famous authors of that time had a wide echo and spread even as children's works.

A special place in this period is undoubtedly occupied by the irreplaceable role of Father Donat Kurti, who was a friar and who stands out and is honored even today for the collection of the Kreshnik Cycle and the National Games together with Father Bernardin Palaj and the arrangement of the National Tales, for which the Austrian albanologist Norbert Jokl called him "one of the greatest Albanian prose writers". These summaries were included in the series "Visaret e kombti", consisting of XI volumes, realized in collaboration with Father Bernardin Palaj; 1937. Reprinted in 2005. – 2007.

It is worth noting that with the end of the Second World War and the establishment of state structures, a rhythm and a noticeable progress was felt in the field of children's literature because this literature was considered and functioned as an independent space of literary creativity. It should also be said that the first works for children with a completely new brand and where the themes of the time prevailed were published during the period of the Second World War.



Thanks to the importance and attention paid to children's literature, seeing it among other things as a form of education and even as a propaganda tool, children's literature moved forward at a fast pace to reflect life, the phenomena of the time, and building on in this way, a new physiognomy, where the preservation of the relationship with the past, myths and legends remained a favorite model among the new generation of readers, not being influenced by the schematism that prevailed beyond this literary tradition.

The fate of being included in the spirit of dictation, as was happening in all the Albanian literature of socialist realism, could not escape even the literary creativity for children, which in a considerable number of published or staged works, was supported on a basis new idea, illustrated with the proletarian physiognomy in the Marxist-Leninist worldview of the word. This way of creating meant to involve young readers with the socialist world, where self-sacrifice for the ideal, the duty to protect the homeland against any external or internal law, aroused in them hatred for the society with different social layers or the exploiting classes and their colorful morals. Therefore, with the aim of its massification, world bodies for children, such as the magazines *Pionieri*, *Fatosi*, *Yllkat*, or even *Skena e fëmijëve*, which began to be published during the second half of the 20th century, gave a significant help.

It should not be underestimated the considerable dedication shown in the first steps of our children's literature by such names as Qamil Guranjaku, who after his death under the care of the writer Moisi Zaloshnja, managed to publish two remaining books until that time in manuscript: "Little sparklers" (collection of poems for children) and "Ten days without bread" (collection of stories for children). child. He, with his completely authentic style through the artistic processing of the source material of popular stories, but also through original creation, was thus ranked together with the names of processors of Albanian fairy tales and children's literature.

In 1954, Teufik Gjyli published *Kacimicrri*, the first long novel published in Albania. In 1957, the volume *Golden Rose* was published, which includes 18 fairy tales. In 1959 was published the *North and the snow*. Then in 1961 he published *The Silver Fox*. Also authors such as Zihni Sako, etc., have had an impact and contributed to the consolidation of this creativity because they were committed to writing specifically for children. What should be singled out in these developments has to do with the end of the 50s, where the predominance of poetry and written prose is distinguished, and the beginning of the 60s of the last century, where the roan for children takes a new surge and wide spread.

In this period, several writers for children stood out who successfully produced both poetry and prose, such as: Odjise Grillo, Xhevat Beqaraj, Adelina Mamaqi, Tasim Gjokutaj, Bedri Dedja, Gaqo Bushaka, etc. Following these stages, it should be emphasized that in addition to poetry and prose, in the following years, drama

also began to rise and consolidate, which was taking a permanent and more visible place on the stages of puppet theaters, all over Albania, something which in synchronized with the flow of publications naturally gave a boost and popularity to children's illustrations as well.

Luigj Gurakuqi remains one of the multidimensional personalities of Albanian historiography, but in the rich background of his contributions, his dedication in the field of literary creativity also attracts attention. He is known and his activity has been analyzed as a man of letters, an educator, and a character of Albanian politics during the first decades of the 20th century. In the field of children's literature, Gurakuqi is represented by the collection "Desire", where carefully written writings for children, written in poetry and prose, occupy a special place in the History of Albanian Children's Literature.

In continuation of the tradition created by Luigji, years later, his successor Mark Gurakuqi, a prominent name of Albanian criticism and letters, summarized and adapted for children's stories from the life and work of the National Hero Gjergj Kastrioti which he wrote with an original language and style and published them in the book titled "*Gjergj Kastrioti's last order*". This publication for years has been followed and appreciated by the wide readership, criticism and history of children's literature.

Mitrush Kuteli is regarded as one of the founders of modern Albanian prose. He has a dense arsenal of creativity that touches the field of prose, poetry, journalism, translation and children's literature. Since the first half of the 20th century, Kuteli stood out in the press for his talent in literary creativity but also for his free views. After the establishment of the communist regime in Albania, he was imprisoned and spent three years in the Vloçisht camp in Maliq.

After his arrest in 1947, he lost the novel *People and Wolves* written about the Nazi camp in Pristina. To return the publishing right, he dedicated himself to children's literature, and thus *Pylli i Gështenjave* (1958), *Xinxifillua* (1962) and the retelling of the Kreshnik Cycle in *Tremige te moçme shqiptare* (1965), a collection of stories which even today it is appreciated by local critics as one of the most successful works of Albanian children's literature. On the 100th anniversary of his birth, the year 2007 was declared "The Year of Mitrush Kutel" by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Albania.

An important name in the field of children's literature is undoubtedly Bedri Dedja, who is known and appreciated as one of the prominent Albanian writers, a writer for children and an academic with a series of publications on the psychology and pedagogy of children's literature. In all his creative and academic activity, Bedri Dedja stands out among others as a theorist and critic of children's literature, an academic.

Among the main works as a writer of children's literature, we can mention the novels "Children of my palace" (1972), "Partisan Met" (1981), "Kacamisri around

the globe" (1993), "A dangerous journey" (1962), "City with three castles" (2003), "Republic of one thousand and one hundred wonders" (1997); the poem "School of the Forest" (1967), the volumes "Eleven-story Tales" (1996), "The Captain of the Force" (1970); as a researcher, he published the books "Tradition and Problems of Albanian Children's Literature" (1971), "Writings on Children's Literature" (1978), "Children's Literature" (1961), etc. Many of his works have been translated and published outside Albania, such as in Macedonia, Kosovo, Greece, Romania, China, and Switzerland. He is also the winner of many literary awards, as a laureate of the "Republic Award", "Naim Frashëri Order" and the title "Grand Master". Dedja has also been recognized by the International Center of Biographies in Cambridge, taking a place in Volume XVI of biographies as an outstanding author of the 20th century. For this activity, he received the Order of the International Book Organization for Children and Young People (Zurich, 2000).

If we are going to deal extensively with the continuation of children's literature and the most prominent names that represent this rich corpus, we cannot leave without elaborating the work of Odhise Grillo. This author published his first book of poems in 1954, titled "Seven Colors". Furthermore, throughout his creativity, Grillo wrote and published perhaps more works than any other writer of this literature, so much so that the criticism of the time qualifies him as the writer who had more works than years of life. In his work, he used themes and fields based on folk motifs, especially his birthplace, Vuno. Odhise Grillo in his creative optics always tried to bring something new to the field of children's literature, even enriching it with innovations, elements experiences and new artistic forms. His fellow writers describe him as a powerful and original voice, so passionate that it seemed as if he was born to write children's literature, being a genuine creator of it. he devoted his whole life to the latter with the dedication and creative skills with which he cultivated his literature.

Among his works we can mention: "*Seven colors*", poem, 1954, "*Rifle on the coast*", novel, 1967, "*Childhood voices*", poem, 1979, "*A man becomes a monkey*", humorous poem, 1993, "*Ladybug of childhood*", poem, 2001. Writer Odhise Grillo was awarded the "2000 Millennium" medal by the International Biographical Institute of America. This medal is awarded to people who rank alongside major personalities in the field of literature. Also, Grillo was included in the 16th edition, "International Authors and Writers Who's Who" 1999/2000, published by the biographical center of Cambridge in England (IBC). Among other things, he was awarded the title of Grand Master by the President of the Republic, as well as being the winner of the National Prize for Children's Literature, given by the Ministry of Culture.

Dionis Bubani remains one of the most special personalities of this literature. During his creative work, he worked successfully and stood out for his completely

original style and point of view in journalism, satire, humor and literature for children and adults, translations and comedy writing. Among his children's works we can mention: "The Adventures of Çapaçuli" around the country and the world / book cycle, "Wolf at the dentist", "Cat and the duck", etc. Bubani has also made a significant contribution as the author of children's song lyrics and is a laureate of the National Children's Literature Award, given by the Ministry of Culture.

With the publication of the works of the well-known author Gaqo Bushaka, especially in the novel genre, Albanian children's literature gained a new dimension and a writing innovation. His entire work ranks Bushaka as one of the most successful authors in Albania. According to critics, with his style and the concepts that he masterfully developed, he has influenced the construction of a kind of authentic narrative for children, which makes his prose very interesting and likable. Some of his best known works are: *The Bear Who Was Looking for His Father*, *On the Island of the Swallows*, *The Bequest of the Fox*, and *The Tale Left for Tomorrow*. What distinguished his creative profile from many other authors is the trilogy *Adventures of Chufu*, consisting of the tales *Chufu and the Curly Bubi*, *Chufu's Vacation*, *Chufu in the house of wonders*, to continue with the works *Chufu and the Bird*, *Chufu with Holidays in the mountains*, *Chufu wants Ice Cream*, *Chufu President*, etc. It is worth mentioning the fact that Gaqo Bushaka, for the values he has brought to Albanian literature and animated film, has been awarded a title by the President of the Republic as well as by the Ministry of Culture, which awarded him the National Award "Hours", dedicated to Children's Literature.

An important role in literary creativity for children is also the work of the well-known writer Xhevat Beqaraj. For several years, he directed the main children's magazines *Pionieri and Fatosi*, in which the creativity chosen by the authors of several generations who wrote this type of literature was published. As we mentioned above, his work represents a wide space in children's literature, which has often attracted the attention of literary critics, the media, and the authorities of the Ministry of Culture, who have awarded him the National Award. From the large corpus of his works, we could single out: *Bubi's house: poems and fairy tales*, *The wind draws - poems*, *Farewell to the stars - poems*, *The little tiger in the teapot - fairy tales*, *Dew beads: poems* etc.

In the literature of any country, names such as Astrit Bishqemi, who has extended his activity in several fields such as: literary creativity for children, translations, studies, critical articles and film scripts, really constitute a specific weight, giving literature a multidimensional contribution. It is worth noting that he holds the title "Professor" in the field of scientific research. In June 2009, from the Ministry of Culture and the Albanian Sector of IBBY (International Board on Books for Young people), he was awarded the "Hours" career award for "dedicated work in the study of Albanian children's literature and as an established creator".



In addition to the national awards in the field of creations for children, in 2010 Albania was nominated for the high world prize “Astrid Lindgren”, which is given in the field of Literature for Children and Young People. Seen in this context, we can affirm that Astrit Bishqemi is the only Albanian who has been nominated so far with this title. From the large and diverse corpus of his work we will mention:

*Gezofi i Tokke (Science Fiction Stories)* - Sh.B. Naim Frashëri, Tirana 1977, *Beyond the solar yard (science fiction)* - Sh.B. Naim Frashëri, Tirana 1978, *Small Carpenter* - Sh.B. Naim Frashëri, Tirana 1978, , *The glass prison* - Sh.B. Onufri, Elbasan 1995; *Dairy cattle* - Sh.B. Sejko, Elbasan 1996, *For a glass of tea* - Sh.B. Sejko, Elbasan 2004, *Fight with the wolf (novels, stories, sketches, funny)* - Sh.B. Rozafa, Pristina 2018, *Teeth of the wolf* - Sh.B. Sejko, Elbasan 1996, *How we threw the computer* - Sh.B. Sejko, Elbasan 2002, *Slippers for Prince Pison* - Sh.B. Sejko, Elbasan 2003, *Maçoku with mobile phone, A palm with fairy tales* - Sh.B. Erik, Tirana 2004, *How a poet grew up* - Sh.B. Rama Graf, Elbasan 2011; *Reissued with the title Dalgët e Këngës* - S.B. Vatra, Skopje 2015, *Girl with geese - screenplay for the film by Kinostudio Shqipëria e Re, Tirana 1975, Authors of Albanian literature for children and young people, 1886-2009 (Encyclopedic dictionary)* - Sh.B. 2 East & 2 West, Tirana 2009.

In Albanian children’s literature, the role and weight of female authors has been and remains present, giving the latter more identity and a variety of styles and profiles. Adelina Mamaqi represents one of the names with a wide range of works in terms of her artistic creativity, as well as in the preparation for publication of many works by other authors of this literature, after finishing higher studies in Albanian Language and Literature, she worked at the “Naim Frashëri” Publishing House, which for nearly four decades has been one of the most important publishing houses in Albania. Mamaqi worked for many years in the editorial office of children’s literature. We would like to place the emphasis on her first work, which is entitled “*Girlhood Dream*”. In 1963, he published the book “*Little Bubi*”. For over 30 years he published poems, stories, fables, fairy tales, among which we will mention: *Orizi i milngonave (poem)*, *Bregu i kalter (poem)*, *Fireworks (poem)*, *Kllochka and kittens (poem)*, *Learn to Adi the letter A*. Mamaqi has been honored with the Republic Award by the highest institutions of the Albanian state.

Another important voice of Albanian children’s literature is undoubtedly Shpresa Vreto, as a well-known author of several children’s books, as well as several scripts for artistic and animated films, where she has placed the figure of children in the face of dramas at her epicenter. and life’s challenges. In 1978, he wrote the script for the cartoon “Mirela”. In 1981, together with Xhanfizë Keko, they realized the script of the film “When a film was shot”. After five years, she comes alone as an author in the production of the film “Hard Start”. With the screenwriter of Kinostudio “Shqipëria e Re”, Petrit Rukën collaborated in the film “A boy and a



girl” in 1990. Some of the books written by Shpresa Vreto are: “Shokë Shkollë”, “Vit i paharruar” etc. After the 1990s, he created “The Little Mermaid” and “My World”. He also ran a children’s library for 12 years in a row. She is a laureate of the National Award “Hours” given by the Ministry of Culture.

If we want to approach Albanian children’s literature in its entirety, we will notice that it is enriched not only by the subjects or fables that build the literary works, but also by the different individualities and directions that have described the end and the end of this literature. In this context, Flamur Topi and the work created by him, has outlined another style and spirit in the large gallery of works and characters that give originality and role to this literature, seen in perspective with the trends in International Children’s Literature. Topi is a well-known doctor in Albania, but also a writer and journalist with extensive experience and appreciation in the eyes of the public and literary critics. He, along with many other colleagues, has been a member of the League of Writers and Artists of Albania since 1970, which proves that he started writing at a young age.

In 1964, Topi published the first science fiction story “Brave Heart”. In 1969, in the volume with the same title, “Braveheart”, he collected all science fiction stories written up to that time. In the following years, the author published the works: “Forgotten sounds”, “The love of robots”, “Illyria and Turi”, “Victory of Good”, “Fight for life”, “Stories for your health”, “A mission of hard”, “Invisible friends”, “Summer Day”, “Race of life”, “Green Peace”, “Stories of Aids - Sida - s”. In addition to his contribution to literature, especially in the sci-fi genre, Flamur Topi has also written screenplays for feature films, such as: “The Brave”, “Tinguj Luftë”, “Me hapin e shokut”, “In the days of holidays”, “Friends of a squad”, “Fight for life”. His works have been honored with prizes in national literature competitions for children, but also for adults. He is a laureate of the “Hours” National Award, dedicated to Children’s Literature, awarded by the Ministry of Culture.

The fable in every era or generation through which Albanian Children’s Literature has been cultivated and built, has occupied an important place and exerted an influence on the formation and education of different generations, cultivating the improvement of artistic tastes, obtaining philosophical and social thought. as well as penetrating the morals of the society of the time. In this context, without any hesitation Ferit Lamaj and his entire literary creativity ranks him as one of the most well-known Albanian fabulists. During his creative and publishing career, he has published over 60 books, in which over 3500 fables are listed. Thus we can mention some of the titles of his books such as: “*In summer and in winter*”; “*In the zoo*”; “*Tosi in a dress*”; “*Who ate the honey?*”; “*Gjelkokoshi wakes up the piggy*”; “*The nightingale and the gin*”; “*201 fables*”; “*Customs fox*”; “*Fox of Troy*”; “*Animals talk*”; “*Bubi, beci and calec*”; “*1111 fables*”; “*Parrot penguin*”; “*A camel near the Eiffel*”; “*Three-legged pig*”; “*Erotic fable*”; “*Scratch and scratch*”; “*Microfable*”; “*Naked bat*”; “*Miss Goat*”; “*Dwarf King*”; “*Gici and the policeman*”; etc.

We cannot leave without mentioning a very important indicator regarding the publication in the international arena of Ferit Lamaj's fables, which have been translated and published in several languages such as: English, French, Spanish, Italian, Greek and Romanian. His creativity has been screened in fabulous albums by the Albanian Public Television, under the interpretation of the most prominent Albanian actors. He is the author of the anthological collection of Albanian fables as well as the winner of many national and international awards, where the following stand out: the first prize in the national competition of the 45th anniversary of Liberation (1989); "La Fontaine" award from the French Embassy in Tirana (1995); "The best children's book in the Albanian language" award (Macedonia, 1996); Career Award (1996); silver medal at the international competition "Il faro d'Argento" (Italy, 1998); silver medal from the International Poetry Library (USA, 2002); the "Silver Naim Frashëri" medal awarded by the President of the Republic (2005); IBBY Honor List (China, 2006). He has studied and researched in the field of fiction in Greece, Italy, France, Germany, USA, Bulgaria, Romania, Switzerland, Austria, Egypt, Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Czech Republic, China. Lamaj is a member of the World Association of Fabulists as well as the International Association of Writers for Children and Young People. He has also been awarded titles and medals from the highest authorities of the Albanian State.

In the wake of the established tradition of children's literature, the author Viktor Canosinaj has also stood out in recent decades, creating a high level of readership. Initially, his name appeared in literary circles around the 70s, of the last century, when he started publishing poems and short poems in the literary press of the time. While in the early 80s, he published his first book for children, following with his first publication for adults in 1989, through which he also won a national award.

Some of his best-known and most appreciated works by both the public and the critics are Flight of the Pigeons novel (2000), Farewell to my shell (1999), Meriyll (2001), Monsters of Mimosa Street novel (2002), All the tulips of the world novel (2003), Blue years (2006), Dreams of a sailing ship novel (2004). It should be noted that in 2013, he published one of his most popular books entitled: "Adventures with the Floating Island". Viktor Canosinaj is winner of the National Children's Literature Award, given by the Ministry of Culture and some of his works have also been translated into foreign languages such as Italian and Japanese. Canosinaj is also the author of the well-known essay "From Liza to Harry Potter", financially supported by the Ministry of Culture

In its entirety, Albanian Children's Literature has a wide scope and especially, the periods between the two centuries, namely between the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as later at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, significant developments are observed, with tendency to create a more comprehensive picture of literary

forms, styles and profiles of authors who have tried in every period or system, to create an unlimited and free space for the new generation. Undoubtedly, especially in the totalitarian communist regime, this literature and its authors were censored, monitored, and persecuted, with the aim of keeping under control the entire Albanian literary system, where children's literature could not be an exception.

To make this statement even more concrete, we can bring examples that are well-known and widely treated in critical thinking, but in this paper, we will look at examples and evidence already known to the Albanian public, such as the case of the well-known writer Visar Zhiti. The communist dictatorship was not satisfied only with the condemnation and anathema of writers in the first years of its installation, but also exerted this pressure in the years when it and its structures were strengthened and operated in all areas of social activity.

In this aspect, not coincidental but on the contrary very reflective of the Albanian literary reality of that period, the work "Torn Suitcase" by Visar Zhiti also began to be conceived, a book which saw the light of publication only after the fall of the communist system in Albania. This work contains stories accompanied by drawings by Atjon Zhiti, creating in this way an intertwining of generations, father, and son together, with a collection of narratives drawn with words and colors. The special feature of this book is in its interior, where Atjon's drawings convey their own independent narrative, joining the stories that "draw" parts of life and have a connecting thread between them like the chapters of a novel.

In this work, we manage to discover that two children and two teenagers mutually give and receive in two times, in two genres of art, while it seems as if the future has been overshadowed by the past, excitement has been added to experience, wisdom has been added to the game, with a fantastic waiting horizon and the two authors merge into one, as in their father-son embrace. It was not in vain that we stuck to the case of the work in question, since "Torn Suitcase" carries an unusual story.

The author of this work himself, at the end of his essay that accompanies the publication of the book, recalls that: "I started in Shkodër, a student, I continued in Lushnjë, where I lived, then in the villages of Kukës, where a teacher took me, he took me underground, until I got out of prison, I rewrote it in Tirana, it was published and I rewrote everything once more in Rome. He is the same and young at the same time.... A book that has followed me all my life..."

Another work built with a very special structure and concept is Zhiti's other children's book "To grow up from love", which contains the creations of his son Atjon, an essay by Edlira Zhiti, Atjon's mother and his wife, the writer. This book was awarded the "Olive Branch" literary prize at the XIX Book Fair in Ulcinj. As we mentioned, this work is a special trend in children's literature because it has three authors in a book for all ages, which can be browsed with pleasure by adults as well

as children and teenagers, having inside and one as a little guide to a mother's first relations with her child, how it may be brought up, devotedly by a holy parental love. Visar Zhiti has been honored with the title of "Grand Master" by the President of the Republic, as well as with the Grand Prize for Literature" and several national awards granted by the Ministry of Culture.

Different literary periods have been represented and have highlighted names and works that have contoured and given the physiognomy of a literature that does not create dependence on translated literature, but has outlined its authentic model, as an integrated part of literature international. In these completely normal flows and continuities for a literature in consolidation, the literary corpus of the writer Xhahid Bushati creates its own corner in Albanian children's literature. Xhahid Bushati is present with his publications in all children's magazines, not only in Albania, but also in Kosovo, Macedonia and Ulcinj. Before and after 1990, he was honored with national prizes in the literary-artistic competitions that were organized by the Ministry of Education and Culture, by the independent Association of Writers of literature for children and young people, as well as by various literary-artistic bodies.

His work is represented by a rich creativity in prose and poetry, parts for dolls. He has also stood out for his style in journalism and in works with studies on literature for adults and children, etc., but mainly and specifically he has devoted himself to the sphere of children's literature. Some of his most important works are: "The first day of snow", sketches and stories, 1976, "Enter my tent", poem, 1978, "Secret of broken glass", part for puppets, 1985, "Help the little bear!", picture story for kindergarten children, 1986, "Bear's Birthday", piece for towers, 1993, "A Twice Foolish Cat", fairy tale, 2012.

The gallery of writers for children, the characters and the literary corpus that they have created has culmination points, as well as recognized flows of publications whose central purpose was propaganda and schematism, as features that testify to the limitations and the compelling spirit in the creative process. The names that would aspire to build a literature where the motives and compositional tools constitute the interior and messages of a real literary creation is without any hesitation Hamdi Meça and his literary work.

Meça published the first poetry book for children in 1976, entitled "Ben, Ben, captain". Then he also published these poetic collections "Foxes and bees" (tale in verse, 1976), "Krutane eagle flowers" (poem, 1976), "Brave squirrel" (poem-tale, 1977), "I grew up with my mother" (poem, 1977), "Mother language", poem, 1978), "Mother with a heart as free as freedom" (triptych of poems, 1980), "Rainbow over the school" (poem, 1980), "Besa e flagurim" (poem and poem, 1984), "Bird on a string" (poem, 1986), "A basket with spring" (poem, 1986). Unlike the poetic creations, which were conceived and written for children, the fables and fairy tales

that the author has written and published so far are dedicated to children and their parents. It is worth noting that in the field of fable Hamdi Meçaj has published the collections: “Pishtar’ i xixellonje” (1988) and “Laraska pa bisht” (1991). In the field of prose for children, he published the novella “The beauty of the earth” (1994). The author continues to have a dense activity and continuity in the field of publications and their promotion to the reader.

The reliance on popular myths and legends constitutes a special postcard in Albanian children’s literature. This phenomenon takes place in the creativity of many well-known names of this literature such as: Ismail Kadare, Mitrush Kuteli, Odhise Grillo, Hamdi Meçaj, etc. The work of the well-known writer Naum Prifti is also part of this consolidated and identity physiognomy of Albanian literature for children. His literary creativity is diverse and spans several genres: stories, dramas, comedies, novels, film scripts, pieces for puppet theater, scripts for cartoons, biographies, critical articles, journalism, where a rich language is noted. fused into motifs from folk folklore, folk rites and legends. There are almost 100 literary works, more than years of life and twice half a century of creativity. In this context, children’s literary creativity occupies a special and by no means accidental place in the entire literary corpus created by him. In 2001, he was honored by the Ministry of Culture and the League of Writers with the award: “Silver Feather”, for the volume with the legend “Mother of the Sun”.

In the field of poetry for children, Shkëlzen Zalli will remain one of the most beloved names for the reader. He left behind a rich fund of works which are continuously read and appreciated by the Albanian reader. He worked at Radio Tirana in Albanian literature programs for children. During his career, he became very popular for children’s shows such as “Microphone of cherries”, “Afternoon Kolovajsa” and “In the dance of our growth”. Some of his most popular works are: *Beyond the Face: Poems – 1998*, *Ben’s Lessons: Poems – 2001*, *Donkey Without One Ear: Fables and Humorous Stories for Children – 2013*, *Do Birds Have Teachers: Poems – 2014*, *Banana wreath: fable - 2015*, *Cat’s diary - 2015*, *Bell card: children’s poem - 2019*. Shkëlzen Zalli is a laureate of the National Award for Children, awarded by the Ministry of Culture

Dealing with Albanian children’s literature on a historical but also a scientific level, you can never stop at the personality and literary and scientific and academic contribution of the writer Tasim Gjokutaj. Thanks to his work, children’s literature has inherited nearly 30 books of rhymes and humorous poems for children, with which he has become one of the most prominent representatives of children’s literature in this field, and one of the most beloved and sought-after names. for children. In his creativity, Tasim Gjokutaj has addressed the children’s scene, for which he has written many pieces for puppets, several pop books for children and adults, but also song texts that have been composed and received prizes at



various festivals. He has done particularly commendable work during the many years that he worked as the director of the children's library in the city, where he developed many different activities for the promotion and reading of books and for the development of new talents in the field of literature. Then Tasim Djokutaj gave lectures on children's literature at "Eqerem Çabej" University, where he also helped to discover and advance talents in the field of literature for children and adults, some of whom are now well-known writers.

During the years that lecturer Tasim Gjokutaj worked, he was also engaged in scientific work, the fruit of which are two books with lectures and studies: "Girokastrite wedding lyrics" and "Children's literature 1", for which he also received the title "Doctor of philological sciences." Even after his death, Tasim Gjokutaj and his literary creativity always remains appreciated and in the attention of critics and scientific works.

In Contemporary Albanian Literature, children's creativity has been seen and appreciated by well-known names of this literature. One of the most important authors is undoubtedly Ismail Kadare, for whom children's literature has been since the first years of his creativity, a space where he has carefully cultivated his written art. Thus, we can mention the publication in 1958 of the poem *Princess Argjiro*, then in 1967 the publication of the poem *The Stonemasons*, to continue with the poem in the *Museum of Arms*, published in 1978.

Taking into consideration the critic's opinion, she dedicated a special place to the well-known poem *Princess Argjiro*, in which Kadare described the sacrifice of an Albanian princess who, in order not to fall alive into the hands of the Turks, is thrown from the walls of the Castle. According to the legend and the masterful construction of this mythical figure by Kadare, Princess Argjiro is thought to have been the ruler of the city of Gjirokastra during the 14th century. She was married to the prince of this city. During the confrontations with the Ottoman armies, Princess Argjiro fought when they surrounded the fortress of Gjirokastra. However, the Ottomans managed to take Gjirokastra, so Princess Argjiro, in order not to fall alive into the hands of the Turks, jumped from the highest tower of the castle together with her infant son. She fell straight on a rock and was crushed but her son survived, and to bless him she began to drip milk. According to legend, the baby survived from the stone dripping with milk. The legend says that the name of Gjirokastra comes from the name of the princess.

This creation remains one of the most representative achievements of Albanian literature for children, which through the symbol of this figure, has built a literary myth that has taken place in the consciousness of local readers, who reflect the existence of this ancient city and its continuity. and generations after the sublime act of the princess with the self-sacrifice of a woman who sacrificed herself in the name of life. Meanwhile, another great name of Albanian literature is, without

any hesitation, Petro Marko, the host of modernity in the Albanian novel and the representative of the Literature of the Lost Generation in this literature.

In terms of creativity for children. Marko stands out with the novels *Pirate's cave and Fantazma and plan 3 + 4*. What distinguishes the novel *Pirate's cave* as one of the most successful novels in Albanian children's literature is the fact that this novel has been dramatized and staged in several variants and although the book was published for the first time in 1964, by the publishing house "Naim Frashëri". The content of the novel is divided into five parts. The first part has two titles "The Story of Niko Dabo" and "Fight with the Shark". While the second part carries the titles "Discovering a centuries-old secret", "Gjonbaba! Gjonbaba!" and "Lolua - Gjonbaba! The third part presents the titles "Preparation", "On the attack to enter the cave", "In the sea of the cave" and "The year 999!". The fourth part begins with the title "The name of Rusman el Namsurit" continues with "Gjonbiri" and ends with the title "Gjonipi". The fifth and last part, has five titles. It starts with the title "Return of loss", continues with "Shipbreaker in hell!", "Other discoveries", "Voice of life" and ends with "On top, the Dolphin of pioneers!". While the novel "Ghost and plan 3 + 4" tells the adventures of a boy, Besim, and some of his friends in the village where Besim's father was born.

The boy is very attracted to the dark ruins of the ominous castle, where it is said in the village that a ghost lived. There is more demand for the latter during the summer season. Meanwhile, other names and personalities of Albanian literature have left their mark in this genre, such as Moikom Zeqo, who has written and published important works such as: "Dardan knights", or "Copernicus's professor" or even "Book of mini-fables", which was published after the death of the author, in which fables collected over 40 years published in the literary press of the time take place.

A prominent place is also occupied by literary works dedicated to children, left by the prominent Albanian poet and prose writer Frederik Rreshpja with his book "Trouta hutaqë". Regarding this work, the well-known writer and critic Xhahid Bushati expresses his appreciation and lists the book "Trofta hutaqë" as an achievement in the field of children's literature, for which he says: "Frederik Rreshpja writes with fantasy and lyricism". A work which aroused the interest of children and critics but also of the filmmakers of the animated film is "Oni sëšte me mojoli" by the author Vath Koreshi, published in 1987. This work admired in those years by the reader and the public, has at its center a boy who, growing up, tries to let his relatives know, especially his father, that with the years he is growing and with him his personality. This novel was dramatized by Radio Tirana and based on it, an animated film with the same title was made.

Always remaining in the elaboration of the works which have played a non-accidental role in the consolidation and enrichment of children's literature, we

will unequivocally stop at the work of the writer Riza Lahi, who has extended his literary creativity as in prose, as well as in poetry and his literary work, in addition to receiving various literary prizes won in nationwide competitions in 1994, winning the first prize for children's literature, we can highlight that some of his works have been published in USA, Greece, Romania, Macedonia, Kosovo, Iran, and finally in India. Riza Lahi has served as a pilot in the Air Force for 30 years, the subjects and characters built by him stand out in addition to the original style and skill and compositional spirit for the fantasy and phantasmagoric circumstances where he places and moves the events and heroes of his works. the author. Among his children's works we can mention: "*The Legend of Zerdelija*" 1985, "*Ledia on a moonlit night*" 1995, or "*Saturday at noon on a star*", a novella for which he was also awarded the National Literature Award for children.

The numerous currents in children's literature in the second half of the 20th century and the first half of the 21st century, which cover and deal with various topics, starting from the ancient, medieval past, but also continuing to the elaboration of contemporary subjects are represented by a considerable number of writers among whom we would single out Moisi Zaloshnje, Nasho Jorgaq, Skënder Haskon, Bardhyl Xhamaj, Mustafa Tukaj, Pandeli Koçi, Vilhelme Vranari, Virgjil Muçi, Alma Zenellari, etc., for whom we can express that with their work, they have managed to enrich the so-called Library of Albanian Literature for Children.

Likewise, in the series of publications in children's literature, the literary corpus of the writer Thanas Jorgji cannot be left without mentioning. This author remains one of the most well-known names and one of the most productive in this literature, creating a whole series of works with subjects and characters that bring a great variety to the development of this literature. Thanas Jorgji, after graduating in Language - Literature, was appointed to the editorial office of the Literary-Artistic Magazine *Nëntori*, an organ of the League of Writers and Artists of Albania, where he worked as an editor for prose until 1992.

Since this year he lives in Munich, Germany. Among his many books, we can mention: *Big Dreams* - novel, *How I Became Robinson* - novel, *Magic Theater* - novel, *Forbidden Hunting* - novel, *Mystery of the Cave* - novel, *Wolf's Mouth* - novel, etc. Jorgji has been awarded the National Children's Literature Award for his literary creativity. His literary work has been translated and published in Greece, Austria, Germany, and Italy in addition to his native language.

It must be admitted that in recent years there has been a decrease in the number of publications for children's literature, mainly by professional writers and mostly teachers and researchers have been included in this genre, who can be said to have not made genuine contributions to this literature, both in terms of creating new characters and authentic fables on which works of children's literature are generally based. In the same way, even in the next generation of the most prominent writers



of Albanian literature, no lasting commitment to children's literature is noticed.

In this aspect, another work by the author Ermir Nika entitled "Grandfather in the frame" has been added to the book collection of children's literature. In this book, the author brings with emotion a culminating event from the life of a grandfather and his grandson. The child faces natural difficulties, which are multiplied by the accidental loss of the grandfather. Coping with the situation, with the help of random people, and the strength and vitality of the grandfather, remain indelible in the child's memory. The descriptions of the situations, given with great art, will remain in the reader's memory for a long time, together with the picture of the grandfather in the frame. Ermir Nika is also the author of a series of children's song texts, a participant in the annual editions of regional and national song festivals, where he is a two-time winner of the first place in the 49th and 50th editions of the National Children's Song Festival.

In order to be as objective as possible in the judgment and evaluation of this process, we must point out that despite the consolidated tradition, valuable streams and contemporary creativity which in these last decades has known continuous peaks, preserving the reader but also being represented in different languages and cultures, Albanian literature for children is still not studied in Albanian universities and even in the last ten years, a decline in academic studies on this literature is noticed as well as an ever-increasing reduction in space and of the engagement of young researchers in the various scientific gatherings that are organized in Albania.

Based on the latest data that we collected to make this process as accurate and detailed as possible, it turns out that a scientific work by Prof. Nor. Dr. Ramazan Çadri with the title "Albanian Literary Tale", the fruit of several years of work which sheds light and analyzes in an analytical way, the relationship between the narration and the construction of the literary structure of the tale. This work will highlight the source values and enrichment of literature through the fairy tale as a fundamental value of memory and written art.

However, seeing this stage as one of the indicators of the transitive process that undoubtedly also affects art or literature, we adhere to the opinion that the created subject and the potential created throughout its history, will not a little affect the awareness of academics to throw view, analyzed and treated with due attention, this precious arsenal of Children's Literature.

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# *The Epic of the Kreshniks in the literature of Ismail Kadare and a description of the rhapsodes of the Albanian mountains*

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**Doct. Denis BIZHGA<sup>1</sup>**

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## **Abstract**

*In 1953, Milman Parry and Albert Lord published “Serbo-Croatian heroic songs”, to prove that the Homeric tradition of epic poetry was still alive in the Balkans of that time. The writer Ismail Kadare, seduced by this hypothesis, created the novel “The H File”, the content of which includes two fictional Irish-American researchers, Max Rothi and Vili Nortoni, who set out for the deep mountains of pre-war Northern Albania. Referring to the Epic of the Kreshniks as one of the most important artistic pillars of the spiritual culture of Albanians, the research of legendary epic songs testifies, among others, to their connection with lyrical epic songs.*

**Key words:** *rhapsodes, lyrics, songs*

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In 1953, Milman Parry and Albert Lord published “Serbo-Croatian heroic songs”, to prove that the Homeric tradition of epic poetry was still alive in the Balkans of that time. One of the testimonies for this continuity comes from the main subject of this study, the rhapsodist of Albanian origin from Sanjak, Salih Ugljanin, capable of reciting for hours Serbo-Croatian and Albanian epic poems about heroic acts of the past. This is where the discussions regarding the beginnings of epic poetry in the Balkans originate. In the context of the Kreshniks’ Epic, it is unknown whether the Albanian songs of the Kreshniks were inspired by the Serbo-Croatian ones or the other way around. The centers of the epic rhapsodes seem to have been the mountainous regions of Bosnia, Sanxhak i Novi Pazar, Montenegro and Northern Albania, although surprisingly most of the Albanian epics are set in Jutbina (Udbina), a village fifty kilometers in northeast of Zadar in Croatia as Robert Elsie would say (Elsie 1995).

Another issue that has been raised is the question of a possible connection between the Balkan heroic epic and the highly prized epic of the ancient Greeks. Is this not the epic and heroic poetry, which is still sung by the Albanians and the southern Slavs, the successor of the Homeric epic? The writer Ismail Kadare, seduced by this hypothesis, created the novel “*The H File*”, the content of which includes two fictional Irish-American researchers, Max Rothi and Vili Nortoni, who set out for the deep mountains of pre-war Northern Albania, with camera in arms for a dual purpose. First, they are looking for the birthplace of the epic, and second, they investigate the possibility of a direct connection between the Homeric epic and the heroic epic, whose songs are performed by the Hijerenda highlanders of Northern Albania with their one-stringed lutes, as the main instruments for conveying the songs of the Kreshnik Epic.

Kadare (Kadare 1990) put both researchers, in an unclear situation “*since this (epic) is the only artistic creation in the world that exists in two languages... in two languages of two warring nations... Albanian and Serbian...*” Furthermore “*It is naive to believe that the epic arose independently in the two peoples. Someone must be the author and someone the imitator. We have an inner conviction that the Albanians, as the most ancient inhabitants of the peninsula, created it first (The fact that their sisterhood is much closer to the Homeric dough proves this).*”

The field trip of the foreign researchers created a feeling of suspicion especially for the sub-prefect of the province, who sent the secret agent Dulle Baxhaja behind them to observe them and bring information about their activities and movements. The same suspicious attitude towards the researchers, for a possible spin, was also born among the local residents. Thus, their apartment in Rrashtbualli Inn is raided, and the device that recorded their voices is destroyed, which also marks the end of their research mission in Albania.

Albanologist Robert Elsie described (Elsia 1995) the work “*The H-File*” as a pleasant satire about two innocent foreigners who try to understand the Albanian spirit and, especially, the quirks of Albanian life with which foreign visitors are

often amazed: the Balkan penchant for gossip and backbiting, the incompetence of the administration, as well as a childish sense of fear and suspicion on the part of the authorities for anything foreign.

Referring to the Epic of the Kreshniks, profesor Zymer Neziri (Neziri 2010) says that is one of the most important artistic pillars of the spiritual culture of Albanians, the research of legendary epic songs testifies, among others, to their connection with lyrical epic songs. Epicologist D. Shala (Shala 1985) underlines: *“Illyrian epic life during the centuries-long period of war and uprisings against the Romans has produced epic songs, which are the connecting link with the Kreshnik Epic.”* Despite the lack of evidence for Illyrian epic songs, the above assertion is supported by other historical and archaeological evidence. Also, a testimony in the linguistic field comes from the Croatian linguist R. Katicic (Katićiq 1988), who talks about the age-old formulas of epic songs in Illyria, based on Illyrian anthroponomic and homonymic evidence.

In this context, M.W.M. Pope would say that (Pope) *“Epic poetry, which still exists in some parts of the world and once existed in many more, is specifically the singing of stories. It is normal to accompany them with instrumental music, and it is generally played by the singer himself. The singer is not just a reciter. He composes the songs. He must be sensitive both to the occasion and to the audience ... He can corrupt a good story, or he can improve and set right a story which he received from tradition in a corrupt state. He is not simply a person who repeats to the extreme what he has learned. He is a creative artist.”*

Nicola Lo Russo Attoma (Ghiglione 1941), with a study of the rhapsodes of the Albanian mountains, would describe the Albanian rhapsody like this: *“Accompanied by the lute, the rhapsody singer of the mountains, after a prelude of melodies that repeat the simple motifs of pastoral work, begins to sing. And, more than anything else, a revelation, at first slow, then ever hotter, alive; the singer articulates ten syllables that tell wonderful facts. History and legend are intertwined. Heroes, men-at-arms, women, myths, distant ages live in poetic re-enactment in the events of love and hate, peace, war...”*

Since the lute is the main instrument for conveying the songs of the Kreshnik Epic, the rhapsody takes the name lute. Prof. Eqrem Çabej, writing about (Çabej 1975) the epic songs of the Albanians, claims that *“in the north these songs are played with the lute”*. The lute is among the most popular one-stringed folk instruments played with a bent-hair bow that is mainly used in Northern Albania and Kosovo. The lute, unlike other instruments, has not only had a musical and entertaining function, but for Ramadan Sokoli (Sokoli 1981) has accompanied the songs that exalt the activity of the brave. Traditionally the lute instrument is produced by the rhapsodists themselves who sing and perform on it. The widest and most complete repertoire of these troves is the *“Eposi i Kreshnikëve”*, which is sung with a lute. For profesor Shaban Sinani, lute has risen to cult status (Sinani 2000). The cult of the lute in the Albanian family is widespread, just as there is a sanctifying respect for the songs of the Kreshniks. Many authors have written about the construction, functions

and symbolism of the lute. For profesor Vasil Tole (Tole 2010), very verses of the epic speak of its construction: “How well Muji is remembered, then he took the big sword, then he went out to the mountain ash, he brought the lute from the mountain, he put the slang from the donkey, he put his race it’s not red.” For Bernardin Palajt: “the lute is a primitive and simple tool. It consists of a wooden cup in the shape of an egg covered with skin, which is called a shark, and it has a not very long tail.”

The lute of our northern highlanders represents the most ancient archetype of bowed chordophone instruments of the European continent, and for Pirro Misso, a house without a lute in the north is called a “abandoned house”(Miso 1990). Fishta (Fishta 1981) considers the lute as “an instrument very liked by the people of our mountains, with which they sing their praises or lament their pain”.

According to prof. Ramadan Sokolit, the head on the tail of the lute, in the form of a goat is a symbol of our national hero, Skenderbeu, while according to prof. Vasil S. Toles (Tole 2010), may be an earlier symbol of the mountain fairies. Despite the symbolism, for Asdren “The sweet fairy of the lute/This is the kanga of the Highlands”.

For Supan (Folklori 1989), epic without music does not exist and a text without music can never be epic. In this context, for Ernest Koliqi(Koliqi 2002), the legendary musical narratives of the epic of the Kreshniks centered on the main characters of Muji and Halil, created and accompanied by the lute, constitute a poetic and ethnocultural complex.

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# *Hate Speech and its Impact on Albanian Youth*

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*Msc. Xhois KUTE<sup>1</sup>*

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## **Abstract**

*Background: The main topic of this scientific paper is based on what hate speech is, and how it affects young Albanians. The main problem raised in this paper is how hate speech is not much talked about in our everyday lives, and how young people do not have enough information about different examples of hate speech in their everyday lives and therefore not being aware how this can affect their mental health and emotional well – being. Purpose: The hypothesis that this scientific paper is based on is how today’s society faces a current situation of co-existence, where there is a lack of information on hate speech, and how young people (students) do not know how to identify what can be considered hate speech or not. Method: The theoretical basis of this scientific paper focuses on relevant literatures, studies conducted on this topic from all over the world, as well as previous studies focused on Albania, with relevant references. This paper contains the main study conducted by the author, a survey named “Hate speech and its effect on emotional Wellbeing” with open and closed questions, the data of which have been analyzed and interpreted. Conclusion: The creation of new platforms where young people can be informed about hate speech, report experiences is a necessary need.*

**Key words:** *hate speech, communication, affect, mental health, emotional well-being.*

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## Introduction

### Hate Speech and the “Paradox of Tolerance” by Karl Popper

Nowadays, one of the most open discussions for the public relates to the exercise of freedom of expression. What is the “line” that divides the freedom of expressing an opinion, and whether this opinion harms, offends, or discriminates an individual or a group of people? Today, a discussion arises to define discrimination and hate speech, and how much it affects people. When today this is a difficulty, we’re faced with, there are many philosophers, sociologists, and researchers, who years ago, chose to focus on the dynamics between human tolerance and intolerance.

For the well-known philosopher Karl Popper, intolerance meant treating one group differently from another based on the beliefs of that group, whether differentiations of race, gender, religion, ethnicity, and so on, and Popper believed that “attacking” these groups based on these beliefs should not be tolerated. We can say that this kind of philosophy, like Karl Popper, is supported by many people even today, in a liberal society. If years ago, the term “intolerance” was the most used, there are many who argue that this term has now been replaced by the term “language of hatred” or “hate speech”. There are many who believe that there is a “thin line” that separates hate speech or intolerance from “free speech” or the basic human right to practice freedom of expression and free speech.

The “paradox of tolerance” is more clearly defined by Karl Popper in his book “Open Society and its enemies (1945)” where his philosophy is expressed as it follows:

*“Unlimited tolerance in communication will lead to the disappearance of tolerance. If there is unlimited tolerance even of those who are intolerant, if we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will perish, and tolerance with them. —In this formulation, I do not mean, for example, that we must always “suppress” the freedom of expression of intolerant philosophies. If we can counter them with rational arguments and keep them in check by public opinion, suppression would certainly be an unwise move. But we must demand the right to “oppress” them, if necessary, even by “force”; for it may easily turn out that they (the intolerant) are not prepared to meet us at the level of rational argument but begin by denouncing the whole argument; they can prevent their followers from being open to rational arguments. Therefore, we must claim, in the name of tolerance, the right not to tolerate the intolerant.”(Popper, Open Society and its enemies, 1945)*



## Definition of Hate Speech

*“The term “hate speech” shall be understood as all forms of expression that propagate, incite, incite or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, antisemitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility towards minorities, immigrants and people of immigrant origin.” (Council of Europe, 2012)*

The definition above is to be considered as an ‘open’ definition, just like the open definition of discrimination adopted by the European Court of Human Rights. There are many cases that can also be seen as examples of homophobic and sexist hate speech and cases of intolerance towards people with disabilities or people with different political views as well.

To further add to the definitions of hate speech, we can also mention the additional protocol of the Convention on Cybercrime, regarding the criminalization of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature carried out through computer systems (Strasbourg, 28.I.2003): *“Hate speech by ‘racist and xenophobic material’ means any written material, any image or any other presentation of ideas or theories, which advocates, promotes or incites hatred, discrimination or violence, against any individual or group of individuals, based on race, color, descent or national or ethnic origin, as well as religion if used as a pretext for any of these factors.” (Strasbourg, 28.I.2003)*

## Objectives and hypothesis

This paper comes because of the immediate need to address discussions and focus more on cases of hate speech in our country. Given that hate speech is one of the main topics in every country in the world, especially nowadays, such a study should be carried out in our country as well. In a period where the world is facing war, protests and civil marches, a world pandemic that brought various damages on a global scale, or leaving serious consequences in the world economy, the world is facing more and more cases every day that bring attention to human rights, a safe life and the well-being of the individual, whether it is physical or emotional.

And while today we refer to mass communication, we will refer to a process through which a complex organization, with the help of one or more devices, produces and transmits public messages that are addressed to wide heterogeneous and distributed audiences. (Dominick, Joseph R., 2010).

We no longer refer to a “mouth to mouth” form of communication, i.e., eye to eye with the other person, but communication has already broken the barriers that define time and place.

Due to digitalization, we have new forms of medias, and information now spreads at marvelous speed, regardless of where you are located. Anyone can connect with anyone everywhere, through just a click online or phone call away.

*“The new medias have made the whole world a ‘global village’, encouraging social interactions between citizens, they have now erased borders between countries.” (McLuhan, Marshall, 2008)*

Another element that should be mentioned, is that social media can also be considered as a ‘foster’ of differentiations between people, thus influencing the social isolation of certain groups or individuals, where they can face many cases of vigilance of hate speech on social media. They might face insulting, even bullying forms of communications against certain individuals, or certain categories of individuals. This “freedom of expression” does not only promote social differences in society, but this phenomenon can promote social isolation, alienation and discrimination of individuals from virtual as well as real life.

### *The objectives of this paper*

- Raising awareness regarding cases of hate speech in a global dynamic form
- Raising awareness on hate speech in our country, opening discussions on this issue, if we lack information or not
- Cases of hate speech among young Albanians and the impact that hate speech has on them

### *Research questions*

The research questions that will be addressed in this scientific paper are listed as it follows:

- Q 1: Is there enough information on cases of hate speech in our country?
- Q 2: Do young Albanians have enough information to identify forms of hate speech in our country?
- Q 3: Do verbal or non-verbal forms of communications that are considered as hate speech directly affect the emotional well-being of the individual?
- Q 4: Can we say that the emotional well-being of individuals deteriorates as a result of exposure to hate speech?

## *Hypothesis and counter hypothesis*

The central hypothesis on which this scientific paper is based is the fact that there is a lack of information that addresses hate speech in our country, and that there is not enough space to discuss and raise attention on topics that affect or harm different groups due to of the differences they have, which can lead to them being confronted with cases of hate speech.

So, the **central hypothesis** is:

1. “In our country, there is a lack of information on hate speech, and for this reason young people do not know how to identify what is hate speech. If we can find a way to better identify it and focus on raising awareness against hate speech and discrimination, then we can change the current situation.”

**Counter hypothesis:** “Young people know how to identify hate speech and have enough information on hate speech.”

But also, a **sub-hypothesis** arises, on which the study will be based:

2. “Hate speech has an impact on the emotional well-being of the individual. Exposure to hate speech has consequences on the mental health and emotional well-being of Albanian youngsters.”

**Counterhypothesis:** “Hate speech has no impact and leaves no consequences on the emotional well-being of the Albanian youngsters/students”.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### *Hate speech and international legislation*

The International Convention on Political and Civil Rights (ICCPR), which is seen by many actors as one of the most important and significant documents regarding hate speech (Gagliardone et.al, 2015), since it includes article 19, with a particular focus on the individual’s right to expression. This article states that: “*Everyone has the right to freedom of expression; this right includes the freedom to receive, seek and have information and ideas of all kinds, without distinction of barriers, through writing, orally, or in print, in the form of art, or through any channel, media and form they want.*”

In point 20/2 of this article, it is stated that:

*“Any kind of advocacy with a nature of nationalistic, racial or religious hatred, which aims to incite discrimination, enmity or violence, is prohibited by law.”*

## *Hate speech and Albanian legislation*

In terms of Albanian legislation, we can say that hate speech is directly related to Article 14 of the Constitution of Albania, which deals with the “prohibition of discrimination”, as well as 15, 16, 17 - the law on protection against discrimination, no. 10 221, dated 4.2.2010; law no. 97/2013 for audiovisual media in the Republic of Albania. According to the “amendment of law no. 10221 on protection against discrimination”:

*“Hate speech is any form of expression in public by any means of promotion, incitement of denigration, hatred or defamation, any concern, insult, negative stereotype, stigmatization or threat against a person or group of persons, as well as any justification of all forms of expression based on a descending list of causes according to Article 1 of this law.”*

Regarding the existing laws for the regulation of media content in our country, which are also related to the regulation of the activities of media operators to avoid the use of hate speech and discrimination, we have:

The Law on Audiovisual Media 97/2013, the Broadcasting Code, as well as the Complaints Council “AMA” - which take care of the monitoring and regulation of ethics codes in the media. On the other hand, discrimination is subject to Law No. 10 221 “On Protection from Discrimination” approved in 2010. In this law, the term discrimination is defined as:

*“Discrimination” is any difference, exception, limitation or preference, based on any of the reasons mentioned in Article 1 of this law [gender, race, color, ethnicity, language, gender identity, sexual orientation, political, religious or philosophical beliefs, condition economic, educational or social, pregnancy, parental affiliation, parental responsibility, age, genetic condition, disability, belonging to a special group, or for any other reason, which has as its purpose or consequence the obstacle or making it impossible to exercise in in the same way as others, of the rights and fundamental freedoms recognized by the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, by the international acts ratified by the Republic of Albania, as well as by the laws in force.”* Also, Article 265 of the Criminal Code states:

*“Inciting hatred and fights, due to race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation, as well as preparing, spreading or storing, with the aim of spreading writings with such content, carried out by any means or form, is punishable by imprisonment from two to ten years.”*

The phrase ‘...writings with such content, carried out by any means or form...’ can be considered inclusive of online media as well, but so far there has not been any public case of the use of these articles against the media (Londo, 2014).

## **Hate speech and its impact on mental health.**

The effects that hate speech can have on the mental health of individuals can be short-term as well as long-term. Apart from the fact that hate speech can pose a threat to a person's physical health (cases of crimes that have occurred because of hate speech), these cases can result in other consequences that are harmful to mental health and emotional well-being in the long run. (Benisek, Alexandra, WebMD, "How Do Hate Crimes Affect Health", 2022)

Hate speech communications can lead to emotional damage, with consequences such as:

1. Loss of trust in oneself and in others
2. The feeling of shame, the fear of being targeted by others
3. The feeling of insecurity and vulnerability
4. Self-denial and identity crisis, etc. (Ratini Melinda DO, WebMD, "How Do Hate Crimes Affect Health", 2022)

Cases of hate speech can cause mental health disorders and symptoms such as anxiety and depression. They can also cause post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Different researches according to "WebMD" show that groups or minorities that have been exposed to cases of hate speech on a regular basis have a high risk of having post-traumatic stress disorders. Also in the most extreme cases, studies show that cases of hate speech can lead to human behaviors with self-harming or suicidal tendencies. (Jennifer Casarella, MD, WebMD, "How Do Hate Crimes Affect Health")

Also, another unhealthy tendency of how hate speech can affect the emotional well-being of the individual is by leaving consequences such as emotional suppression, or suppression of the feelings of individuals. Those who are victims of hate speech, whether they were witnesses of it, find it more difficult, if not impossible, to express their emotions. They have the tendency to hide their emotions in this way by closing them in themselves. This makes it very difficult in the long run for them to be able to heal through therapy and deal with the damaging effects that hate speech has had on their mental health. (Benisek, Alexandra, WebMD, "How Do Hate Crimes Affect Health", 2022)

## Methodology

Regarding the methodology of this scientific paper, mixed methods were used. Mixed methods can be thought of as a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods in the way that best fits the specific project. (Bob Matthews, Lizz Ross, Research Methods, 2010). Qualitative research methods are methods that primarily deal with stories and narratives that deal with people's subjective meanings, feelings, thoughts, and beliefs. Qualitative approaches provide the opportunity to explore concepts with research participants (respondents) in a deeper way by listening to the explanation of concepts in their own words and experiences. (Bob Matthews, Lizz Ross, Research Methods, 2010)

To achieve the maximum result in the collection of data to support and analyze the topic of this scientific paper, it was decided to formulate the questionnaire on the language of hate in our country entitled "Survey on hate speech/discrimination and its impact on emotional well-being ". In this case, the aim was to investigate how the young students of the Universities of Tirana who participated in the survey, conceptualize the language of hate, and whether it affects their emotional well-being. Qualitative approaches help to understand these respondents' perceptions more deeply. In this survey semi-structured interviews were used.

Quantitative research methods are methods that mainly deal with the collection and processing of data that are structured and can be presented numerically. (Bob Matthews, Lizz Ross, Research Methods, 2010) In this scientific paper, quantitative approaches collect and process data that is structured and categorized in such a way that it can be counted. They are constructed and structured by the researcher, deciding both the questions that are asked and the types of responses that respondents can choose from (in the form of a set of categories or responses).

### *Quantitative data analysis*

The data that was collected from this study was then analyzed through the program "Google Forms", which is a survey management software as part of the package of editing documents from the company "Google". The primary data were presented in the form of tables, graphs and descriptive analysis as well as demographic data where each of the sectors includes the respective percentages and characteristics of the respondents.

## *Measuring instruments of scientific research*

In this scientific paper, the measuring instruments that were used are questionnaires containing semi-structured interviews. The types of questions are varied, ranging from yes/no questions to semi-structured interview questions that allow respondents to express themselves more freely, as well as questions that give the possibility to give one or more of the choices depending on the experiences of the respondents. The questionnaire was divided into 3 sections. The first section required general information of the respondents, such as the variables of gender, age, field of study, etc. The second section focused on how much the respondents are aware of hate speech, identification, and concrete cases with mostly closed questions as well as alternatives, while the third section contained questions about the relationship between hate speech and emotional well-being/mental health in respondents. The questions were formulated by the researcher.

### *Study population*

In the statistical sense, the population is the total number of cases that can be included as research subjects. (Bob Matthews, Lizz Ross, Research Methods, 2010). The population of this study resulted in a total of 270 students, who were from different branches at the Universities of Tirana (coming from private and state universities). A high number is noted because the questionnaire was conducted online and distributed on social platforms as well as active student groups on social platforms. In this questionnaire, extra care was taken to keep the questions simple or well explained as well as including examples so that the students were clear in their choices.

### *Sampling and study data*

The time distribution of the questionnaire lasted from June 1-st to July 1-st, 2022, giving students a whole month to respond on the online google forms website. The participants of this survey were informed in advance about the framework of this study, due to the fact that their data would be analyzed and interpreted within the framework of this scientific paper. The target group chosen for the study was 18 - 24 years old, taking into account that the focus was the collection of interviews with young students of the bachelor cycle (and this is the age group that affects students of the 3-year cycle or 4, 5 depending on the field of study) . The target group was focused only on students who are



registered in the Universities of Tirana (not in the universities of the districts) The purpose of the questionnaire was to understand the connection between hate speech among Albanian youth, whether they have experienced it or as witnesses, and to understand if hate speech has affected their mental health/emotional well-being. In total, this survey resulted in 20 questions which were then analyzed and interpreted.

### *Reliability considerations*

All data obtained from the responses of students who chose to participate remained confidential. It was made clear to the students at the beginning of the survey that each of their answers remains anonymous, and that this survey aims to preserve their privacy. No private data of the participants has been made public. It should be said that regardless of privacy, the google forms format requires each respondent to create a personal account in the online format, in order to verify that the data is correct from real individuals (not online robots).

## **Results**

The 20 questions that were raised in this survey are listed as below:

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your age?
3. Where is your birthplace?
4. Are you a bachelor student at a state or private university?
5. What is your field of study?
6. After given some examples to read, do you think these cases you read are examples of hate speech?
7. Do you think you have enough information about the types of hate speech in our country?
8. Have you ever been exposed to hate speech/discrimination?
9. How has this exposure to hate speech been?
10. In cases where hate speech was directed at others, which of the cases was it?
11. Where did this exposure to hate speech occur?
12. Which of the following cases was the discriminatory comment you found?
13. What cases of hate speech online and in audiovisual media have you noticed?
14. On which of the platforms listed below have you noticed the most instances of hate speech?



15. Do you think hate speech affects an individual's emotional well-being/ mental health?
16. If you think it does, in what way do you think it has affected your emotional well-being or that of others?
17. Please share your experience as a student with hate speech.
18. When you were exposed to hate speech/discrimination, did you do anything to stop this situation?
19. If not, what was the reason for not responding?
20. Have information/awareness campaigns against hate speech been carried out at your university?

After reading all the questions of the survey, 270 students have given their answers which have been analyzed. Most of the students partaking in this survey were female (75.6%), the minority were male (24.4%). About their age, there was an equal distribution of students from the age of 18 till 24. Out of 270 students, the birthplace of most of them (57.8%) were from cities outside of the capital, and 42.2% of the students were born in Tirana. Regarding whether they study in a private or state university, 66.7% of them said that they studied at a state university, 33.3% said that they studied in a private university, and about their field of study, they mostly were studying medicine, journalism & communications, political sciences, architecture etc.

After gathering their general information, the students were given 4 examples of news titles/comments online in Albania, to read and analyze. After reading these examples, most students (88.9%) answered that they believed the examples above were forms of hate speech. Then, 58.9% of the students said that they believed that they had enough information on hate speech, and 41.1% believed that they did not have enough information on hate speech.

After this section, the survey asks students to get into detail about their experiences with hate speech. Out of 270 students, the majority of 71.5% claimed "yes, I have been exposed to hate speech", 17% claimed that they have not been exposed, and 11.5% of the students said they weren't sure.

Getting more into details with the type of hate speech they had been exposed to, and the most important discovery of this study, most cases of hate speech that the students have been exposed to, were towards the LGBTIQI+ community, with 187 cases, followed by hate speech based on sexism, with 177 cases, and third overall were hate comments based on xenophobia and differences of ethnicities in Albania.

Moving on with the survey, out of 270 students, the majority by 97% claimed that they have been exposed to hate speech on different platforms such as social media & TV. Out of all the platforms they have been exposed to hate speech, 78.5% of the students claim that social media has the most cases of hate speech. The

platforms include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, Telegram, Tik Tok etc. Second place with 8.9% we have audiovisual media platforms such as TV and radio stations, followed by 5.9 % of students that claim that have seen cases of hate speech on different blogs or online media comments.

Going to the last part of the survey, regarding how hate speech affects mental health, out of 270 students, the leading majority by 97.8% claim “yes, hate speech has affected their mental health and emotional wellbeing”. Going more into detail, 94.8% of them said that hate speech has affected them negatively. The survey also asked students to share their subjective experiences through short sentences (not mandatory), how hate speech has affected them, and a total of 84 students chose to share their experiences, but with identities kept anonymous.

## Discussion

This sector deals with the interpretation of the analysis of the answers to the questionnaire above, as well as the analysis of the data that have been ascertained up to this part of the scientific paper. Referring to the first research question of this study:

1. “Is there enough information on cases of hate speech in our country?”

Based on the materials treated in the literature review as well as the studies collected in our country, there are treatments and discussions on cases of hate speech in Albania, as well as relevant institutions and organizations that conduct continuous studies, but we can say that there is always a place for improvement. Based on the results of the last question of the questionnaire, if awareness campaigns against hate speech were carried out in their universities, out of 270 students, the majority, 78.1% in total, 211 students chose “No”, thus concluding that according to their experience, awareness campaigns against this phenomenon have not been carried out in their respective universities.

Regarding to the second research question of this study: 2. “Does Albanian youth have enough information to identify hate speech in our country?”, most young people surveyed answered yes, stating that they think they are capable of identifying cases of hate speech in everyday life, regardless of whether or not they are exposed to information on hate speech. According to the chart, 58.9% of them answered with “Yes”, so 159 students think that they have enough information on hate speech and the minority, 41.1% answered with “No”, so 111 students who do not think that they have enough information about cases of hate speech in our country. Regarding the third research question of this study:3. “Do verbal or non-verbal communications that are considered hate speech directly affect an individual’s emotional well-being?”, most young students answered yes, confirming

that they think hate speech affects everyone's mental health or emotional well-being. Out of 270 students that took part in this study, 97.8% of them, a total of 264 people, think that "Yes, hate speech affects their mental health", while the minority 2.2% of them, a total of 6 students, think that "No, hate speech does not affect their mental health".

Regarding the fourth research question of this study: 4. "Can we say that an individual's emotional well-being deteriorates as a result of exposure to hate speech?" To the last research question, most students who participated in this survey answered with "hate speech negatively affects mental health", thus confirming that according to the results of the survey, the emotional well-being of the individual worsens because of exposure to hate speech. To be precise, out of 270 respondents, most of them 94.8%, so 256 people answered that hate speech affects them or others in a negative way. On the other hand, the minority with 4.4% think that hate speech does not affect their emotional well-being, and 0.7% think that hate speech has a positive effect on emotional well-being/mental health. Regarding the central hypothesis as well as the counterhypothesis that was raised at the head of the scientific paper, they are as below:

The central hypothesis: "In our country there is a lack of information on hate speech, and for this reason young people do not know how to identify what is hate speech. If we can find a way to better identify it and put the right focus on awareness of hate speech and discrimination, then we change the current situation." Counterhypothesis: "Young people know how to identify hate speech and have enough information about hate speech."

As can be seen from the results of the survey, the young people found, despite a small difference in percentage, that in fact they have information on the hate speech in our country and that they can identify it, thus **proving the counter hypothesis**.

Regarding the second hypothesis: "Hate speech has an impact on the emotional well-being/mental health of the individual. Exposure to hate speech leaves consequences on the mental health and emotional well-being of Albanian youngsters." The results of the questionnaire above show that most students think that hate speech has an impact and has consequences on the mental health/emotional well-being of the individual, **confirming this sub-hypothesis** and rejecting the counterhypothesis.

## Conclusions & Recommendations

To move towards a future where young people are more informed, more aware and alert to hate speech, so that they understand the impact that cases of discriminatory language have on mental health, it is necessary create

environments of discussion on this phenomenon. The creation of new platforms where young people can be informed about hate speech, report experiences is a necessary need. The conduct of awareness campaigns against hate speech, various activities, should be implemented as early as possible in the educational life of students. If such activities are implemented from an early age, there is a probability that cases of hate speech are lowered in the future, thus making a change. In this way, a space of communication would be given to victims of hate speech to express their difficulties and to connect bridges with other people with whom they can identify, by helping them heal from their negative experiences as well.

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# Online media and broadcasting ethics

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*Xhesjon ZOGU*<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

*Background: The code of ethics, drafted by a group of local and foreign experts, aimed to establish a certain framework where a distinction was made between what should and should not be broadcast in the media. For many years this code of ethics was respected by most of the traditional media in the country, where quality content and ethics had the main weight during the broadcast.*

*Purpose: This study tries to analyze one of the most common problems in the Albanian media, the transmission of unethical content. The study relies on quantitative and qualitative data, researching both the nature of the content being broadcast and the causes leading to its transmission. Method: In the framework of this study, monitoring was conducted in various online media, and also a survey was conducted with 22 surveyors, to understand if the public needs these contents and what access they have to them.*

**Keywords:** *Media, online media, ethics, broadcasting, content, interests*

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## Introduction

LaRue T. Hosmer defined ethics as “a statement of an organization’s norms and beliefs, an attempt to establish the firm’s moral standards.” Although ethics has had different approaches over the years, it made the distinction between what should and what should not, between wrong and right. One of the most important ethical theories was that of Immanuel Kant, deontology, which believed in the philosophy that ethics follows universal moral laws such as do not lie, do not deceive. In the media framework, this philosophical approach was related to the respect of the basic principles to get closer to the right and the truth, starting from impartial, free, and objective reporting and information. (T.Hosmer, 1991)

In the 2000s, the first contact of television with technological developments and their use began. Of course, this evolution marked an explosion, culminating in 2004, when Digitalb started broadcasting despite obstacles and vicissitudes. Over the years, using technology and going online was seen as a necessity and means of survival for these televisions. With each passing year, the television stations increased their technology-oriented funding while the newspaper became less and less useful every day. The well-known theory of “convergence” happened exactly when all the media created their online pages, as an opportunity to expand the channels of information distribution.

Top-Channel, according to the observations made during the study, turns out to have a massive activity and following in all its social networks, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube, etc. Innovation media tried to be multi-platform and always available in the hands of the reader and with information as quickly as possible. Here we can take the case of Top Channel, which, in addition to broadcasting on television, publishes its content on several online platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, etc.

The code of ethics and traditional media, mainly television, interacted as an unbreakable “law” that ensured the smooth running of all content and broadcasting. The introduction of new means of communication and the transition of the media to the online world also brought the beginning of the first ethical problems. During this transition, we encountered a confrontation of different cultures, where the traditional one was oriented towards verification, impartiality, and accuracy, while the online one demanded immediacy and “fast-food” products.

The rapid technological development made television no longer a medium where people gathered to watch or be informed but to move into an online and ubiquitous individual act. This was tempting for the reader but challenging for television and new media. At the time when television was the main medium, it

was the reader who sought it, while in the digital age this approach has changed, it is the media that follows and seeks the reader.

This type of evolution increased its consumption and immediacy of use. A reader can read the same news in different versions and different media at the same time and within a few minutes. This increases, even more, the pressure on the media to be “latest”, which leads to the creation of various problems. Here it is worth mentioning “Agenda Setting” and “Agenda Building”. So, the media is no longer a mechanism for setting the agenda but mainly builds them. This change was noticed in online media and not in television, where “Agenda Setting” has more value.

## Methodology

Based on the type of topic and the increased appetite for views which translates into financial income, the research itself requires measurement through different indicators. For this reason, it was thought to do a qualitative as well as quantitative analysis.

The qualitative analysis is mainly based on the evaluation of different media contents through observation, as well as on a large number of researchers who have addressed this topic by local and foreign authors.

The quantitative analysis relies mainly on primary data collected from and monitoring various online media. The questionnaire was completed during the period 20-28 April 2022, shared online, and prepared in google form.

Based on a wide range of studies by local and foreign authors who explain the approach on which online media relies, in the specific case of the Albanian media, it turns out that the online media industry has shown a tendency to provide content that breaks ethical rules but that attracts visitors.

Thus, the *hypothesis* we raise in this study is:

The transition of traditional media online escalated the ethics of broadcasting.

*Research questions:*

1- Why does the media decide to break the ethical code and how has this approach been transformed?

2- Is the reader interested in unethical content that is broadcast by the media?

## Results

Many researchers have tried to create a reflection on the relationship between ethics and law in themselves. In the 18th century, scholars of liberalism tried to define a boundary between ethics and law. Immanuel Kant says that “Ethics

considers internal human attributes, but rights are related to external practical behavior”. Based on this, researchers Sedigheh Babran, and Mahboubeh Ataherian concluded that “ethics and rights are not equal concepts; ethics values rights”. (Sedigheh Babran, 2019)

Kant’s principles were otherwise known as the theory of deontology. Ethics, according to this theory, uses rules to distinguish right from wrong. Kant believes that “ethical actions follow moral laws, such as don’t lie, don’t steal and don’t cheat, and in the case of the media, they translate into respecting the basic professional principles to get as close as possible to the right and the truth as a goal of an honest, true reporting and information, without infringing anyone’s freedom and rights”. (Çipuri, Media përballë pasqyrës, 2021)

### *The new broadcast approach to online media*

Technology and broadcasting the latest news so that the audience is engaged is no longer seen as the exception but as the norm, which essentially has instant information. According to the researchers, we must admit that going online has forever changed the structure of news and the way it is transmitted. This kind of evolution takes the individual further and further away from television because the news that may be broadcast on the central news on television can be read many hours before. (McFadden, 2016)

Ramadan Çipuri, in his book “Vetëcensura”, says that the traditional media was forced to “convert” to new technological tools, as the only way to increase the diversity of information distribution channels. Media adaptation and diversification was seen as necessary element and survival tool to compete with the rest of the online market. Çipuri points out the fact that the media is still in the process of adopting new practices, which aim to reach as wide as possible. (Çipuri, Vetëcensura, realitete të gazetarisë shqiptare, 2016)

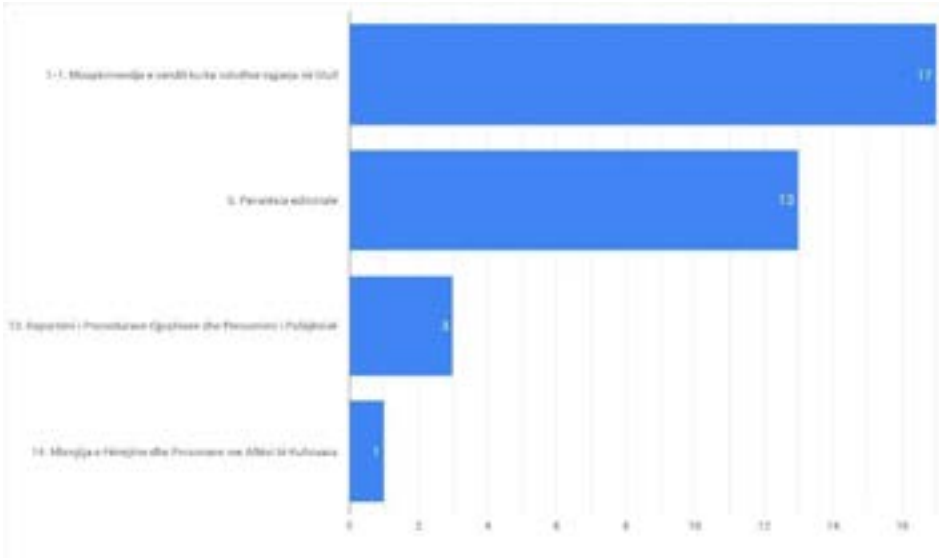
Jeffrey Cole asserts that “the era of single newsroom media with predictable deadlines is gone.” Cole parallels the importance of the online age with newspapers, where according to him, “newspapers have become breaking news businesses”. This is because online they can do instant coverage by writing and posting their stories with audiovisual content at the last minute. (McFadden, 2016)

In a monitoring report published by the Albanian Media Council, the ethical codes that are violated the most by the media are highlighted. The monitoring carried out from the period December 2019-March 2020 highlights a significant problem both in editorial independence and in the difference between fact and opinion. 2 are the main elements that must expose the problem of editorial independence such as “politics or power ready writings and secret advertisements”. According to the reports, not distinguishing fact from opinion, “indicates an



attempt that the reporting is not impartial but “enriched” with the opinion of the one who reports by manipulating the reader”. (Këshilli Shqiptar i Medias, 2020)

**FIGURE 1:** The ethical codes that are violated most by online television portals



*The audience creates “conditions” in front of the media, encouraging the “break” of ethics*

With the evolution of the media and its extension online, researchers noticed that the audience also began to create a certain position. Consumers of media articles are increasingly changing the way they access information obtained online. Joseph B. McFadden notes that the consumer is not bound to receive information when the media wants it, but when he wants it himself. But not only that, “they want to get news when they want and when they can collect it from a variety of sources”. (McFadden, 2016)

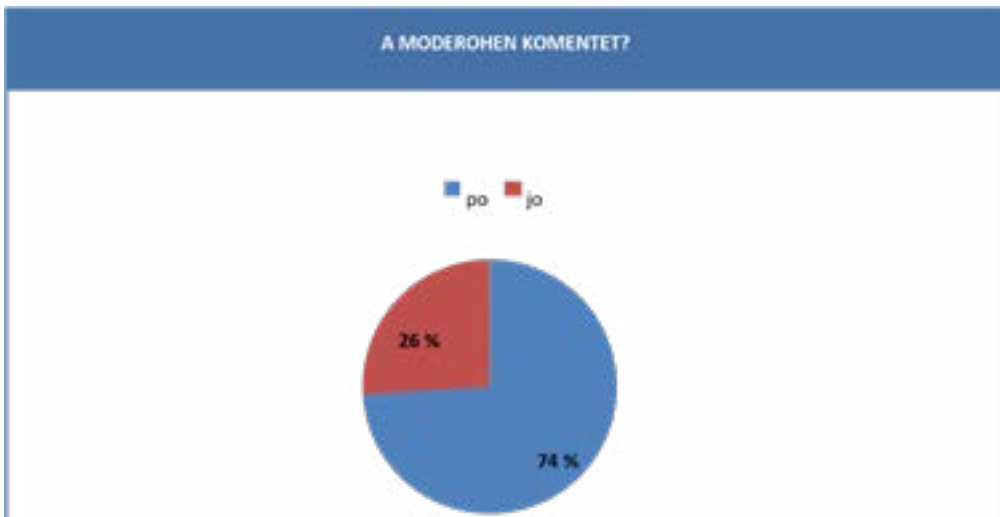
With this added luxury in the hands of the audience, not only the pressure on the media begins but also the lameness in its transmission. The consumer is no longer just a reader on social networks, he reacts and gives opinions through comments. This type of interaction usually consists of the use of insults and insults “toward minorities, religious communities, groups, starting from sexual orientation, specific public figures, and politicians, etc.” According to a survey conducted by the Albanian Media Institute, “for the most part, online media have enabled comments from users: in 80% of them”. What makes this type of interactivity more interesting is the assertion of online media leaders, who state that “there are users who are more interested in reading comments than the content of the article itself”.

**FIGURE 2:** “Can readers comment?”. Source: Albanian Media Institute



Where online media executives were asked, “if they moderate comments and most said they do: 26% of them said they don’t moderate them, while 74% said they filter them.” (Medias, 2018) (Eun-Ju Lee, 2017)

**FIGURE 3:** “Moderation of comments”. Source: Albanian Media Institute



According to McFadden, with this positioning, the media consumer causes the media to lose revenue by cutting advertising. “The money is not enough to compensate for lost readers and print ads,” McFadden says, adding that with less revenue, the support base for quality news is shrinking. The pressure and reduction of budgets for the media mean that there is less attention to the information that

is created and more attention to its distribution. The Center for Excellence in Journalism (State of Media) has called the news industry today “more reactive than proactive.” (McFadden, 2016)

### *Relationship quality / profit*

Journalist Patricia Sullivan says that “Right now, almost no online news site invests in original, in-depth, and scrupulously edited reporting.” On the other hand, McFadden points out that this type of operation causes superficial news to be distributed, commented on, and reviewed, but they do not go deeper to discover new facts and elements. (McFadden, 2016)

Turkish researchers Ali Murat Kırık and Ahmet Çetinkaya affirm the same, who says that “online journalists often reuse the news they receive from news agencies in a form that fulfills their goals.” (Ali Murat Kırık, 2017)

Investment media and readers’ demand for real-time material is growing every day. According to the researchers, the media is aware that what is most demanded of them in these moments is the speed in transmission. On the other hand, this brings various ethical problems which are far from “being a journalist”. (McFadden, 2016)

The media, mainly inclined to products produced at less cost and immediately, decides to broadcast ready-made and shallow statements from certain institutions or individuals. So, it is about information quoted directly from politicians’ profiles, mainly on social networks such as Facebook or Twitter. Of course, there are also quotes copied from certain sites or institutions. (Medias, 2018)

The UNESCO report notes that the media pay more attention to the clicks received by an article than to “minutes devoted” and “time spent” on these pages (which are also more significant long-term indicators of quality journalism) that are used to justify increasing digital advertising rates in an increasingly poor market”. But operating towards such an element, according to the report, is likely to lead to an irreparable loss of public trust in the media. (UNESCO, 2020)

### *“Click Journalism”*

According to the researchers, the difficult financial situation and the integration into social networks made the media tend towards the so-called “click journalism”. Following this practice became mandatory for the media, which by increasing the number of clicks, also increase the profit from various advertisements. This is done not only for digital advertising but also for other methods of their application. To achieve this type of approach, the media use intriguing news, with headlines and images that tease the reader to click on them, even though



the content may be different. This type of “informative mess and unethical news negatively affects the journalism profession”. (Ali Murat Kırık, 2017)

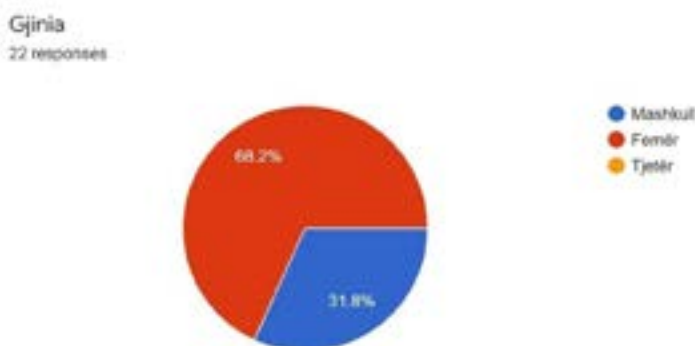
According to an observation by the Albanian Media Institute, online media include phrases like “you’ll never believe what...” or “unbelievable what happened to...”, often deliberately leaving out the title of unfinished, which prompts readers to click and read.” This body notes that another element that attracts clicks is the use of nude photos and articles related to sex. Horoscopes or “impossible things” are also other elements that the online media uses as “bait” for the consumer. (Medias, 2018)

The report of the United Nations Organization for 2020, states that this practice also includes “misleading use of statements, illustrations or statistics, true materials taken out of context, misleading materials (when the name of a journalist or the logo of a newsroom is used by other persons without any relation to them), as well as manipulated and fabricated content”. “Click journalism” is most evident in the absorption of “click bait” clicks, where editors use headlines that attract more and more. (UNESCO, 2020)

### *Discussions*

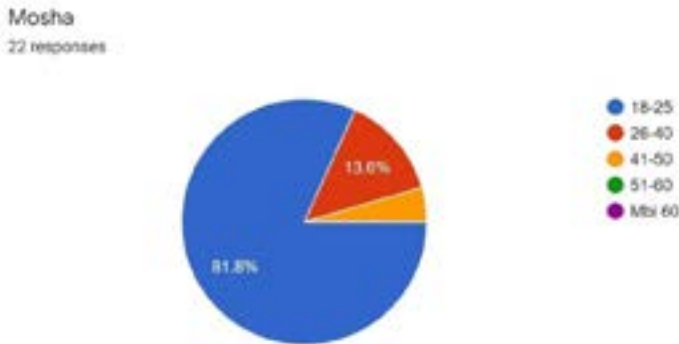
As part of this study, a survey was conducted with different citizens, to understand their perception of the violation of broadcasting ethics and their approach to these violations. The questionnaire was completed during the period 20-28 April 2022, shared online, and prepared in google form.

**FIGURE 4:** Gender



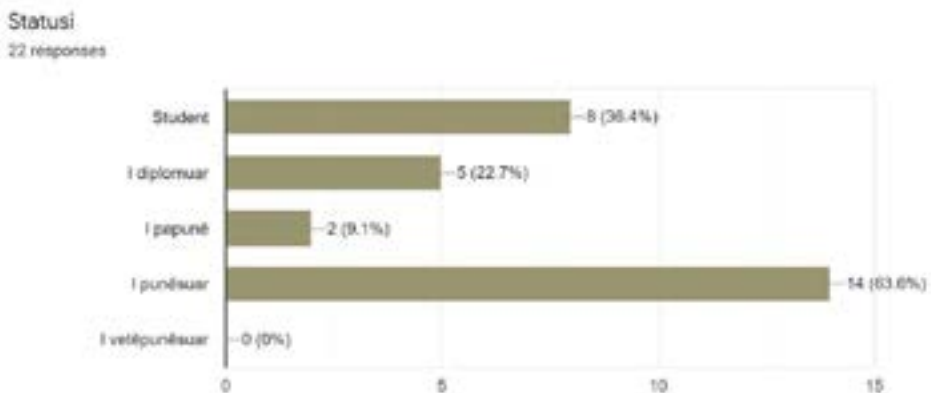
Meanwhile, the figure below presents the data on the age of the respondents.

**FIGURE 5: Age**



We also asked respondents about their status, to have a clearer reflection of their engagement and level of media and information culture.

**TABLE 1: Status**

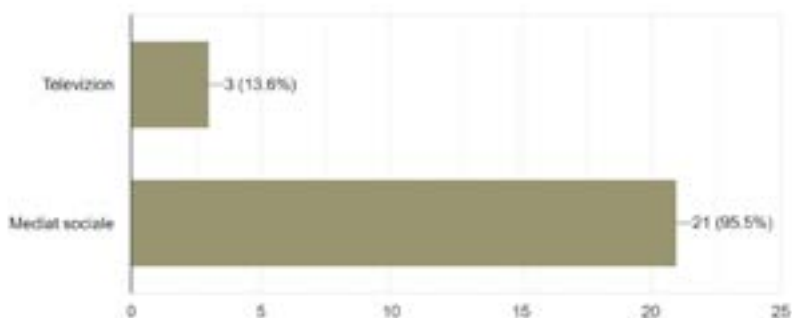


From the responses of the respondents, we noticed that social media play an important role in informing the public, while television is almost dying out when it comes to being informed. 21 of the people surveyed choose social media to get informed, against 3 other people who also use television or both.

**TABLE 2:** On which platforms are you informed about events?

Në cilat platforma informoheni për ngjarjet?

22 responses



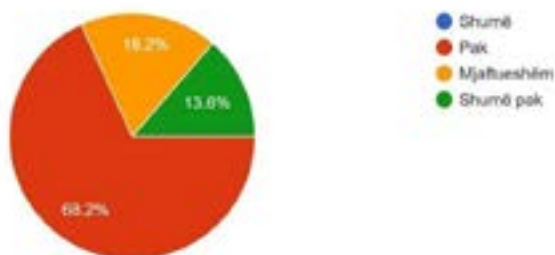
Although citizens choose online media to be informed, they remain pessimistic about the information that these media transmit. To the question “How much trust do you have in the information transmitted by the Albanian media online”, 68.2% of respondents have little trust, 13.6% very little, and only

18.2% have enough confidence in the information they receive. This result highlights a very important element that is changing with social media, the public has lost trust in the media even though the information may be in real-time.

**FIGURE 6:** How much trust do you have in the information transmitted by the Albanian online media?

Sa besim keni në informacionin që transmeton media shqiptare online?

22 responses



When asked about the statement “Give your assessment about the statement: The information I get from Albanian online media helps me to be more informed”, about 54 percent of them agreed with this. According to logical reasoning, these

answers are also related to the many sources of information, which help them to understand what is happening in the reality that surrounds them. But an overwhelming part of them, about 32 percent, were neutral to this statement.

**FIGURE 7:** Give your assessment about the statement:  
The information I get from Albanian media online helps me to be more informed

Jepni vlerësimin tuaj rreth pohimit: Informacioni që marr nga media shqiptare online më ndihmon të jem më i informuar  
22 responses



In the eyes of the public, Albanian online media pays more attention to its financial interests than to inform the public. 40.9 percent of the respondents state that they completely agree with the statement “Give your assessment about the statement: Albanian media pays more attention to its financial interests than quality information of the public.”, and about 36 percent agree. 18.2 percent of them are neutral while a very small percentage disagree.

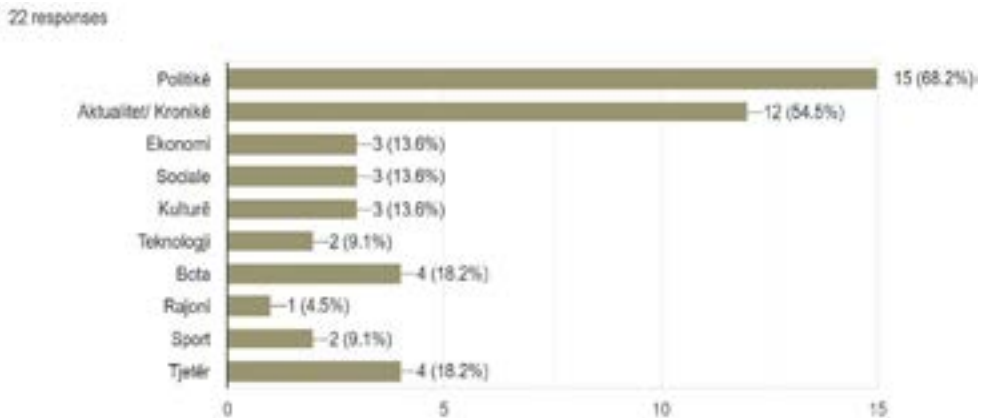
**FIGURE 8:** Give your assessment of the statement: The Albanian media pays more attention to its financial interests than to the quality information of the public

Jepni vlerësimin tuaj rreth pohimit: Media shqiptare i kushton më shumë rëndësi interesave të veta financiare se sa informimit cilësor të publikut.  
22 responses



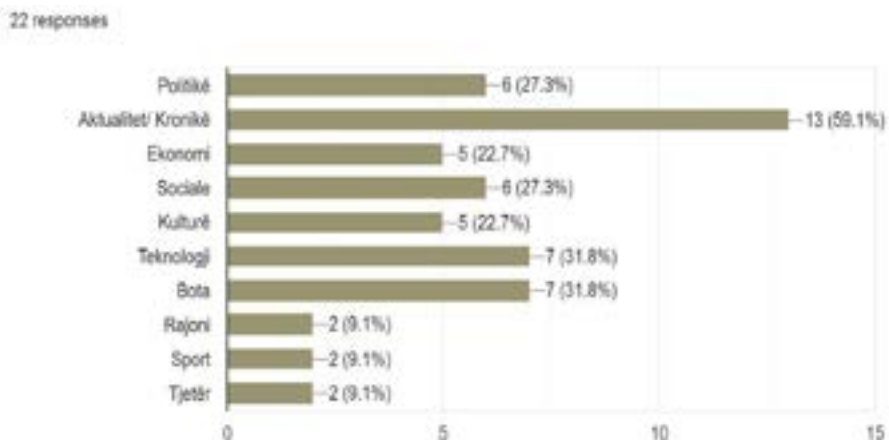
Politics continues to be the main source of news circulating in the media, occupying relatively a large space compared to other content. About 68 percent of respondents encounter more political news in Albanian online media. Also, the news of the chronicle is ranked second after the political news. 54.5 percent of respondents encounter more chronic news in online media than other content such as economy, social, culture, etc.

**TABLE 3:** What are the news/contents you encounter most in the Albanian online media?



Regarding the statement “What news do you follow most in the Albanian media online?”, 59.1 percent of the respondents follow news related to the chronicle and current affairs. In second place are news from the world and the region with respectively 31.8 percent and in third place is political news with 27.3 percent.

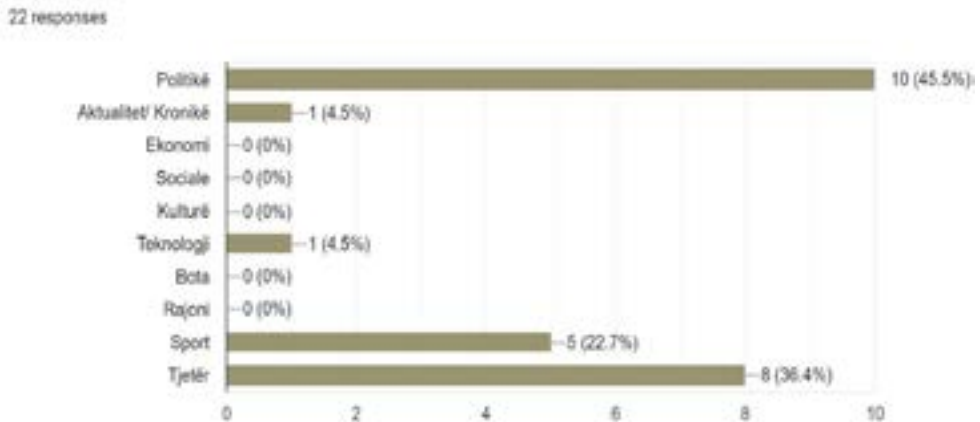
**TABLE 4:** What are the news you follow the most in the Albanian online media?





The political news that citizens do not want to follow in online media accounts for about 45 percent of the respondents. While other news that has nothing to do with the economy, culture, society, etc., are the things that citizens want to see but that the media does not give the proper importance to. From the result, we notice that even though politics occupies the largest space in online media, the public is oversaturated and little interested in what happens.

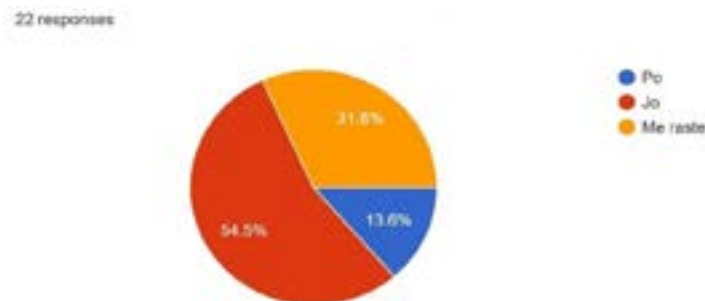
**TABLE 5:** What are the news you follow the most in the Albanian online media?



Regarding the question “Most of the Albanian online media broadcast unethical materials such as Bias, pictures of people killed, injured, in accidents, children’s faces, unpleasant words, information that is not in the interest of public opinion, etc. Are you, as a reader, interested in watching these broadcasts?”, about 55 percent of the respondents say that they are not interested in these details or ethical violations of the media, which can be of different natures.

On the other hand, about 32 percent of them have cases where you are interested in this information, while 13.6 percent say that this information interests you.

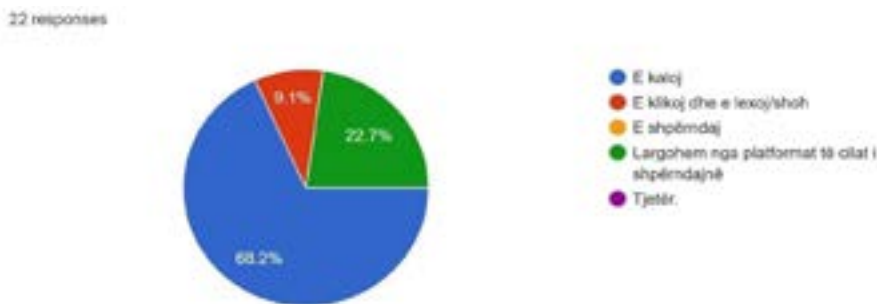
**FIGURE 9:** Most of the Albanian online media broadcast unethical materials such as Bias, images of people killed or injured, in accidents, children’s faces, unpleasant words, information that is not in the interest of public opinion, etc...



When we asked the respondents “Which are the Albanian online media that commit the most ethical violations according to you?”, they ranked many media starting from “Life is fun” which is mentioned the most, Syri, Top Channel, Balkan Web, anonymous portals, pro-government media as well as pink media. If we look carefully at the approach of these media, we see that they are positioned in certain political directions, whereby attacking each other, they ignore the codes and ethical rules of broadcasting.

When respondents were asked “How did they react when they come across such unethical content?”, about 68 percent of them passed it off as news or information. But about 23 percent of them boycotted these media that spread unethical information, leaving their platforms. And only 9.1 percent of respondents stopped reading and watching unethical content.

**FIGURE 10:** How do you react when you encounter such unethical content?



What we noticed from the survey is that the public is aware of the ethical violations that online media commits. Having greater access to information, the public has chosen to select the media where they receive information. As noted in the survey, the majority of the public decides to boycott online platforms that distribute unethical content that is not in the public interest.

## Conclusion

Based on the above analysis where local and foreign researchers analyze in detail the new media approach and its content, combined with the empirical data collected within this study through the questionnaire and continuous observations of online media, we conclude that Albanian online media offers the public material with ethical violations and unnecessary content.

In response to the raised hypothesis, we can say that the online transition of traditional media has taken off the “rails” in terms of ethical rules and the established approach. In online media, we observe a speed-reach-profit ratio, which brings nothing but a deception of the audience and support of their financial interests.

As the questionnaire highlighted, the media is oriented to overfill its space with political news due to low-cost production, turning this phenomenon to the detriment of information and ethical codes. The media must maintain a balance between the categories it covers by imitating impartiality, accuracy, and objectivity.

On the other hand, citizens find that they are mostly aware of the breaking of ethical codes by the media. And what constituted a negative element for the media and a positive one for the audience, was that the latter has begun to choose and select the media where it receives information. Despite this, the public's trust in online media has suffered a significant decline, turning this into an important concern.

## Further suggestions

The wide reach of social networks and the engagement of the media in them, responding with immediacy and diversity, requires specific ethical codes that guarantee the smooth running of this process. Although there have been ongoing efforts to draft a code of ethics, these efforts have been minimalist as the media itself is not interested. Looking at the research results, we can easily say that the media has found the right “bait” to capture the audience, and this cannot be done without “breaking the rules”.

The process of self-regulation is a failed attempt from the start, given the media's approach to the public. Even the creation of a legal framework could regulate this highlighted problem, but on the other hand, the fear of possible censorship by the institutions and other actors involved increases.

Standing between two “fires”, self-regulation and the law, the media has not yet shown a full will to change certain broadcasting policies. From time to time there has been an upsurge of concern at the national level, but this only changed small media or institutional actors.

The AMA, the media authority, operates with a double standard where it controls and sets certain codes for traditional media but not for online media. So media operates in two areas, on the one hand, there are ethical frameworks while on the other hand, the consumer finds it online.

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## Annex

Hello! This questionnaire is being carried out by Xhesjon Zogu, as part of research for academic reasons. The research analyzes in itself the new approach of traditional media during its online upheaval as well as the breaking of ethical rules during broadcasting. This study aims to recognize one of the most common problems in Albanian online media, the transmission of unethical content, as well as the perception of the audience. Name and surname \*

Age \*

18-25

26-40

41-50

51-60

Over 60

Status \*

Student

Graduate

Unemployed

Employed

Self-employed

Other:

On which platforms are you informed about events? \*

Television

Social media

How much trust do you have in the information transmitted by the Albanian online media? \*

many

slightly

FAIRLY

Very little

Give your assessment about the statement: The information I get from the Albanian media online helps me to be more informed \*

Agree

Agreed

Neutral

I disagree

I do not agree at all

Give your assessment of the statement: The Albanian media pays more attention to its financial interests than to the quality information of the public. \*

Agree

Agreed

Neutral

I disagree

I do not agree at all

What are the news/contents you come across the most in Albanian online media? \*

You can select more than one category

policy

Actuality/ Chronicle

economy

Social

Culture

Technology

world

region

SPORTS

Other

What is the news that you follow the most in Albanian online media? \*

You can select more than one category

policy

Actuality/ Chronicle

economy

Social

Culture

Technology

world

region

SPORTS

Other

What is the news that you would NOT like to follow in the Albanian online media? \*

You can select more than one category

policy

Actuality/ Chronicle

economy

Social

Culture

Technology

world

region

SPORTS

Other

Most of the Albanian online media broadcast unethical materials such as Images of people killed, or injured, in accidents, children's faces, unpleasant words, information that is not in the interest of public opinion, etc. Are you interested as a reader in watching these broadcasts? \*

yes

not

Occasionally

How do you react when you come across such unethical content? \*

I pass

I click it and read/watch it

I share it

I leave platforms that distribute Other.

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# *Public diplomacy as political communication in Albania*

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*Eriklenta YMERI, MSc<sup>1</sup>*

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## **Abstract**

*Public diplomacy represents an important activity that serves national interests and comes as a function of the development of the country and its people. The importance of public diplomacy is increasing, especially when considering the current global context – technological, digital, economic developments, interconnections, and interactions at multilateral levels. In Albania, little is known about public diplomacy, its role, and functions, how it is constructed and how it is represented through various initiatives. The study on Public Diplomacy as a Political Communication Tool in Albania aims to provide a general overview of public diplomacy in Albania, initiatives and activities taken in support of public diplomacy, and the role of public diplomacy in the development of the country and the benefits associated with it. For the realization of this study, a mixture of research methods was used, including desk review of exiting literature and key strategic documents, and interviews conducted with the public to assess public perception and knowledge on public diplomacy. The results show efforts made in years to engage in public diplomacy with countries all over the world, as a strategic intervention to promote the country's development. It furthers shows the low levels of recognition and knowledge of the wider public about public diplomacy in country. The study highlights that public diplomacy in Albania is in the steps of its development and yet to consolidate.*

**Key words:** *Public diplomacy, political communication, political influence.*

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## Introduction

One of the most important and vital models of interaction is communication – communication between individuals, groups, societies, and communities between states and countries. Key features that lead the communication and tools used to define the purpose of the communication, are defined depending on the contexts where this communication takes place.

Thus, in terms of the practice of public diplomacy, as a concept focused on relations between political structures, a special emphasis is placed on political communication, which refers to a range of professional practices, and an academic discipline as well. As a professional practice, the term political communication suggests about communication processes targeted as propaganda, electoral marketing, political marketing, political campaigns, and political public relations. While as an academic discipline, political communication is based in theories that derive from political science, sociology, psychology, marketing, and other fields. According to Gonçalves (2018), it is accepted that political communication is focused on the interaction between political actors, media, and citizens, characterized by its persuading and strategic character.

Pippa Norris (2015) defines political communication as: an interactive process concerning the transmission of information among politicians, the news media, and the public. The process goes on downward from governing institutions towards citizens, horizontally in linkages among political actors, and upward from public opinion towards authorities. The literature on political communications can be divided into three main categories [...] to distinguish between production, content, and effects. While Chaffee (1975) suggests that political communication is the role of “communication in political processes”.

Consequently, to achieve its purposes, political communication uses a series of practices and strategies, which have as their final goal the appeal to mobilize public opinion and increase the influence of actors who use political communication to influence. The structure and content of political communication play a critical role in promoting collaborations and providing the necessary support to implement political communication in practice.

This study aims to explore and offer an analysis of key aspects related to design and implementation of public diplomacy in Albania, as a tool to impact a country's development. The study will answer the following research questions “In which development sectors public diplomacy is present in Albania?”, and will seek to address three main objectives:



- (1) Provide an overview of public diplomacy in Albania.
- (2) Identify key initiatives implemented in Albania in frame of public diplomacy.
- (3) Explore the role of public diplomacy in the country's development.

## Literature review

### *Public diplomacy and its characteristics*

In the two most commonly used definitions Signitzer and Coombs (1992: 138) understand the public diplomacy as: »... a way, with which the government and the private individuals and groups can directly or indirectly influence those public opinions and positions, which directly influence the foreign politics decisions of another government.« In their understanding the public diplomacy is widening its field of traditional diplomatic activities: from the sphere of »high politics« on the diverse issues and aspects of daily life and from the »closed« sphere of governments and diplomats on new actors and target groups, i.e. different individuals, groups and institutions, which are joining international and intercultural communication activities and have influence on the political relations between countries (Signitzer and Coombs 1992: 139, as cited in Krajnc, 2019).

Public diplomacy is represented by a few characteristic features. Public diplomacy deals with influencing public attitudes towards the design and implementation of foreign policies. It includes dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with those of another country; foreign affairs reporting and its impact on politics; communication between those who have the duty of communication, such as between diplomats and foreign correspondents; and intercultural communication processes (Cull, 2008).

Public diplomacy is about 'having other people on your side - influencing other people's opinion and attitudes.' To convince the leaders of other nations and their governments to support certain policies, the citizens of those countries must also be convinced. So, for example, the goal of US State Department diplomacy is to inform, engage and influence global audiences. This goal is intended to reach beyond foreign governments to promote better appreciation of the United States abroad, greater acceptability of U.S. policies among foreign publics, and sustained access to and influence in important sectors of society. the foreigner.

Another critical characteristic of public diplomacy is related to its goal to "advance policies". According to the United States Advisory Committee, public



diplomacy involves understanding, informing, engaging, and influencing the attitudes and behaviors of foreign audiences in ways that support the nation's strategic interests.

The Lord Carter Review (2006) defines public diplomacy as “work which aims to inform and engage foreign individuals and organizations to improve understanding and influence of the United Kingdom (UK) in a manner consistent with medium- and long-term goals of the government.

In an International Policy Statement, Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC) defines and recognizes the growing importance of public diplomacy as:

“Projecting a coherent and influential voice to all those who have influence within a society – not just within its government. Canada's credibility and influence abroad will be built not just by government actions, but by Canadians themselves – artists, teachers, students, travelers, researchers, experts, and youth – interacting with people abroad. Public diplomacy includes cultural events, conferences, trade fairs, youth trips, foreign students in Canada, Canadian study abroad and visiting thinkers. All this cultivates long-term relationships, dialogue and understanding abroad, supports our advocacy and increases our impact. Public diplomacy is also important to realizing our foreign policy goals. Convincing others of the value of our strategies and propositions.”

Australia also uses the concept of public diplomacy as “influencing other states to protect and promote national interests. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Australia refers to public diplomacy as “a means of communicating with the populations of other countries, influencing international opinion, and projecting the national image abroad”.

For the above, it can be summarized that public diplomacy has as its main purpose influencing the perceptions, thoughts, and attitudes of individuals in foreign countries in ways that serve the interests of a country's foreign policy.

### *Strategic areas of public diplomacy*

Public diplomacy offers space for cooperation for the advancement of several or more strategic areas of a country's development. Public diplomacy comes as a way to respond to contemporary challenges, through the creation of common discussion spaces that address common problems, improve common understanding, and create bases for global cooperation. For these reasons, states consider it necessary to invest, in a sustainable manner, in the practice of public diplomacy to improve and develop different fields and sectors of a country. These may include:

- (1) Economy as a strategic sector (Economic Diplomacy).
- (2) Culture as a strategic sector (Cultural Diplomacy).
- (3) National security as a strategic sector.
- (4) Education as a strategic sector.
- (5) Sports as a strategic sector.
- (6) Science and technology as a strategic sector.

### *Approaches and tools of public diplomacy*

The goals and objectives of public diplomacy must be pursued and realized through approaches, tools and techniques that engage a country's audiences, and facilitate networking, cooperation, and communication between people and institutions to build understanding, trust, and influence the advancement of a country's national interests. Approached and tools that are used to practice public diplomacy can include:

- (1) Branding the nation.
- (2) Propaganda.
- (3) Cultural relations.
- (4) Public relations.
- (5) Lobbying.
- (6) Media involvement and engagement.
- (7) Engagement of Alumni groups.
- (8) Building networks of influence.
- (9) Diaspora communities.

## **Methodology**

### *Research methodology*

The research is carried out using the mixed research method, collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data, combining the strengths of primary and secondary research. For the collection of primary data, the study used the qualitative research method. The study also used a systematic literature review to collect secondary data. This involves finding, evaluating, and synthesizing the content of many empirical articles. This research method enables reference to useful primary sources (Cronin et al., 2008).

The study uses the positivist research paradigm. The phenomenon must be observable or discoverable in order to be considered scientific knowledge, and the



researcher must be completely objective when interpreting the findings (Bryman, 1984; Struwig & Stead, 2001). The collection and analysis of secondary data used for the purpose of the study is related to the use of the positivist paradigm. But the study also uses the social construction paradigm. According to this paradigm, 'truth' varies. Truth is different based on who is asked, and people change their definitions of truth based on interactions with other people. Researchers using this paradigm are particularly interested in how people agree, or disagree, with what is true or real (Pressbooks). The approach used to conduct the study is the deductive approach, as the study is built based on what is known about public diplomacy. The deductive approach begins with the general and ends with the specific. Arguments from widely accepted principles are best expressed through the deductive approach. This approach comes from 'top-down', from theory to hypothesis, to data to complement or contradict the theory (Morales, 2017).

## Study sample

### *Primary data collection*

For the collection of the primary data of the study, the sample of the study included ordinary citizens, residents of the municipality of Tirana, a sample population of 10 people. The sample was realized/selected in two stages: The first phase has included the selection of primary sampling units - citizens, residents of Tirana municipality. The second phase included the selection of interviewees. The selection is based on what is known as 'simple random sampling', where random citizens who have shown willingness to conduct the interview have been selected. A total of 10 interviews were conducted.

### *Instrument and data collection*

*Primary data collection.* For the realization of this study, a structured interview was used. The interview contains 11 questions, divided into 3 sections: 1) The purpose of public diplomacy (3 questions); 2) Public diplomacy initiatives and activities (4 questions); 3) The role of public diplomacy in the development of the country (4 questions). The interview lasted about 20 minutes.

### *Secondary data collection*

For the collection of secondary data of the study, a systematic review of the literature was used, which according to the researchers is one of the most

rigorous methods to collect articles, because it is certain that all relevant data is covered. The purpose of this review is to identify the existing evidence that answers the research question and objectives of the study. Research strategy used to collect secondary data included review of governmental institutional sites and databases (Ministry of Finance and Economy, Minister of State for Diaspora, National Agency of Diaspora, Ministry for Europe, and Foreign Affairs), with reference period public diplomacy in Albania in the last 3 years (2020 - 2022). The review focused on articles covering the following information: (1) The state with which there was a cooperation relationship; (2) The type of cooperation carried out; (3) The type of activity performed.

## Results

Albania has built and established diplomatic relations with the countries of the region, countries around the globe, with international organizations, and other regional and international initiatives, as strategic development partners that support and help advance the country's strategic development priorities.

Albania is involved and participates in a series of regional and wider initiatives which represent important agreements within the exercise of public diplomacy functions, which facilitate the country's efforts to promote economic growth and social progress, as well as factors of others that promote or may hinder its overall development:

**Open Balkan Initiative:** The initiative for the creation of the Open Balkans (Open Balkan) or otherwise known as Mini-Schengen aims to improve the political-economic relations between the countries of the region. The Open Balkans is an economic and political zone of 3 Balkan countries, Albania, North Macedonia, and Serbia, which aim to increase trade relations and cooperation as well as improve relations between the parties. Until now, only these three countries have become part of this initiative, while Kosovo, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina have hesitated to join it.

**Albania-EU relations:** The process of Albania's integration into the European Union (EU) is considered the most strategic national priority, which leads the country's governing agenda. Albania established diplomatic relations with the European Community in 1991. Albania was officially recognized by the European Union as a potential candidate country in 2000. In June 2006, the process of negotiations on the Stabilization-Association Agreement with Albania was concluded, which was signed in the Council of General Affairs (GAC), in Luxembourg. In April 2009, the SAA entered into force. In the same month, Albania officially applied to join the EU. Albania enjoyed the status of a candidate country for the EU since June 2014 ([PuneteJashtme.gov.al](http://PuneteJashtme.gov.al)) On July 19, 2022, the European

Union officially opened negotiations with Albania (and North Macedonia). The official opening of negotiations means the approval of the established EU law (acquis), preparations for its implementation and the implementation of legal, political, administrative, economic, and other reforms necessary for the country to fulfill the conditions for membership.

**Albania in the Security Council:** For the first time after joining the UN since December 1955, Albania has been voted to be a temporary member of the UN Security Council for a 2-year term for the period 2022-2023. This mandate began on January 1, 2022. Albania's election as a temporary member of the UN Security Council has been assessed as a historic opportunity and achievement of Albanian diplomacy. The activity of the UNSC has international peace and security as a priority. In view of this priority, the SC enjoys the right to send peacekeepers to troubled regions and approve sanctions. In June 2022, for the first time, Albania held the presidency of the SC during its two-year mandate in the Council. In 2023, Albania will have the presidency a few months before the end of the mandate (October 2023).

**Albania in NATO:** Albania becomes a full member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization NATO at the Summit of the Alliance that was held in Strasbourg & Kehl in April 2009. Membership in NATO has created the opportunity to, through active participation in the decision-making of the Alliance, contribute to the processing of issues related to Euro-Atlantic security and, therefore, also to national security. As a member of NATO, Albania is in a better position to confirm its national interests and increase national prestige and reputation. After joining NATO, Albania's efforts focused on transforming the armed forces into a smaller, fully professional, deployable, and interoperable force with NATO.

**Albania and OSCE – Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.** Albania's accession to the OSCE was accompanied by deep legal reforms regarding human rights. The circumstances that enabled Albania to join the OSCE included the democratic movement of December 1990, the first pluralist elections and the adoption of the Interim Constitutional Package on April 29, 1991. This Package included provisions that recognized political pluralism and respect for human rights. Albania is in a new phase of cooperation with the OSCE - in partnership for the achievement of the country's national priorities, in accordance with the aspirations for Albania's integration into the European Union. The presence of the OSCE in Albania supports legal, judicial, administrative and property reforms and helps the Albanian authorities in building parliamentary capacities, the fight against corruption and the promotion of good governance, strengthening civil society, strengthening media freedom, etc.

**Albania within UNESCO (Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization of the United Nations).** The spirit of cooperation is concentrated in the four areas of the Organization's activity, namely education, science, culture, and communication.

Cooperation with the organization has encouraged quality education, preservation of cultural heritage, citizenship education, freedom of expression, the creation and functioning of civil society and the protection of human rights. During the last three decades, cultural, environmental, and spiritual assets with indisputable universal values have been included in various UNESCO programs. Cooperation and interaction between Albania and UNESCO are multi-sectoral and in coherence with national development priorities, in fulfillment of joint efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Albania and the Council of Europe. Within the framework of cooperation, the legal framework for the development of democracy has been built through laws of a constitutional character, which also contain a list of human rights and fundamental freedoms, after consultations with international experts. Continuous programs have been implemented in the field of human rights and the rule of law, where, among other things, the training of judges, lawyers and the police, reform in the prosecutor's office, in the judicial system, in the Ministry of Justice and in prisons have been addressed, the drafting of the civil and criminal code and the relevant procedure codes. In the period May 23 - November 9, 2012, Albania chaired the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe for the first time since its membership. The Albanian presidency focused on these priorities: 1. Promotion of stable democratic societies; 2. Strengthening democracy at the local and regional level; 3. Strengthening the rule of law in Europe; 4. Continuation of the political reform of the organization; 5. Guaranteeing the long-term functioning of the European Court of Human Rights; 6. Stimulation of dialogue at the inter-institutional level and at the level of international organizations ([punetejashtme.gov.al](http://punetejashtme.gov.al)).

Albania and OHCHR. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) strives to provide expertise and support to the various human rights monitoring mechanisms in the United Nations system. OHCHR assists with technical expertise in capacity building to implement international human rights standards on the ground. The Office helps governments, which bear the primary responsibility for protecting human rights, to fulfil their obligations and supports individuals seeking their rights. Moreover, it objectively denounces human rights violations. Albania has effective relations with the Office of the High Commissioner ([punetejashtme.gov.al](http://punetejashtme.gov.al)).

Albania has diplomatic relations and cooperation bridges at the state level/bilateral relations with countries in the region and beyond:

Diplomatic relations between Albania and the USA: There is cooperation with a concrete and comprehensive calendar, which focuses on three plans: partnership on global issues; partnership for regional issues and partnership for the bilateral agenda - political dialogue, security, strengthening the rule of law in Albania, economic development, energy security and educational-cultural exchanges. Cooperation with the United States in the UNSC has been key in addressing the unjustified

and unprovoked Russian aggression against Ukraine, where Albania is co-custody with the US for Ukraine. Albania has made its contribution, alongside the USA, in peacekeeping missions, including in Afghanistan, while it is sheltering Afghan refugees for a transitional period. Albania was among the first countries to join the international coalition against terrorism and ISIL, under the leadership of the US,

Albania-Turkey relations: Turkey is an important strategic partner of Albania in the region and beyond, where the strengthening, expansion and deepening of relations with Turkey, in the new conditions of joint security, peace and economic development commitments, remains one of the important priorities of the foreign policy of Albanian institutions. Turkey has represented one of the main supporters for Albania's entry into NATO, as well as being an important contributor to the modernization of the Albanian army and police. The cooperation between the two countries consists especially in the field of energy, minerals, construction of infrastructures, telecommunications, etc., and the will is expressed to encourage, expand, and further deepen this cooperation and increase Turkish investments in Albania as a common good for the two countries. Turkey is also one of the most important economic and commercial partners for Albania.

Diplomatic relations between Albania and the countries of Western Europe (Austria, France, Germany, Holland, Switzerland). All these countries have supported the policy of enlargement within the framework of the EU, the implementation of justice reform in Albania, and the implementation of national anti-corruption policies. These countries have contributed through various programs in the fields of democracy, rule of law and law enforcement, economy, development, environment as well as in culture - activities in music, theater, literature, or films, education, science, and civil society, focused on governance and civil society; water-sewerage; humanitarian aid; social infrastructure and services.

Diplomatic relations between Albania and the states of Northern Europe (Denmark, Finland, Norway, United Kingdom, Sweden). These countries have supported the democratic reforms undertaken in Albania and have financed several development aids programs and projects. Political dialogue is considered one of the main pillars of bilateral relations. Through numerous cooperation programs, a special contribution is seen in terms of strengthening security and the rule of law in the country. Cooperation has expanded in terms of border control, the fight against organized crime, including human trafficking and illegal immigration. All these countries have supported the integration-membership process of Albania in the European Union, for obtaining the status of a candidate country and subsequently for the opening of EU accession negotiations.

Diplomatic relations between Albania and other European countries (Belgium, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain). The countries have continuously supported the democratic and reforming processes in Albania, its integration into the European and Euro-Atlantic structures, the independence of Kosovo and in



other aspects. There have been efforts to promote cooperation in areas of mutual interest such as economy and education.

Diplomatic relations between Albania and the states of the Visegrad group (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia). The countries of the Visegrad group have made an important contribution to the integration processes of Albania in the European Union and have provided support with expertise in the framework of twinning programs and the Western Balkans Fund. The countries have expressed the political will to further expand relations in the economic and trade relations, especially in the sphere of energy, rail transport, tourism, infrastructure, art and culture, education, and science. Cooperation has also been noted at the parliamentary level - there have been exchanges both at the level of presidents of parliaments and parliamentary committees.

Diplomatic relations between Albania and Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. There is a common will to promote and strengthen relations and intensify cooperation in more concrete terms in all areas of mutual interest. These countries have always supported Albania on its way to NATO membership and European integration in the EU, and for the opening of negotiations. Latvia was the first country to ratify the Stabilization and Association Agreement between the EU and Albania. There is a Memorandum of Understanding in the field of European Integration between the two Ministries of Foreign Affairs. Albania shares common positions with these countries on important regional and global issues. Political dialogue is considered one of the main pillars of bilateral relations. Albania remains in solidarity with the Baltic states, as a member of NATO.

Diplomatic relations between Albania and Russia. Bilateral cooperation appears very weak. The main lines where cooperation with the Russian Federation has been developed remain areas of mutual interest, economic spheres where the parties have mutual interest, education, culture, sports, tourism. Tourism is an area of interest for cooperation with Russia, where Albania has a lot to offer. The Albanian government has removed visas for Russian tourists for several years, an action that expresses the will to facilitate cooperation between the two countries.

Diplomatic relations between Albania and other countries (the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the State of Qatar and the State of Kuwait, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine, Afghanistan, India, Kazakhstan, China and South Korea, Argentina and Brazil, Ireland and Iceland, Israel, Japan, and Canada). Relations with these countries are valued in terms of regional security and stability, investment, and economic potential (economic and trade exchanges), initiatives with impact on the tourism sector. There is a rich legal framework, with agreements in the field of economic cooperation, trade, protection of investments, in the field of health, culture, air transport, environmental protection, visa waiver for passport holders diplomatic and service, etc.



## Discussions

Study findings note that public diplomacy in Albania has been implemented through years, to support the country's development in several areas of development. The study shows about the various relationships established with countries and partnerships all over the world, that have contributed to build Albania's public diplomacy, and consequently impact development. This, like other country's public diplomacy strategy, that uses partnerships as a means to broaden the scope of public diplomacy. Public diplomacy does not happen in isolation. It is part of a series of processes and efforts carried out over the years, in different fields and sectors, by multiple stakeholders, that nurture and share the goal of improvement and development. Interests, be they strategic, commercial, humanitarian, are pursued and achieved through the development of multilateral relations, based on mutual benefits.

Public diplomacy in Albania serves to many purposes. Key highlights from the study show that advancement and achievement of national interests, supporting the creation of favorable conditions for national development, improving the image of the country, promoting tourism, are few of the purposes public diplomacy in Albania intends to achieve. While this is like purposes of public diplomacy for many other countries as well, it is noted that the scope of public diplomacy in Albania needs to strengthen further.

This study also explored the areas of public diplomacy in Albania, and found that in the context of Albania, public diplomacy activities have centered around regional political initiatives, cultural activities, media engagement, sport activities, diaspora. It is observed that such activities are at the center of public diplomacy in general, confirming that Albania is making efforts to align its public diplomacy agenda with its partners and allies. The new global environment requires concrete, continuous, and sustainable and strategic investments to develop effective public diplomacy, and Albania should continue to further invest in this strategic direction.

Study findings suggest that public diplomacy brings a number of benefits in terms of: facilitating free movements / free movement of peoples; knowledge of cultures, promotion of history, cultures and values; social, economic and cultural benefits; promotion and widespread recognition of human rights, impact on the reduction of prejudices and stereotypes; national security; promotion of values, national identity, and improvement of the country's image; promotion of tourism and economic growth; increasing progressive development and collective well-being; development in personal and interpersonal terms of individuals; ensures world peace, political stability; better employment opportunities and financial

support; exposure to good practices and exchange of experiences; highlighting opportunities and development opportunities that come as a result of implementing such strategic instrument.

Next steps include focusing on the policies that promote good governance and democracy, drafting a diplomatic agenda that reflects the unique diversity of the nation, mapping actors who are interested in building bilateral relations in all spheres of development and strategic sectors of development, investing to transform current practices into advanced practices to effectively promote the country and its social, economic, environmental, cultural, and other interests.

## **Limitation**

This study does not exclude the possibility that not all areas of public diplomacy in Albania have been fully covered. While these limitations have not impacted the findings and results of the study, future work could be taken to deepen knowledge and information about public diplomacy in Albania.

This study uses as a reference period only last three-years of public diplomacy initiatives in Albania. While findings are accurate to present the actuality of public diplomacy in Albania, a detailed analysis over a longer time might enable identification of valuable information on how public diplomacy in Albania has evolved, and changed, through years.

The study sample used is limited, which can impact generalizing findings on the level of knowledge and perceptions of the public about public diplomacy. It is recommended that future studies are conducted using a larger sample.

## **Conclusions**

International relations have power and can exert tremendous influence. A country's foreign policies are guided by national interests, but the nature of the relationships built plays a key role in each country's capacity to pursue enduring interests. The nature of international relations helps to create a favorable climate, or not, to achieve the country's political goals and objectives. In a time of rapid, radical, transformative changes, both at the national level and in the arena of international relations, the development of relations between nations, which are based on the mutual understanding of the societies of these countries, their culture, takes on significant importance. The role of public diplomacy to mediate differences, and project the development of critical issues for the country is of major importance.

Albania actively encourages and promotes the building of diplomatic relations with strategic partners, to support security issues and stability in the region, which promote the economic development of the country, which address important national issues. Investment in activities to strengthen public diplomacy have included organizing advocacy and lobbying meetings to secure support and promote the country's interests, taking leadership in the direction of important regional and European structures, with wide influence on important regional and global issues, hosting of activities of a global nature in Albania that shows the readiness of the country to support regional and world policies, celebrating and promoting strategic relationships through cultural events.

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# *Book review. “Metamorphosis of a capital” as a reflection of societies consciousness*

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*MSc. Dritan IDRIZI<sup>1</sup>*

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## **Abstract**

*Background: Literature is the best narrative approach to society. A writer conveys his thoughts through the text he writes, to give some voice to his inner world and change the setting of the reality. The author of this novel tries to tell the story of the individuals whose consciousness is molded by the system and the country itself; a story that goes on for decades in the capital of Albania. Purpose: This article aims to analyze the reason why this topic is still a current phenomenon and how society tries to hide the truth. Conclusion: “Metamorphosis of a capital” is a kind of reflection of our consciousness. It builds the scene of an absurd, grotesque theatre, where the truth still hurts.*

***Key words:** literary work, narrative, civic consciousness*

A book should be an ax that breaks the frozen sea inside us - says Franz Kafka. “Metamorphosis of a Capital” is such a book. The novel written by the writer Ylljet Aliçka, brings to our attention, without resorting to making history, the essential changes suffered by intellectuals, but also society, after the communist

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dictatorship in Albania. Metamorphosis is a strong, sudden transformation, which we have also encountered in other literary works, as a change that affects the individual in his psyche, in the confrontation he has with himself and society. The metamorphosis of beings guided by reason does not always have a positive direction; it is enough to remember one of the most outstanding works of world literature such as “Metamorphosis” by Kafka to agree with this assumption.

The novel introduces from the first pages the main character, the image of the intellectual of the 70s, in Communist Albania, Benjamin Bendo. He is a character that you can easily encounter even today, in the daily life of the transition, who shows the “values” of the time of the dictatorship as anti-values of today’s society, where the characters of the ‘active life’ of Tirana after the 90s, have become the greatest opponents of the previous system, even though they were equally active and zealous towards the monist system.

This novel is a witty parody, with strong doses of irony and sarcasm, which make this book interesting and comprehensive for any reader curious about the past and the time we live in today. The metamorphosis of the individual who was used to serving the party and the system at the expense of the individual himself, through the stylistic analogy of the writer, makes it easier for us to identify the character of that time and the transformed individual, apparently, nowadays.

The author neatly manages to make literature with a human matter that the reader believes he knows, but outside of himself recognizes it as a phenomenon, but does not experience it as its own event; he suffers on a personal level, in his daily encounters, but he does not take it as an identity crisis of the social environment where he belongs. “Metamorphosis of a Capital” builds the scene of an absurd, grotesque theater, where the truth hurts, the spectator/reader sees and knows up to his sixth sense, the deformations of the social psyche of the society he belongs to; he stops to witness how the society of the dictatorship “passed” from a society that had the common “good” at the top of its attention to a society that “slipped” into a so-called chaotic democracy, where it is enough to anathema the past and the wrongdoings of the system - by forgetting the responsibility of everyone who had served him devoutly, not only out of fear but also the desire to suppress those who did not follow the “spirit of the party” and the time - to be a “devout” citizen of the pluralistic society.

In the matter of this novel, you can feel the sharp spirit of the individual who changes his attitudes and worldview according to his “appetite”, time, and situation. “Appropriability” is considered a great success even though, often, it conflicts with the moral ethics of the characters themselves (Vladimir, Sadik, Benjamin, etc.).

Benjamin, the central character of the literary work in question, puts his artistic skills at the service of easy money - writing verses about the death of unknown people, whose families, after losing their beloved ones, seek to perpetuate their memory with some verses sometimes heroic and sometimes hilarious, so that it seems as if they were written for everyone, but not for their relatives. If the dead

man had the opportunity to hear those words that were written just for him, he would think that he had been mistaken for a war hero, a famous artist, or anyone who had a glorious life! An absurd feature of the time when people began to look at the freedom that came thanks to the instant change, to do whatever they wanted, leaving the not-so-glorious past in oblivion.

This novel also brings to our attention the post-communist chaos created by those who served the previous system and who, with vigor and “new energy”, created a new oasis to properly respond to the challenges of democracy. Someone who had been a prominent sculptor during the dictatorship, after its fall, found himself on the streets of Western countries selling his art to survive. Someone else cursed the past outside the house and praised the post-communist present, but inside the family, we mourned the glory of the time of the partisans and the “commander”(dictator Enver Hoxha).

These stories of people from both times, remind us of the absurd past and make us pay attention to the routine present of the capital city, as an entity where every Albanian had his “representative”, which easily passed from dictatorship to post-dictatorship, without making any analysis of the evil and faults of the past and consequently no discernment to draw lessons. The author goes further, delving into the inner world of the characters. He displays human nature and its behaviors changed not only by time, but also by the possibility to change them, without having to testify “in front of the mirror” which in moments of weakness sometimes appeared in the form of tears, and sometimes in the form of collective mediocrity and hypocrisy among themselves.

The void of values, hypocrisy, and disorientation of uncontrolled post-communist openness, subjugation, servility and the courage to lynch those thinking differently, speaks out for the improvised fictitious identities of many intellectuals in the capital, as well as our own society. Each character carries a quality that we easily find in prominent public figures in the country who in some cases have turned into an “anti-communist model” and who have built their careers on the “corpses in the closet” of the past, in complete harmony with the monist regime and now as the greatest anathemas of that time. They continue to analyze those who ruled the country for about five decades but forget the position of the “little ones” and their contribution to the deepening of the struggles of those who thought differently from the spirit of the era.

This literary work also reminds us of the struggles of those who loved the old system for what they had and this new one for what it gives without making any “mea culpa” for the not-so-transparent past and laughing at the present mirror. To sum up, “Metamorphosis of a Capital” can be read all in one breath like a novel, but like any good literature has a deep influence on one’s mindset, building in the reader, and through him for the whole society, an inner gate of catharsis, honest reflection, and deep experience, what anyone could see in the mirror if they stopped for a moment of reflection with themselves.



# Book Review. Three forms of thought —

\_\_\_\_\_ **Phd. Dorian SEVO**<sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

## **Abstract**

*The author Imam's "Three Forms of Thought" explains almost in detail how important and how significant thought is as a substance and as a form for man. This book is a work of extremely high interest which has been missing from the university textbook and philosophy students in particular. He treats not only the forms of thought but also its origin, from the Greek and Egyptian myths and those of West Africa and Asia. The book in question is an outstanding contribution to the field of philosophy and the faculty of social sciences. Also, society can benefit from it as it has very detailed information. It deals with the evolutionary origin of thought both in the scientific and religious spectrums. In general, the work presents the forms of mythological, rational, and religious thought in a very clear manner.*

**Key words:** *thought, identity, origins*

"Three Forms of Thought" by author Arben Imami explains almost in detail how important and how significant thought is as a substance and form for men. This book is a work of exceptionally high interest that has been missing from university textbooks and philosophy students. It analysis not only the forms of thought but also its origin, from the Greek and Egyptian myths and those of

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West Africa and Asia. This book is an outstanding contribution to the field of philosophy and the faculty of social sciences. Also, society can benefit from it because of the thorough information you can find there.

It deals with the evolutionary origin of thought both in the scientific and religious spectrums.

The myth is treated seriously, how it came to our world and how we have lived with it, seeing it as a true god, and this is also the first form of human thought because outside of it, man and nature were almost the sole things, fused, that were not seen separately, that is to say that nature itself was a continuation of human consciousness or an extension of this consciousness where there was no dividing gap. For example, when the river came rushing, as the author beautifully mentions in the book, even the gods, or god in this case, was the rush itself, the flood embodied in this rapture and not seen as distanced from the rush, so not seen as simply the trigger, but the god himself was within that powerful momentum. This happened because the people of that era and form of mythological thought saw nature, God, and thought as a sole thing.

The author says that this was among the first forms of thought. While with rationality as another form of thinking, man realizes that he has his own thought and feels this misfortune by seeing thought itself as a phenomenon and managing to understand it as disconnected from nature because, at this historical moment, humans understands that there is nature but there is also thought at this moment. According to the author of this book, we are moving into the era of rational thought, that is, in this form of thought which has accompanied and still accompanies us. Then we move to the third form which is the religious one where God is no longer seen as a part or pretended concretely in natural phenomena, such as in the case of the river flooding or the rain falling where we touched God himself to the raindrops, as the tribes of West Africa considered this phenomenon and believed to it. But now he is seen as an entity that is distant and that causes natural phenomena but is not even there himself.

So, this is also the difference that the author makes between the form of mythological and religious thought. In general, the work presents the forms of mythological, rational, and religious thought in a very clear manner.

Also, in this work, the transitions of thought forms from one to another are given in an explicit manner and such a masterful harmony. However, the work is of great interest to philosophy researchers because it is full of scientific examples which are interpreted accurately by the author himself. This literary work keeps you engaged throughout its pages; it is a fantastic compendium of forms of human thought that has never appeared in a university textbook in the field of philosophy. The book is a scientific study and has a lot of information in it.

Since thought is the basic substance of man as Descartes himself treats it, it constitutes what is even more intimate in him because man is his own thought. The word man in this book is directly associated with thought and vice versa. The book comes for the first time in the hands of the Albanian reader not only as a book but also as a literary work not ever written until now, by the Philosophy Department which has had a moral and intellectual obligation over the years to a book of this nature.

Never has such a literary work been written by philosophy professors in Albania.

This book openly competes with the so-called scholars of philosophy because it is very serious material in its' writing style and in a way that is quite difficult to be easily understood by those who want to learn. Imami, in this book, mentions different authors such as Hegel and Kant, who in my opinion, have taken thought seriously and have dealt with the forms of thought themselves, such as Kant's thought forms. Hegel also has excellently treated the thought related to consciousness and nature in his major work "The Phenomenology of Spirit".

The forms of thought that Mr. Imami has addressed in the book show how thought has evolved over time and how it differs from animal behavior, where the author correctly states that the difference between human thought and animal "thought" or understanding, lies in the fact that human thought is a thought that learns from the thought of its ancestors, while animals cannot do this. Animals cannot learn from what other species may have done formerly. Therefore, a person does not have to invent numbers, letters, etc. from the beginning when he is born, because he manages to learn from what the first ones have left and there is nothing left for him but to progress and then the next generation to learn and so on and so forth; So, a kind of rational spiral that animals cannot have. Therefore, Hegel told us that animals do not have history because they do not have the same development in thinking as humans. The animal must learn everything from scratch when it comes to life because its life has no mental evolution, so it is always the same.

All three forms of thought that mankind has had in time such as mythology, rationality, and religion are forms of the evolution of his thought.

The author says that Human thinking evolves, and in this evolution, man changes himself. Through this book, Mr. Imami leaves a mark in the academic world, specifically in the field of philosophy in addition to the political and artistic one he has already marked. I can't think of anything else but to mention that this literary work is worth reading. On my responsibility, I emphasize that such a historical-philosophical literary work has not come to life yet in the Albanian language as an original work of an Albanian author in the discipline of philosophy.



# *The media research analysis as an approach to investigate the fabrication of an international subject in the news* —

— *Associate Professor Dr Belina BUDINI* —

## **Abstract**

*How does the fabrication of an international subject happen in the media? This article focuses on the theoretical framework for media research analysis in the context of the international media coverage of the Western Balkans and Albania as a case study. The theoretical and methodological approach reflects on the media research conducted both in terms of content analysis as well as theoretical and agency analysis. As Philo C. Wasburn puts it in “The social construction of international news”, in the symbolic universe built by the American media, during most of the 20th century and after 1989, the United States were considered not only the center of the greatest world events but were understood as the “natural order” for the American citizen and consumer<sup>2</sup>.*

## **Introduction**

“Reality is socially constructed, and the sociology of knowledge should analyze the processes how this happens” according to Berger and Luckmann<sup>3</sup>. In social sciences there is a long discussion opened around the question of how the media

<sup>1</sup> She is Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Education and Liberal Arts at the European University of Tirana and Head of Department of Humanities and Communication.

<sup>2</sup> Philo C. Wasburn , *The social construction of international news, We're talking about them, they're talking about us*, London: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> Berger Peter L. Luckmann Thomas, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, Open Road Media, 2011.

makes sense of events. The fabrication or the social production of news is one of the dominant approaches. This perspective, supported by both American and British media scholars, requires a thorough and structural response related to the media content, but the focus should be first on the process of producing that content. Its main statement is that it is the social system that produces media content. Therefore, media news, both national and international, should be seen as products of a social system or factory that is embodied by the media organization itself in the first place, but which also extends to the social environment around it through numerous threads and connecting channels.

This means that the process of selecting and preparing news in the media is determined precisely by organizational factors such as professional staff and their specialization, the deployment of the network of resources and institutional contacts, as well as by professional ideologies or the codes of the journalist's profession. Because it is precisely the media organizations and their staffs that decide "what constitutes news", the study of content and information media texts imposes first the review of the organization or the media agency itself to understand how the media decide first what constitutes or does not constitute news.

## **Social construction of reality: The Theory of Berger and Luckmann**

The idea of social news production borrows from the theory of social construction of reality. This theory was originally proposed by Peter Berger and Thomans Luckmann in a book written in 1966 entitled "The Social Construction of Reality". According to this theory, society itself is more a construct than an embedded reality. Its essential assertion is that "the meaning of messages is socially constructed", while the broader suggestion is that "reality is socially created and the sociology of knowledge should analyze the processes of how this happens". In fact, the theory of Social Construction constitutes a very influential trend in social sciences and the greatest shift of paradigm in humanities in the second part of the twentieth century. Other media researchers start from this theory when they constitute the constructive or fabricating role that media have. Stuart Hall is one of them. His theory of "Representations" refers to the very concept of construction on the part of every medium (especially mass media) of aspects of reality as people, places, objects, cultural identities. Reality according to this approach is always represented as such, thus mediated through codes of perception, and always implies a "construction"<sup>4</sup>. This means that the reality is inevitably selective. On the other hand, both structuralists and post-structuralists see "reality" and "truth" as products of specific representation systems, meaning

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<sup>4</sup> Hall Stuart, Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices, London: Sage, 1997.



that behind these systems lie defined historical motives and circumstances, although not static. On the other hand, in the spirit of this theory, it is impossible for the media to present the world as it is, because the media builds meaning on the world, changes it or mediates what is now there. As for the news media among scholars there is broad consensus that the “reality picture” that news builds can only be a selective construct consisting of intertwining fragments of information with observations that make sense by being presented at a specific angle of view or perspective or frame. Some of the postulates of social construction for the media suggest that the media reproduce certain meanings selectively or that the media cannot report social reality objectively since all the facts are interpretations. Although the theory also acknowledges that the meanings offered by the media can be negotiated, or rejected, while the basic postulate relies on the idea that “society is a construct more than an embedded reality”<sup>5</sup>.

### **Three levels of construction: Stuart Hall**

According to Stuart Hall, the media do not report or reflect events that are “naturally” in themselves newsworthy. “News is the final product of a complex process that begins with the systematic selection of events and topics based on socially constructed categories”<sup>6</sup>. In other words, the news is not something that the event itself contains but is the consideration of the event as news. In my research project paper, I have widely referred to Hall’s approach related to how the media constructs reality. He identifies three levels of social media construction:

#### *A. Construction at the organizational level*

Construction at the organizational level includes staff, agency, ownership, human resources, job sharing, finances(budget) offices: management, sources. Therefore, construction at the structural and infrastructural level of the media. For example, “An aspect of the selective structure of the news can be seen in the organizational routine of newspapers in terms of types and areas of news.” Since newspapers are engaged in news production regularly, these organizational factors will influence what is selected. Specifically, newspapers are predisposed to certain types of events and topics depending on the professional staff and teams of people available, as well as depending on the structure of the media

<sup>5</sup> Berger Peter L. Luckmann Thomas, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, Open Road Media, 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Hall Stuart, *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*, London: Sage, 1997.

(division into sections of internal, international, political, sports, news sections). The organization of staff therefore directs the content towards several categories that constitute news. Equally influential are finances, available human resources, labor-sharing practices, offices, and infrastructure. However, at this level of construction, Hall identifies an important problem, which also constitutes a major theme of his studies, which is widely referred to. The problem of religious ideology because of the organizational structure. More specifically, his concern relates to a routine practice of referring sources of information from the media. The fact that the news is widely based on material broadcast on formal channels such as press releases, press conferences and official documents, shows according to the researchers that “news collection is normally a matter of representatives of a bureaucracy selecting information prefabricated by members of another bureaucracy” . In this way, the media legitimizes officials as the first performers of events, causing political and economic elites to play a leading role in the construction of the symbolic universe of daily news. This does not mean that there is only a consensual and unique view of media events, which constitutes an extreme level of ideology of media content. However, Hall and other scholars speak of a conformity of dominant discourses in society with ideologies or professional media practice. This is not simply related to the fact that the media is owned by capitalist owners (i.e. the ownership structure) as this means ignoring the daily “relative autonomy” of journalists and information producers from direct economic control.

What Stuart Hall and others refer to are routine news production structures, which relies on other sources, other powerful structures that provide preliminary definitions for news. This means, according to Hall, that the media does not autonomously create the news, but goes to them through official and institutional sources that make up the first definers of events, turning the media itself into their secondary definers. Some of these institutions interpret or dramatize their role and importance through public relations and press agents. Other institutions that generate a volume of activities reported at regular intervals are courts, governments, political parties, parliament, sports teams that produce news assimilated by the press. One of the reasons why this happens, according to the critics is because of the income allocation and time schedules that can be significantly reduced if “predetermined events” are covered; this are events that have been announced in advance and planned to be covered. This practice also increases the journalist’s dependence on news sources who are willing and able to determine their activities. Likewise, the division of fact from opinion as a professional requirement that Hall and other scholars see as linked to the myth of objectivity that is at the ideological core of the journalist’s work, produces professional practices that require articles based in “authoritative” and “objective” statements, which are often the “accredited”



sources. Therefore, according to Hall, media content symbolically reproduces the preexistent structure of power in the institutional order of society. So, it is precisely these high-status and powerful sources that constitute reliable sources for the media, the ones that turn into the first definers of topics and events in the media. What is more, according to Hall, the transmission of dominant ideas depends more on the non-binding mechanisms for their reproduction. This is not to say that the media professionals are willing to support certain private economic interests or state interests, but because of their institutional position and organizational practices, they are likely to serve those interests and reproduce their structural and power bases, nevertheless.

### *B. Construction at professional level*

Professional construction has to do with journalist practices like news values, professional codes, professional sources. The question of selection within each category of those events that are assessed as of interest to readers remains crucial. The profession's code of conduct about what constitutes good news, i.e., what the journalist considers to be newsworthy, are what further define the selection of news. Media researchers Galtung and Ruge were the first to analyze international news to find the factors explaining their position at the top of the international agenda<sup>7</sup>. They built a list of values that lie behind the news, a kind of measuring system that determines which news will be at the entrance of a news edition on TV or on the front page of the newspaper. According to them, negativity is the first determining factor of a news story, meaning that “bad news, dealing with death, tragedy, theft, violence, natural disasters, political revolts, or simply extreme weather conditions, always rank above “good” news such as royal weddings, various ceremonies, etc.”. Proximity to the scene is the second most important conductor on the list of American researchers, as it has been created the idea that audiences want to know more about events that occur near them or involving people from their country, meaning that information rangers must weigh well in advance the interest that presents an event to their specific audience. Likewise other criteria such as the time of development of the event, so how fresh it is as an event, but also the degree of spread or knowledge about it, the criterion of the following, particularity, clarity (not complexity), unpredictability, not forgetting the criterion of the people of the elite involved in it, but also the ordinary characters who give an angle of human interest, as well as the factor of exclusivity and the size of the event, are those taken into consideration when building a news story. All these journalistic angles also define the content of the media, i.e., what is reported and sometimes also the

<sup>7</sup> Galtung, J. & Ruge, M. Holmboe: The Structure of Foreign News, *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 2, 1965: fq 64-91.



way it is reported, putting emphasis on the criteria mentioned above. However, more about the construction work speaks the text for itself. The presentation or the text constitutes the third level of social construction or fabrication of news or media events for their audiences.

### *C. Construction at text-level*

Textual construction concerns contextualization through narrative, text, discourse, and reference frameworks used. At this level, the construction can be traced back in the text chain from the designation, classification, identification, links to other events, making sense of events and extracting or suggesting meaning to the public. Indeed, the first two aspects considered (bureaucratic organization of media work that divides into specific categories and typologies, as well as the value of news that determines the selection of specific events within these categories) are only one part of the process. The third aspect, the moment of the construction of history itself, is equally important, albeit less obvious. It concerns the presentation of the event to the imagined audience or public in a language that is understandable to that public. This presentation requires an order and does not follow from chaotic and random criteria, not in the same way they occur in the real world. Furthermore, these events must be named, defined, and referred to in terms of other events known to the audience. This identification and contextualization process is among the most important to give meaning to media events. According to the cultural studies approach to the media, an event only makes sense when placed in a known or identified social and cultural framework. Without a social and social contextual map, journalists cannot give meaning for their audiences to unexpected, unusual, and unplanned events that make up the mass of events worth publishing. Such events present the unpredictability, variability, and conflicting nature of the world, but they must be made meaningful to be newsworthy. These processes of identification, classification and social contextualization of news closes the process of the making of social news. More about this process says the discourse analysis and framing.

### **News framing process: Robert Entman**

The selection process called “framing” is inevitable in terms of making the news. This concept is used in studying the effects of a discourse, but also as an instrument applied by the media in news making. The angle of the presentation of an event is called “frame”. Entman proposes that frames or angles used by

the media can be identified in news narratives through key words, metaphors, concepts, symbols, and visual images<sup>8</sup>. He emphasizes the fact that this process works through repetition, selection and exclusion of some topics and ideas versus others. Through these processes, some aspects of perceived reality are selected by media that are themselves defining, intrepid, evaluating them in moral views and developing or recommending. So, the process of framing the news has to do with exactly what is “highlighted”, what is “selected” and what is “excluded” in journalistic terms. Similarly, the frame can be seen as the connecting knot or line of explanation of events. The deductive approach used to extract news reference frameworks therefore focuses on the search for key words, stable and repeated phrases, stereotype images, as well as formulations based on the same sources of information. Media researchers have generally studied Framing Theory either within the news effects tradition, or in the context of the news-making process. As far as the effects are concerned, it has been studied the influence that news frames have on audiences, while in terms of the news-making process, the studies focus more on the way news content is created and modified, considering factors that influence news fabrication in a certain way. Likewise, the news framing process itself is influenced by other factors and elements such as “social norms and values, pressures and organizational constraints, the pressure of interest groups, journalistic routines, as well as the ideological and political orientations of journalists”. On the other hand, foreign policy, and national interest also orient news content.

Researchers mention various stages of framing processes like “frame building” and “frame setting” as well as the effects of framing in terms of the individual and social level of the consequences that the framework has. Factors that structurally influence news framing are internal factors in the field of journalism, which determine how journalists and news organizations frame issues, as well as external factors, i.e., beyond the journalistic field. The process of building the news frame takes place in interaction between journalists and elites. Journalistic text is the product of these frames or scenarios, meaning that frames are part of journalistic, but also political, institutional, and social imperatives.

Some of the criteria researchers suggest for identifying frames are:

First, they must be identifiable conceptual and linguistic characteristics.

Second, they must face journalistic practice.

Third, it should be possible for a certain frame to be clearly distinguished from another frame.

Finally, the frame must have representative validity, so be known to others as such.

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<sup>8</sup> Entman Robert M, *Projections of Power: Framing News, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy*, The University of Chicago Press: 2004.

Some of the mechanisms by which news frames can be identified and measured are: 1. titles; 2. subtitles; 3. photos; 4. resources; 5. quotes; etc.

Some authors group the “framings” into two divisions by naming “framings of specific issues” related only to specific topics and “general framings” which extend widely to topics from the most diverse. What is more, some framings transcend not only themes, but also different time and historical periods, as well as different cultural contexts. Some of the densest frames that are identified in the news by scholars in news texts are those of “conflict”, “destabilization”, “crisis”, “human interest”, “morality”, “economic consequences”, but also “international terrorism”, “war on terror”, “world crisis”, “national interest”, etc.

### **Theoretical analysis: International Reporting; Foreign countries in the media**

In the field of media studies there is no shortage of research about international coverage or reporting of Western media, especially of American ones. Part of these studies are more interested in the flow of information within transnational or global communication. Another part of the literature related to the above content deals with issues of religious imperialism or cultural dominance and globalism with the argument that it is Western corporations that have control of the flow of information. Few of these studies rely on systematic historical investigation of international reporting. This body of studies has not been directly valuable to this research and only tangentially touches on the topics of interest within the foreign reporting of international media in general and American and British media. On the other hand, a considerable number of studies address issues of foreign country image in Western countries, where Western spectrum media constitute an important research locus. Another group of studies deal with the image analysis of other countries in the US or UK, focusing further on the effects of how foreign states are perceived by the international public.

I have mostly referred to studies that focus on foreign correspondence and international reporting, especially when dealing with international magazines such as Time and The Economist, but also American and British press in general, although these studies do not address the international reporting of specific countries such as Albania. Another group of studies focusing on the organizational aspects of the international media, especially for Time magazine, has been helpful, like the work of the renowned sociologist Herbert Gans that has monitored journalistic environment in the context of a research project installed in some of the American mainstream media such as CBS, Time, and Newsweek<sup>9</sup>. For

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<sup>9</sup> Gans Herbert, *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, 'Newsweek' and 'Time'*. London: Constable, 1980.



the Economist, the work of Alexander Zevin (2019) has been important to map out a larger view on the newsmagazine as well as to understand some of its core principles and operations, a journal that he confirms has made history as well as reporting it<sup>10</sup>.

The literature concerning international reporting of western media, does not specifically look at subjects such as Albania, although it is important to look at how the international media reports those countries in the context of the trends in international media coverage of the Western media spectrum in general. This study relies particularly on the News Framing Theory. Elements such as topics and angles or frames of reported events have also been studied. In fact, the process called “framing” is inevitable in terms of making the news. This concept has been widely used to study the effects of a discourse, but also serves as an instrument applied by the media in news making. Entman proposes that frames or angles used by the media can be identified in news narratives through keywords, metaphors, concepts, symbols, and visual images<sup>11</sup>.

Finally, within the framework of international media reporting and lectures, we briefly refer to literature about the discussion of Orientalism in general and that of Balkanism for the very connection they have with our object of study. In this regard, Todorova’s approach to the discussion on the Balkans sheds some light on the discourse about Albania, although it does not specifically consider the media when talking about the construction of this discourse. Likewise, the reference to Edward Said’s well-known work, *Orientalism*, has been inevitable, to understand the historical roots of Western discourses for the rest of the world.

## **International images in the media**

Representations or discourses about Albania in western media are circulated and re-appropriated by the national media in Albania but have rarely turned into an object of analysis and scientific research, with very few exceptions focused on issues of image and effect, rarely in those of the production and construction of these content leading to the creation of specific images. I am referring to a handful of publications by Albanian authors, mainly focused on the study of the images about Albanians especially those created by the media of neighboring countries such as Greece and Italy, but also of other countries where Albanian immigrants are present, such as the British media<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> Zavin, Alexander Zavin, *Liberalism at Large: The World According to the Economist*, Verso, 2019.

<sup>11</sup> Entman Robert M, *Projections of Power: Framing News, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy*, The University of Chicago Press: 2004.

<sup>12</sup> i.e., Isa Blumi, “The commodification of otherness: how to think about Albanians?,” *East European Politics and societies* (1998); Nicola Mai, Russell King, “Out of Albania, From Crisis Migration to Social Inclusion in Italy”, Berghahn Books: 2008; Alpijon, Gezim, “Western Media and the European

## Albania in general historical, geo-political discourses

Maria Todorova's book "Imaging the Balkans" unravels the historical roots of the discourses over the Balkans and serves as a reference point on "ways of speaking" for the Balkan region, whose entity is also Albania that constitutes our direct object of study<sup>13</sup>. Todorova focuses on the discourses of historians as far as the Balkans are concerned as a geographical and cultural entity. It itself relies on abundant literature that deals with the problem and the presentation of "the other" and "different" as a genre at the crossroads of disciplines, from anthropology, to literature, philosophy, sociology, and history in general, while discussion of Orientalism also constitutes a subgenre of this preoccupation with "the other". It was Edward Said who coined the term Orientalism with his book bearing the same title and which constitutes a criticism of the orientalism discourse, and which constitutes according to him "a Western style to dominate, restructure, and gain authority over the Orient". He has studied Orientalism not only in terms of language, societies and peoples, but also as a system of thinking that builds an approach to a heterogeneous, dynamic and complex human reality mainly from an essentialist perspective which observes the Orient from afar, i.e. from above. However, Todorova's book claims to be more than a subspecies of Orientalism, therefore more than an Orientalist variation about the Balkans. According to her, the Balkan category deserves special attention and close analysis. Unlike the Orient as the analysis category of Said, the Balkans have historical and geographical concrete, so it does not have the not so concrete nature of the Orient. Said, on the other hand, was convinced that Orient and Occident do not correspond to any stable reality that exists as a natural fact. However, what scholars care about beyond the debates on epistemological approaches and the ontological status of their theories is the existence of an East/West dichotomy and the size of space that this divide engulfs.

According to Todorova, the East is more often identified with the industrial backlog, the lack of social and institutional development that is typical for the developed capitalist West, as well as for irrational and superstitious cultures untouched by the Western Enlightenment<sup>14</sup>. Similarly, according to her, the Balkans have a concrete historical existence and more concretely two are the historical legacies of the Peninsula of Southeast Europe: one is the millennium of The Byzantine with its own deep political, institutional, legal, religious, and cultural impact, and the

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"Other": Images of Albania in the British Press in the New Millennium", *Albanian Journal of Politics I* (1): 4-25, © Albanian Political Science Association, 2005.

<sup>13</sup> Todorova, Maria, *Imagining the Balkans*, Oxford University Press: 1997.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

other is the Ottoman half-millennium that gave the name of the peninsula, as well as gave it the longest period of unity it has known. Exactly the Ottoman elements are according to her, even those that have served to further fuel current stereotypes for the Balkans. Similarly, popular according to her is the impression that the Balkans began to lose its identity when it began to Europeanize. Precisely such a description according to Todorova underlines the difference between the Balkans and Europe. While the image of the Orient has served as “escape from civilization” and the notion of the Orient as a kind of utopia or symbol of freedom or wealth, as romantic or extravagant excesses; For Todorova the Balkans has an unimaginative concreteness, and almost complete lack of wealth, which promoted direct access to it and usually negative, but rarely nuanced, with very few exceptions. Likewise, the transitional status of the Balkans is the one that characterizes the descriptions about it. While the West and East present themselves as incompatible entities, as complete anti worlds, the Balkans have always evoked the image of a bridge or intersection. The bridge metaphor serves to say “semi-developed”, “half colonial”, “half civilized”, “half oriental”. Referring to British diplomats who considered the semi-Orientals abominable, Durham wrote in 1925 that “A Consul found it a smart solution not to learn the local language, as its recognition would cause it to be kept for a long period in some “intolerable hole...”<sup>15</sup>. It is precisely the ambiguity that lies in such definitions, the one that also gives the traits or elements of an anomaly to the Balkan region. Despite the meaningful nuances between anomalous terms (deviation) and ambiguity (with two interpretations), Todorova suggests that ambiguity is treated as anomaly. This is precisely why persons and phenomena in transition states, as well as marginalized ones, are considered dangerous, as they pose danger in themselves and pose danger to others. So, in the Balkan region Todorova notices an intermediate situation.

Finally, what attracts the attention of scholars about the Balkans and the media, is that for the Balkans it is reported only in times of terror and unrest, while the rest of the time are ignored. A frozen vision of the Balkans as the product of coincidence, underestimation, and sensationalist journalism is more than a stereotype according to Todorova. This image for the Balkans according to the parameters created since World War I has been reproduced almost without changes over the following decades and operates as a discourse. This is a version of American supremacy, therefore forged according to the model of the old European aristocratic paradigm. This version manifests evolutionary belief in the superiority of the civilization over the law to barbarism, archaic predispositions, backlogs, fights, unpredictable behaviors, and disapproval, which constitute “tribalism”. The very use of the term “tribal” links the Balkans to an inferior category of civilization, originally used against Africans. The main characteristics of a tribal

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<sup>15</sup> In : Todorova, Maria, *Imagining the Balkans*, Oxford University Press: 1997.

society are “primitiveness, lack of complexity and weakness, because when faced with the demand for modernization and sophisticated system of legal and political representation, this society falls into the collapse of tyranny.

## **Trends in international media coverage**

### *First trend: Falling international coverage*

One of the trends that is most talked about related to international reporting is the significant decline in coverage that world events receive on written media pages. According to one study, under the conditions of a strong competition for reader attention, even the American press is focusing on stories or news of practical value more than on complicated global events or distant countries. Likewise, in a widely cited article entitled “Goodbye World”, Peter Arnett, CNN’s international veteran correspondent, he states that “foreign news is gradually disappearing from press pages and national news is dominating every page of it”<sup>16</sup>. The trend he sees in the American press is the departure from practices and experience of international reporting towards practical locality, the one who can sell the covers. As for the decline in international coverage, Wasburn expresses himself, referring to a lecture he gave at Harvard in the 1990s CBC moderator Dan Rather telling students: “Don’t be lying; The trend in American journalism is the departure from foreign coverage that is very expensive. It takes a lot of room and time after you’re dealing with complicated situations that require a lot of explanation. And there’s always someone around whispering that people don’t care about this information at all... If you have to write something about the international chronicle, make it short.”

A study examining international news at Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News between 1985 and 1995 also showed that there was a decrease from 20 to 14%. Only after 2001 was there an increase in space dedicated to international events in the American media, but again related to security issues and the fight against terrorism, whose vanguard were now the United States itself.

However, the space dedicated to international news has not been always the same for the American media. Thus, during the Cold War period only, a third of news could be classified as international. During the 1980s and 1990s the number of international news increased, reflecting the events of these years. While 1992-1995 marked a decline again when international coverage accounted for only 29% of the news chronicle. In this period the news returned to the domestic agenda in a similar or lower position of international coverage even compared to the Cold

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<sup>16</sup> Arnett Peter, Goodbye Wold, American Journalism Review, Nentor 1998. [www.ajr.org](http://www.ajr.org).



War period. As for the period after the events of September 9, 2001, the data speaks of increased international reporting, but focused on the role of other countries in America's own "war on terrorism".

In a changing picture, nowadays, environmental conditions remain delineating for the press. The challenge of the moment is product differentiation. Newspapers and written media must compete not only with each other and news agencies, but also with television and the internet. Low-cost satellite phones, as well as internet technology, create new imperatives in terms of pace and frequency of reporting. Technology has also created new foreign news typology such as blog nature information, etc. "Each new conflict brings increases in the number of correspondents; peace brings decline. Current debates about the disappearance of foreign news often do not take this fact into consideration." Although several foreign offices have been closed and the overall international coverage space is being reduced, external news remains among the most abundant segments of news coverage, albeit in constant contraction. A 2005 report, as far as the Ecclesiastical Project in Journalism was concerned, it found that among the newspapers studied, coverage of external events during 2003 and 2004 was in almost the same quotas as internal event coverage, while in 1977 and 1987 the space dedicated to external news was three times higher to a third higher than that dedicated to internal news. Meanwhile, in 1997 the international event coverage space was one and a half times higher than that of national news, according to data presented in the study for 2006.

*Second trend: geographical proximity, bilateral relations determine coverage*

In an analysis exploring the dynamic nature of the international news stream on time, three researchers track the visibility of foreign states in the American media. They have monitored two major American media outlets such as the NYT (1950-2006) and NBC Nightly News (1968-2006)<sup>17</sup>. They valued five contextual factors that influence the visibility of foreign countries in news including: geographical proximity, bilateral trading relations, displacement of American troops, GDP per capita income and population. In general, American media cover countries in which the United States has more meaningful diplomatic contacts. Another study identifies factors that determine international events that are covered and those not covered by us news media. The variation studied by the authors of the article precisely concerns the media coverage of international events. Seven variables have been selected: the potential for social

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<sup>17</sup> Timothy M. Jones, Peter Van Aelst, Rens Vliegthart, Foreign Nation Visibility in U.S. News Coverage A Longitudinal Analysis (1950-2006), Communication Research June 2013 vol. 40 no. 3 417-436



change, normative deviation, relevance for the United States, geographical distance, linguistic proximity, freedom of the press and economic system. In the analysis to distinguish between the news covered and those not covered, the authors also identify some of the most powerful discriminators. The results of their study show that discriminatory function, i.e., in favoring of events reported and in favor of others that do not roil and play: normative deviation of an event, relevance to the United States, the potential for social change and geographical distance.

### *Third trend: The viable discourses of American superiority*

Foreign correspondence in American journalism was formally organized in the late 1830s and since then the goal of American journalists sent to cover foreign developments has been the historical contextualization and framework of these events, thus giving them meaning to the American public. The dominant discourses in American correspondences, according to scholars, was that of American superiority, especially in political terms, that was regularly constructed through the proposal that the United States had a sacred mission to fulfill to the rest of the world, which could be achieved through “savior” and “charitable” intervention or through enlightenment (towards Europe).

The usual practices of how international news was provided in the early 1900s according to Joci Cole and John Maxwell Hamilton, authors of a 1900-1921 foreign correspondence study, was through foreign strings and recycled stories that correspondents found in local newspapers<sup>18</sup>. Not even the NYT had still original coverage of foreign news. The ethnocentric understanding of foreign cultures by the early American press is typical of the early phase of American foreign correspondence in the world, although over the years the texts of American journalists sent to report from foreign countries began to be more ambivalent and, in some cases, reflected efforts to present alternative images of the countries from which they reported. While still information was provided mainly by “news digests”, the appearance of foreign correspondents signaled a new stage when journalists sent abroad broadcasted a first hand’s experienced world different from ready-to-use materials. Readers of the American press must have been interested in foreign news starting from this period and in the period between the World Wars, as the researchers’ data says that editors began racing with foreign news, which in the New Herald Tribune accounted for more than 60% of the total news since 1859. Interest in news on the part of all produced the world’s first news cooperative, The Associated Press, which means that everyone could now provide the same foreign news.

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<sup>18</sup> Hamilton, John Maxwell, *Journalism’s Roving Eye: A History of American Newsgathering Abroad*. Louisiana State University Press: 2009. pp 15.



On the other hand, news of the “news digest” method had been almost entirely dependent on European newspapers. However, this model of news presentation became delineating for the first forms of foreign news correspondence in terms of selection criteria and priority given to events, but also to the way information material was composed. Similarly, the focus in terms of covered territory was the same as that covered by the news digest, the first country occupied Europe, Mexico and Central America, as well as a very high attention on conflicts and sensational events from foreign and distant countries. In fact, sensation and violence were also the ways of presenting local and internal news in so-called “penny papers”.

The news constructions of the time, of the form of “news digest”, thus drew a dangerous and strange world. There was no large difference between countries for the way it was presented, as the main dichotomy at this time according to scholars was between the United States and the rest of the non-American world that presented violent, strange, and threatening. This form of information had become quite homogeneous, telegraphically written, focused on details, but lacked the context or background of the development of events spoken of. Accuracy and evidence, analyzing foreign cultures did not yet constitute a professional rate of journalism in the 19th century. It should also be said that the currents at this time were influenced by the way the world presented themselves in the annals of foreign diplomacy, as well as by the editorial sections that had now been consolidated in the press. Thus, the contents and editorials reflected the ideology and belief that the U.S. had a unique position and role, appointed by Fate, to be “leaders of civilization”.

Likewise, the discourse in Washington was channeled by the same principles of the sacred mission. Studies of this period therefore speak of a presentation of the world in relation to the United States through a discourse of the American mission, which ignored the complexities of foreign cultures thus underestimating their value. The researchers therefore confirm that the discourse of American superiority in articles for foreign countries also contains the discourses of being American in self-defining terms. There are even those who conclude that foreign news is national news. Cases where the discourses of ethnocentrism were challenged are rare in the beginnings of foreign news media in the American press, however, are not lacking. A widespread practice in the American press of the “news digest” model was to mock or mock foreign cultures through analysis and descriptions, especially as far as foreign leaders were concerned.

The researchers speak of the phenomenon of negative stereotype of foreign leaders, as well as the argument behind it as a manifestation or reinforcement of the sense of American political specialty. Similarly, such appearances meant that a certain people or nationality is incapable of self-government and exploitation of its natural resources, in support of the imperialist rule. This does not mean

that there was lack of correspondents who challenged prejudice and highlighted the stereotypes with which they approached foreign cultures. There were those who sympathized with foreign countries, their cultures, their people, and their struggles, as well as those who mocked the U.S. approach, especially the NYT and the New York Tribune. Likewise, in the context of international news the theme of the need for national leadership is even stronger. “Leaders to maintain the support of followers focus attention on foreign threats that shift attention from unresolved internal problems.”

Likewise, as far as the following discourses are concerned today in international reports of the American media. “In the symbolic universe built by American media not only is the United States the center of the greatest world events, but the altruism of our democracy and our capitalist economy, although they no longer constitute the only alternative to “communist totalitarianism” as it was since the end of World War II until 1989, They are still understood today as the “natural order” for the American citizen and consumer. On the other hand, the lecture for the other is often analyzed by researchers to build oneself. So, the other’s constructions are essentially self-constructed. In such a spirit, Dell’Orto states that historically the US has defined itself as contrary to Europe. Thus, Europe is perceived as “the other foreign, threatening enemy and potential learner”<sup>19</sup>. American superiority appears openly in chronicles of Europe since the nineteenth century according to it. The Disc of American Superiority is illustrated especially with Italy and Greece. Such discourses speak of foreign cultures as beautiful but enslaved and unable to self-govern, so they need American intervention. The beautiful and the ruined is the dichotomy that prevails in descriptions of Egypt, Turkey, to St. Domingo.

#### *Fourth trend: ethnocentrism, capitalism, individualism as the hit parade of Americanism*

As part of the analysis and interpretation of media content, it is important that the values that the media puts at the heart of its reporting are recognized. Some of the main topics or codes that go through American media reporting have been identified by Herbert Gans. Ethnocentrism, individualism, moderation, are some of them. According to Herbert Gans, who was the first to ask this question in 1979, the enduring values that permeate news in the American media industry “can be grouped into eight entities: ethnocentrism, altruistic democracy, responsible capitalism, small-town pastoralism, individualism, moderation, social order and national leadership”<sup>20</sup>. At the top of the list is precisely ethnocentrism that

<sup>19</sup> Dell’Orto, Giovanna, *Giving Meaning to the World: The First US Foreign Correspondents, 1838-1859*, Greenwood Press: Westport, 2002. p. 121.

<sup>20</sup> Gans Herbert, *Deciding What’s News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, ‘Newsweek’ and ‘Time’*. London: Constable, 1980.



speaks of American orientation as ubiquity (i.e., with the widest spread) in terms of the chronicle of international reports of the American media. Ethnocentrism manifests itself in both the content of international reports and in the country or space left to them in relation to internal reporting. As CNN's renowned American journalist Christiane Amanpour is quoted as saying, "If there are no American soldiers at an event, there is no American media."

Likewise, the value of individualism is one of the most expressed in American media reporting. The focus on individual actors rather than social structures or processes, as well as more than on groups or policy issues, is also characteristic of the American media. According to Gans (1979) about 90% of the news is about people and what they do and what they say. The news focuses mainly on individual public officials, business leaders, well-known personalities, and scientists, as well as on the actions and stories of ordinary people. Likewise, news is personalized in the sense that "they prefer angles of human interest in dealing with events by underestimating the institutional and political considerations that make up their social context".

Gans sees the expression of individualism even in the treatment that the American media does to communism and socialism. He argues that "communism and socialism are seen with fear as they weaken the individual, while capitalism is valued less for what is in itself than for the freedom it offers to at least some individuals". The theme of individualism is also related to that of responsible capitalism, as its extension. One of the other topics that permeates the American media is that of moderation. Gans suggests that news is critical of individuals, groups or ideas seen as extreme: atheist or religious fanatics, members of countercultures, ideologues or those who see only their self-interest, etc.<sup>21</sup>. The latest topic in terms of American commercial media is national leadership and the U.S. president as the defender and guarantor of political and social order, even as the nation's moral leader.

## Conclusions

The theoretical, agency and content analyses within the framework of the representations of the subject of Albania by two foreign newsmagazines speak of:

1. Constant approach and treatment under the sign of the demarcation of Albanian abnormality.
2. Constant institutional and professional approaches with the subject of Albania.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid...

3. Constant fabrication of the subject of Albania based on organizational, professional, and textual discourses characteristic in the Western media landscape, respectively the international newsmagazines.

The Theoretical analysis based on research about our study object speaks of:

1. Construction and fabrication of international and international news content on the international Anglo-American media spectrum.
2. Construction occurs at the organizational, professional, and textual levels.
3. Thematic framing or selection of reporting angles are part of this process.
4. The discourse that dominates international media reporting is still that of American or British superiority.
5. On the horizon of the Western international media, new trends such as the decline in international coverage are observed, shifting the focus towards news of a practical and entertaining nature, falling number of foreign couriers, focusing on the values of Americanism such as individualism etc.
6. Some of the determining or crucial factors in covering or not covering a foreign country are indicators such as geographical proximity and diplomatic relations and especially American or British interests there.

The conclusions arising from agency's analysis, as to the defining factors of this viable report and constant approach are:

- Factors of the magazine's property, managerial and organizational structure have had a significant role and weight in covering or not covering the subject of Albania, in the kind of coverage given to it and in the way it is treated and discourse for it.
- The journalistic model or profile, as well as aspects of newsmagazines professional performance, shed light on how events and subjects are presented.
- The editorial line, their political positions, their international line of reporting, the philosophy of national incarnation and values, are factors that have also influenced the magazines' approach towards the subject of Albania.
- The magazines' audience and their information sources have also influenced the frequency of Albania's coverage, as well as have had a demarcating role in the way this subject is presented to respond to the reader's identity.

The conclusions arising from quantitative and qualitative data based on content analysis on Albania speak of:

- Constant coverage and nature of the similar coverage generally from year to year and from one historical period to another.

- Albania's space in terms of configuration of sections, areas of coverage and frequency of subject mentions do not undergo relevant changes from period to period.
- Textual content quite similar and often the same or identical from one historical period to another. The prevailing discourse of each period is that of Albanian abnormality intertwined with that of American or British superiority.
- The themes and reference frames within discursive formations are also close and often the same, but so are the angles of view.

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