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**TWENTY-FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON:
“SOCIAL AND NATURAL SCIENCES – GLOBAL CHALLENGE 2022”**

9 NOVEMBER

BARCELONA

Organized by

International Institute for Private- Commercial- and Competition Law (Austria)

in Partnership with

**Bielefeld University of Applied Sciences (Germany), Keiser University (USA),
Institute of History and Political Science of the University of Białystok (Poland)
and School of American Law (Greece)**





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Edited by: Dr. Lena Hoffman

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The performance of Albanian municipalities in the production of fruit trees

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Abstract

Our country stands out for the growth of different types of fruit trees such as seeds, kernels, subtropical, mulberries, walnuts, etc. Their growth is widespread in all municipalities of the country. The production of fruit trees occupies an important place in the agricultural production of the municipalities themselves. In this work, the performance in the production of fruit trees for 61 municipalities of our country in 2021 is evaluated. The performance evaluation is done by using the DEA (Data Envelopment Analysis) method. In this analysis, out of all the municipalities, those with the best performance have been identified. For other municipalities, possible ways of improving their performance have been suggested. Aiming towards the best possible performance in the production of fruit trees is necessary as it leads to an increase in production and consequently to an increase in their consumption and marketing, to an increase in profit and therefore to an increase in the well-being of the population of rural areas. Furthermore, the growth of fruit trees affects the environment, the development of the agro-processing industry, the development of the agricultural machinery production industry, etc. In this context, the evaluation of the performance of the municipalities related to the production of fruit trees and the identification of their production possibilities is of great interest as it affects their sustainable development.

Keywords: fruit trees, municipality, performance, Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA).

Introduction

Albania has a diverse and suitable climate for the growth of many fruit trees. Being situated in the Mediterranean region and in the subtropical zone, its climate starts from mild, typical Mediterranean in the coastal lowlands and ends with the cooler and harsher continental in the mountainous regions. In our country we grow fruit trees that require a subtropical and warm climate such as mespola, pomegranate, fig, jujube, feno, as well as cherries, cherries, plums, apples, pears, quinces which endure cold climates, and lastly chestnuts that grow in harsh mountain climate.

The diversity in the growth of fruit trees in our country is also due to the mostly hilly-mountainous landscape. This landscape creates good cultivation and production conditions for fruit trees. On the other hand, fruit trees can also be grown using other terrains such as coastal sands, steep and dry slopes, the sides of fields, gardens, yards and roads, etc. Furthermore, our country has ancient traditions in the cultivation of fruit trees, which have been passed down from generation to generation. Trees have always planted by residents of rural areas around their residence. The trees have been mainly cultivated for the fruits, which are rich in different types of nutrients. Fruits of some types have been used since ancient times and are still recommended today

by folk medicine. Fruits are healthy and therefore the cultivation of fruit trees has always been increasing, as can be seen from figure 1. This figure provides a graphic representation of the progress of the number of fruit trees during the last 12 years (2010-2021) as well as their production during this period.

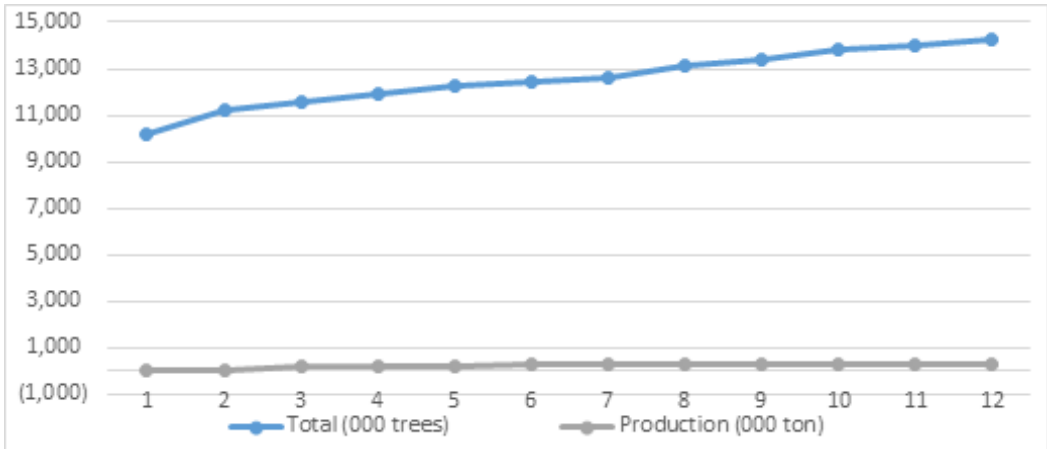


Figure 1. Number of fruit trees and their production 2010-2021

Source: INSTAT, *Agriculture Statistical Yearbook 2021*

The main goal of farmers who are engaged in the cultivation of fruit trees is to obtain maximum production from them and to meet the always-increasing needs of consumers and the agro-processing industry with fresh products. About 50% of the population of our country lives in rural areas and provide their income mainly with agricultural products. For this reason, the cultivation of fruit trees should be treated as an important sector in the economy of our country. In addition, the development of technology and cultivation systems have shown that in order to obtain sustainable production at a low cost, this sector must solve many existing problems.

So, the production of fruit trees, although being quite important for our agriculture, has constantly shown poor levels of performance. In this sector, as in any other sector, it is not enough to simply produce, but you must be efficient in production. Therefore, it is necessary to find a solution for farmers in order to increase their production for the domestic and foreign market, and thus increase their income and well-being. And in this perspective, the increase of performance in the production of fruit trees is an important issue to study since the economic growth, unachieved due to the lack of efficiency, can be obtained without additional costs.

Material and Method

In this paper, the performance in the production of fruit trees for each of the 61 municipalities of our country has been evaluated based on the data on the level of production of fruit trees, the areas planted with fruit trees and the number of their roots. These data were taken from the INSTAT Agriculture Statistical Yearbook 2021 and INSTAT databases of agricultural statistics for 2021. The number of fruit trees for each municipality in Albania is given in the graphic shown in figure 2.

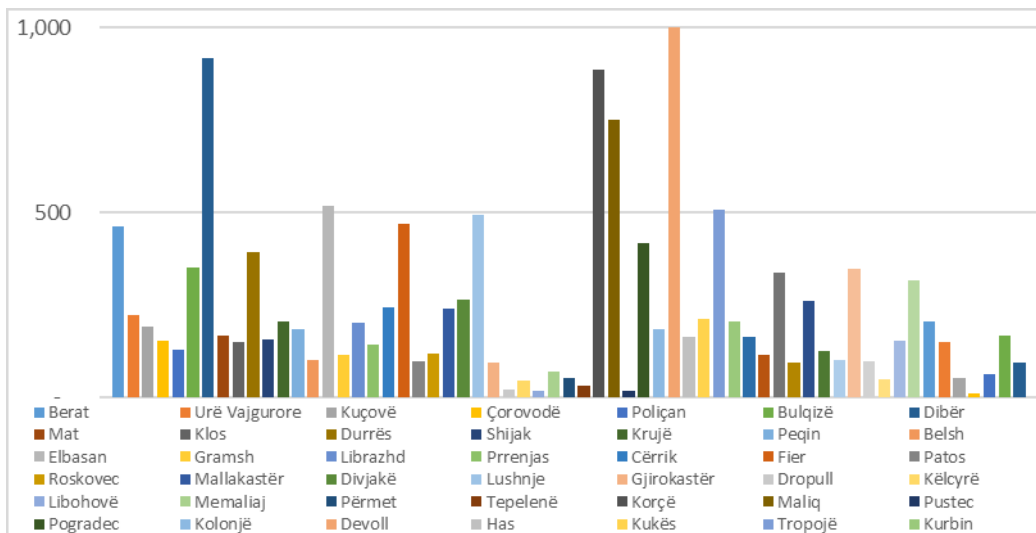


Figure 2. Number of fruit trees, 2021 (000 trees)

Source: INSTAT, Agriculture Statistical Yearbook 2021

The area planted with fruit trees for each of the municipalities is given in the graphic presented in figure 3.

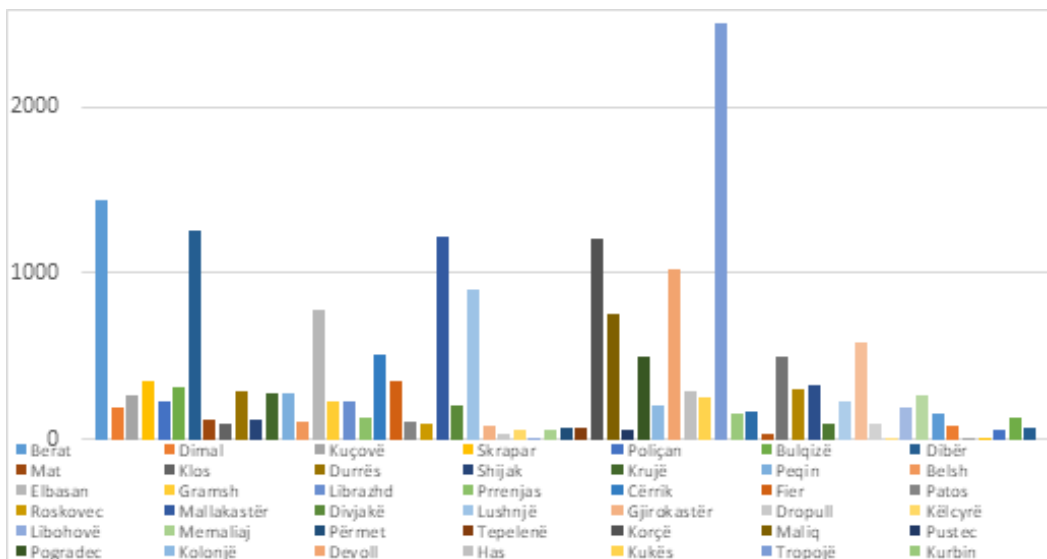


Figure 3. Area planted with fruit trees

Source: INSTAT, databases of agricultural statistics for 2021

The total production of fruit trees for each of the municipalities is given in the graphic presented in figure 4.

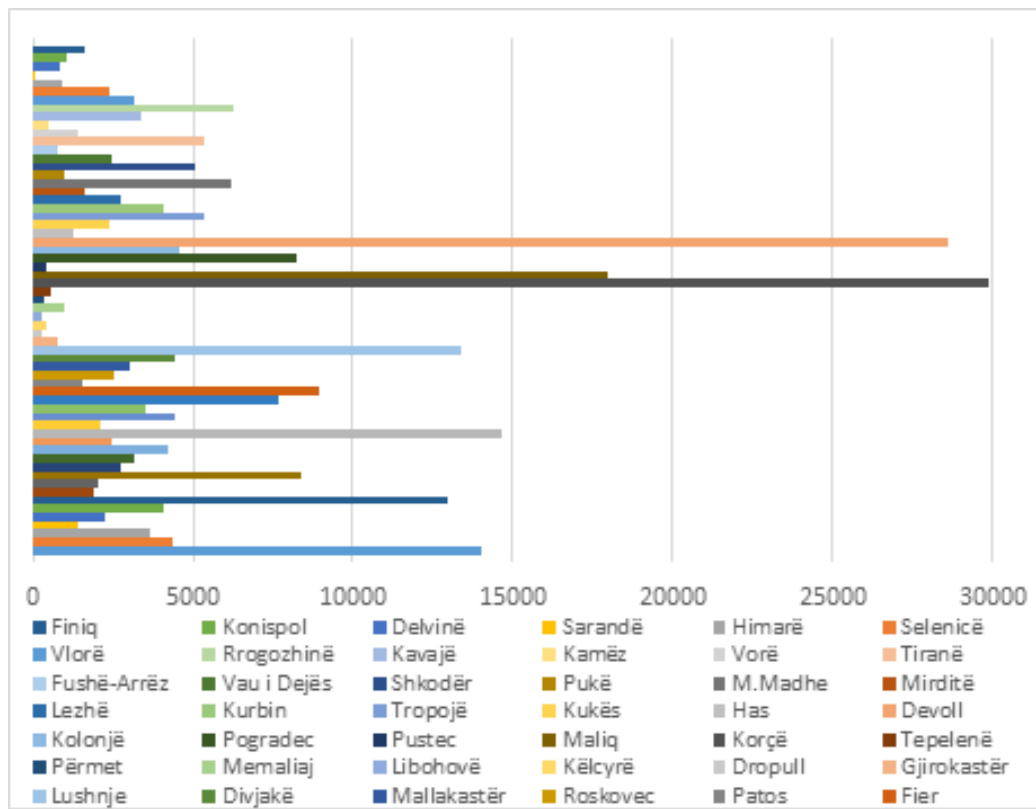


Figure 4. Production of fruit trees, 2021 (tons)

Source: INSTAT, Agriculture Statistical Yearbook 2021

The performance of the municipalities in the study, based on the relative technical efficiency, was evaluated using DEA method (data envelopment analysis), through the input-oriented CCR model (CCR-I), in its multiplier form. Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) is an approach for evaluating the performance of a set of peer entities called Decision Making Units (DMUs). The model will determine which municipalities are efficient and which are inefficient by constructing an efficient production frontier, such that all the observed municipalities (DMUs) lie on or below the efficient frontier. The production performance of each municipality, through DEA, has been evaluated in relation to the performance of all other municipalities that participate in the analysis.

Furthermore, the DEA model finds the reference set for municipalities that are inefficient and is specific for each of them. Linear combination of the efficient municipalities of the reference set gives an efficient hypothetical composite unit. The idea in DEA is for an inefficient municipality to be able to function as efficiently as this hypothetical composite unit formed by the linear combination of its referent set. Data envelopment analysis is a Linear Programming-based methodology for performing this type of analysis. Using the CCR DEA model, Input-oriented, Multiplier form (under the CRS assumption), the relative technical efficiency of an arbitrary unit () is determined as follows:

$$\max z = \sum_{r=1}^s \mu_r y_{r0}$$

s.t.

$$\sum_{r=1}^s \mu_r y_{rj} - \sum_{i=1}^m v_i x_{ij} \leq 0 \quad \text{for } j = 1 \text{ to } n$$

$$\sum_{i=1}^m v_i x_{i0} = 1$$

$$\mu_r, v_i \geq 0 \quad \forall i, r$$

Where:

y_{rj} represents the output value r ($r = 1, \dots, s$) to the unit j ,

x_{ij} represents the input value i ($i = 1, \dots, m$) to the unit j ,

μ_r is a non-negative weight assigned to the output r ,

v_i is a non-negative weight assigned to the input i ,

s is the number of outputs

m is the number of inputs

DEA method is to determine the values for the weights and which represent the variables of the problem. A separate LP problem is solved for each unit in DEA, where the objective is the same: to maximize the weighted sum of outputs of that unit. The unit being rated cannot have weights for itself that would make the efficiency for any unit (including itself) greater than 1. For each individual unit, it is required that the weighted sum of the unit's outputs be less than or equal to the weighted sum of its inputs. Since the sum of the weighted inputs for the unit being evaluated must be equal to 1, the sum of its weighted outputs (increasing to the maximum) cannot exceed this value. Thus, units that are efficient will have a DEA efficiency score equal to 1.

Results and Discussions

After processing the above data by using Solver in Excel, through the DEA model, CCR-I, multiplier problem, the efficiency of each municipality in our country is characterized by a single summary of the result of the relative technical efficiency. The obtained results of these relative technical efficiencies are reflected in table 1.

DEA			DEA			DEA		
No	Municipality	Efficiency	No	Municipality	Efficiency	No	Municipality	Efficiency
1	Berat	0.901195	22	Roskovec	0.830258	42	Kurbin	0.798921
2	Urë Vajgurore	0.736206	23	Mallakastër	0.377962	43	Lezhë	0.578989
3	Kuçovë	0.568627	24	Divjakë	0.659733	44	Mirditë	0.843805
4	Çorovodë	0.276369	25	Lushnje	0.807977	45	M.Madhe	0.541979
5	Poliçan	0.521796	26	Gjirokastrë	0.31982	46	Pukë	0.310219
6	Bulqizë	0.428226	27	Dropull	0.367279	47	Shkodër	0.604573
7	Dibër	0.420254	28	Këlcyrë	0.318314	48	Vau i Dejës	0.789513
8	Mat	0.479344	29	Libohovë	0.579668	49	Fushë-Arrëz	0.229233
9	Klos	0.591616	30	Memaliaj	0.567372	50	Tiranë	0.452664
10	Durrës	0.856519	31	Përmet	0.207332	51	Vorë	0.523225
11	Shijak	0.700624	32	Tepelenë	0.538845	52	Kamëz	0.616702
12	Krujë	0.457741	33	Korçë	1	53	Kavajë	0.681901
13	Peqin	0.678912	34	Maliq	0.834818	54	Rrogozhinë	0.745411
14	Belsh	0.808826	35	Pustec	0.718535	55	Vlorë	0.616409
15	Elbasan	0.841935	36	Pogradec	0.628711	56	Selenicë	0.717966
16	Gramsh	0.545208	37	Kolonjë	0.833592	57	Himarë	1
17	Librazhd	0.731406	38	Devoll	0.965964	58	Sarandë	0.575239
18	Prrenjas	0.910942	39	Has	0.227312	59	Delvinë	0.515579
19	Cërrik	0.946406	40	Kukës	0.362307	60	Konispol	0.246465
20	Fier	0.764079	41	Tropojë	0.313467	61	Finiq	0.695089
21	Patos	0.512866						

Table 1. The results of the relative technical efficiency of the municipalities

Source: Data processed by the authors

The DEA calculations are derived from the actual data observed for each municipality and provide only relative efficiency measures. The DEA calculations are designed to maximize the respective efficiency score for each municipality. From table 1, it can be seen that the municipalities of Korçë and Himarë show the best performance in the group of 61 municipalities included in the analysis. These two municipalities have a relative technical efficiency score equal to 1, which means that in this group they are technically efficient and are located in the efficient frontier. So, these municipalities have resulted in the best production practice compared to all the municipalities of the country. The relative technical efficiency of these municipalities, evaluated according to CCR-I, means that they have better used their resources for the production of fruit

trees compared to other municipalities.

Other municipalities do not result with optimal levels in their performance in the production of fruit trees. They are technically inefficient, since their efficiency results are less than 1 and are below the efficient frontier. The municipality with the lowest relative technical efficiency score is that of Përmet (0.207332), followed by the municipality of Has (0.227312), Fushë-Arrëz (0.229233), Konispol (0.246465), Çorovodë (0.276369), etc. Their inefficiency shows non-optimal utilization of available resources in the fruit tree production process compared to other municipalities. It is effectively possible to find through the DEA model how inefficient municipalities can improve their relative technical efficiency score, thus improving their performance in the production of fruit trees. For this, all inefficient municipalities must be compared with the efficient municipalities that make up their reference set. For each inefficient municipality, the linear combination of efficient municipalities (reference set) that results in a hypothetical efficient unit can be determined.

To clarify the meaning of the reference set, we will refer to Berat and Finiq municipalities, which from the DEA model have efficiency results of respectively 0.901195342 and 0.695088991, therefore they are inefficient. The municipality of Berat, which although achieves high levels in the production of fruit trees, in terms of performance has not shown optimal levels. So, this municipality has been technically inefficient from the evaluation through DEA. For the municipality of Berat, a group of municipalities from the group of efficient municipalities, that are Korçë and Himarë, will be selected to make up its reference set.

From the sensitivity report for the municipality of Berat, it is shown that the reference set consists only of the municipality of Korçë, as shown in table 2. In this sensitivity report, there are the weights needed to create a composite unit that is more efficient than the municipality in question. There we noticed that 47.02% of the factors and product of the Korçë municipality creates a hypothetical efficient unit with a product equal to that of the Berat municipality, achieved with fewer resources than those used by this municipality. So, the idea here is that the municipality of Berat (inefficient) should be able to function as efficiently as this hypothetically composed unit.

No	Municipality	DEA Efficiency	Reference Set	Composite Weight
1	Berat	0.901195	Korçë	0.470200448
			Korçë	0.029247002
61	Finiq	0.695089	Himarë	0.757427802

Table 2. Reference set for Berat and Finiq municipalities

Source: Data processed by the authors

Also, from the sensitivity report for the municipality of Finiq, it is shown that the reference set consists of the efficient municipalities of Korçë and Himarë, as shown in figure 2. In this sensitivity report of this municipality, there are the weights needed to create a composite unit that is more efficient than the Finiq municipality. There we note that a weighted average of 2.92% of the municipality of Korçë, plus 75.74% of the municipality of Himarë (of their resources and production) produces a hypothetical efficient composite unit with a product equal to that of the municipality of Finiq

and which requires less resources than those used by this municipality. In this way, the municipality of Finiq is designed in the efficient production frontier. The same situation would be described for all other inefficient municipalities.

Conclusions

In this analysis regarding the performance of 61 municipalities in Albania in the production of fruit trees, according to table 1, we note that in 2021, about 3.28% of them reach the maximum value, and are technically efficient, while approximately 96.72% of them are technically inefficient. Thus, based on the indicators taken into consideration, the municipalities which are technically efficient during the evaluation of their performance in the production of fruit trees, compared to other municipalities, have had the best practice. They have reached their level of production by making better use of the surface of the land planted with fruit trees and the number of fruit trees compared to other municipalities. In this sense, there is no room for performance improvement in these municipalities. Meanwhile, in any municipality that has a technical efficiency result of less than one, there is room for improvement, since they have not maximally utilized the surface of the land planted with fruit trees or their number in the production process. The improvement can be oriented by the reference sets for each inefficient municipality. The assessment of the municipalities' performance and the finding of reference sets was achieved by the input-oriented DEA CCR model through its multiplier problem. The results confirm the utility of using DEA models in the assessment of performance in production of fruit trees. Evaluating and improving the performance of the country's municipalities in the production of fruit trees is very important as they are, above all, necessary and healthy food for people. Furthermore, in our country, their cultivation increases the income in agriculture and narrows the difference between plain and hilly-mountainous areas. Fruit trees supply the market with fresh fruit for consumption and the agro-processing industry throughout the year, increase the country's exports, etc. In addition to the nutritional value of fruits, many trees such as walnuts, chestnuts, mulberries, etc., are also valued for the quality of their wood, which is used in the wood manufacturing industry. Trees, on the other hand, are used to protect the soil from the erosive action of erosion, to beautify roads, flower gardens and parks, to improve air quality, etc. We emphasize here that fruit trees represent a diversity of species and cultivars with special features and the possibility of cultivation in different climatic and soil environments, which is possible and should be a priority for our country.

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The diversification of the Albanian economy in the face of the new challenges of Globalization

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Abstract

The study is aimed at assessing the new trends in the Globalisation including changing demographics of world output, world exports, flow of investments etc., and the opportunities created from these economic transformations for small countries like Albania. In recent decades, the phenomenon of globalization has become quite evident due to the interdependence of national economies that were once traditionally isolated. The great technological developments in IT and transportation, the lowering of trade barriers, and creation of international institutions has facilitated the creation of a huge global economy. In the early decades after the second world war the United States and other western industrialized countries namely Germany, France, Italy, the United Kingdom were the world's dominant economic powers. However, from 1960 to today, emerging economic powers like China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, Brazil, South Korea etc., have significantly increased their share of world output. This trend is expected to continue in the future regardless of the prolonged negative effects caused by the pandemic - COVID 19, supply chain disruption and the war in Ukraine. Albania, as an aspiring country to enter the European community, has its economy very much linked to neighbouring countries. The major changes in the demography of global economies require diversification country's trade and foreign direct investments in the future.

Keywords: Globalization, Albanian Economy, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Diversification of Trade.

Introduction

The globalization of the world economy has increased the volume of trade and investment in developed and developing countries alike. The globalization of markets refers to the merging of historically distinct and separate national markets into one huge global marketplace. Falling barriers to cross-border trade and investment have made it easier to sell internationally (Hill, Hult, 2018). Initially, the main contributors of world trade and FDIs were the western industrialized countries. However, emerging markets, such as China, India, Mexico, Indonesia, Turkey, now account for a significant share of global trade. After 2019, a chain of events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, disruption of the supply chains, the blockage of the Suez Canal, the war in Ukraine have somewhat stopped this trend. Neo-mercantilists policies are gaining momentum due to problems in the transportation of goods and the lack of microchips in the world markets. The demographics of international trade and FDIs, regardless of the obstacles in the globalization of the world economy in the last couple of years, are changing rapidly. Various studies highlight the importance that Emerging markets will have in the future. In this context, the Albanian economy should be geographically diversified to maximize the benefits resulting from the new globalization trends.

The paper is organized as follows. Section I shows the methodology used. Section II analyses the new trends of the Globalization. Diversification of the Albanian Economy in the face of new global trends is analysed in Section III. Last section summarizes the main conclusions of the paper.

1. The Methodology

For the realization of this study, has been used the extensive contemporary literature on globalisation and new trends of the world economy. In the study, a wide range of secondary sources were used in the form of academic literature, reports of important international organizations or publications. The reports of the Albanian Institute of Statistics (INSTAT), Bank of Albania (BOA) and the reports of international organizations such as PWC, OECD etc., have been a special help.

The study is also based on “online” articles and publications related to Globalization. A significant part of the data was obtained through the use of Internet resources such as the official website of “Statista”, “Investopedia”, “World Economic Forum”, etc.

2. New trends of the Globalization

Recent decades have brought significant developments in the world economy. In addition to industrialized countries, emerging countries are increasing their presence in the global economy. When analysing the 20 countries with the largest proportion of the global gross domestic product (GDP) based on Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) in 2021, China is ranked first with 18.6%, USA second with 15.7%, India third with 6.99% and in 7th and 8th place is Indonesia and Brazil with 2.44% and 2.35% respectively (Statista 2022).

In the last couple of years, negative phenomena including the COVID-19 pandemic, the blockage of the Suez Canal, the war in Ukraine have disrupted the supply chains and eventually stopped globalisation trends to some extent. Many countries are revising their structures of economy and Neo-mercantilism is in the focus. Neo-mercantilists equate political power with economic power and economic power with a balance-of-trade surplus. The flaw with mercantilism was that it viewed trade as a zero-sum game. A zero-sum game is one in which a gain by one country results in a loss by another (Hill, Hult, 2018). COVID-19 and the Russian invasion of Ukraine are the latest in a series of shocks shaking the foundations of globalization as we know it. The question that raised in the World Economic Forum 2022 was: as economic decoupling, techno-nationalism and the onshoring of supply chains accelerate, is a new era of self-sufficiency and regionalization set to replace what came before it? (WE Forum 2022).

Despite the obstacles resulting from the pandemic and the turbulent geopolitical situations, the process of globalization seems unstoppable. Developed countries are still e major source of the FDI outflows. In 2021, the United States was the major source of FDI outflows worldwide, with outflows peaking at USD 434 billion due to high levels of reinvestment of earnings. Other top sources included Germany, Japan, China and the United Kingdom, each recording more than USD 100 billion in outflows (OECD 2022). Emerging countries are also contributing in the FDI outflows and increase of the global trade. In 2019, FDI stocks in UAE from all EU partners

reached 137 billion Euros and UAE outward FDI stocks to all partners were close to 139 billion Euros (EU-GCC 2021).

Emerging markets have coped with the latest economic troubles surprisingly well. When the Federal Reserve, tightened monetary policy to tame inflation in the early 1980s, Latin American countries were plunged into crisis as they fell behind on their dollar debts. By comparison, this time seems curiously calm. Although the Fed is raising rates at its most furious pace, much of the market drama has centred on rich countries rather than emerging ones. It is the central bank in Britain, not Brazil, that is scrambling to avert a bond-market crisis, triggered by the government's reckless budget (The Economist, 2022).

Eventually, the future seems to reserve an important place for emerging markets in the world economic arena. Emerging markets (E7) namely Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Russia, and Turkey could grow around twice as fast as advanced economies (G7) on average. As a result, six of the seven largest economies in the world are projected to be emerging economies in 2050 led by China (1st), India (2nd) and Indonesia (4th). UK could be down to 10th place by 2050, France out of the top 10 and Italy out of the top 20 as they are overtaken by faster growing emerging economies like Mexico, Turkey and Vietnam respectively (PWC 2017).

3. Diversification of the Albanian Economy in the face of new Global Trends

Porter theorizes that four broad attributes of a nation shape the environment in which Local firms compete, and these attributes promote or impede the creation of competitive advantage. These attributes are

- Factor endowments—a nation's position in factors of production, such as skilled labor or the infrastructure necessary to compete in a given industry.
- Demand conditions—the nature of home demand for the industry's product or service.
- Related and supporting industries—the presence or absence of supplier industries and related industries that are internationally competitive.
- Firm strategy, structure, and rivalry—the conditions governing how companies are created, organized, and managed and the nature of domestic rivalry.

He argues that firms are most likely to succeed in industries or industry segments where the diamond is most favourable (Hill, Hult, 2018). Albania, although a small country, has important natural resources and a vital young population that is threatened by emigration. Those factor endowments, a blessing for the nation, must be fully utilised. In order to achieve economic growth, the Albanian international trade and FDI must be diversified. Diversification is important because it is associated with economic growth and reduced volatility. Diversification of exports, which provide foreign exchange and enable imports of critical goods, services, and know-how, is crucial for developing countries. The question to address is how export diversification is affected by trade policies, including multilateral rules, regional trade agreements, and national measures (Dadush, Ali, Doghan, 2020).

The FDI structure in the Albanian economy is dominated by neighbouring countries, Germany and the Netherlands. According to the report of Bank of Albania on "The quarterly flow of direct investment-liabilities by country" the biggest contributors of FDI for the second quarter 2022, were Netherland, Italy, Germany with 11%, 13%,

8% respectively (BOA 2022). Dutch investments accounted for more than 22% of Foreign Direct Investments for 2021. The main reason for the Netherlands leading the ranking of foreign investors in recent years is the fact that the Netherlands is one of the European jurisdictions where offshore companies are registered (Monitor 2021). Green-field investment from other developed countries like USA and newly emerging countries, like China, Malaysia etc., are not in the picture. A green-field investment is an important type of foreign direct investment (FDI) in which a parent company creates a subsidiary in a different country, building its operations from the ground up. In addition to the construction of new production facilities, these projects can also include the building of new distribution hubs, offices, and living quarters (Investopedia 2022). FDI from gulf countries like UAE, Qatar etc, that can be a great opportunity for the development and employment are negligent as well.

The same picture is in the field of Albania's international trade. Italy, according to the report of Institute of statistics INSTAT on "Export by countries, 2017 - 2021", is the main partner with 42% of the total. Emerging markets like Brazil or Saudi Arabia have negligible weight in the country's total exports, with 0.04% and 0.1% respectively. The share of USA is merely 1.3%. When analysing "Import by countries, 2017-2021", Italy again is the main partner with 24% of the total followed by Turkey with 11%. Emerging markets like Indonesia or United Arab Emirates, a rich gulf country, have negligible weight in the country's total imports, with 0.2% respectively. The share of USA is only 2% of the total imports (INSTAT 2022). Eventually international trade of Albania is highly localized and does not rip the full benefits of the globalisation.

Conclusions and implications

The Globalisation, while it has grown strongly in the last decades, poses threats and opportunities for countries around the world. Last couple of decades have seen a major shift in the international trade from industrialized western countries towards emerging markets. Emerging 7 countries namely Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Russia, and Turkey have had the highest economic performance. Some of them have formed economic alliances like BIRCS, which comprises five major emerging economies Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa paving the way to a multipolar economic world. COVID 19 pandemic, war in Ukraine have disrupted supply chains resulting in many countries empowering neo-mercantilist policies. However, the predictions are that the globalisation process will continue and emerging markets will increase their presence in the global economic arena in the long run. In the case of Albania, international trade and foreign direct investments are geographically localised. FDI structure in the Albanian economy is dominated by Italy, Turkey, Germany and the Netherlands. The country's international trade, including exports and imports, is mainly concentrated in neighbouring countries such as Italy, Turkey and Greece. An exception is China, where imports have a large weight. The international economic exposure is very negligent with countries like the United States, with which Albania has very good political relations. Albania has also low economic engagement with emerging markets like Indonesia, Mexico, Malaysia, Brazil, Saudi Arabia etc. Globalism offers many opportunities for diversification, which is important for the country's economy because it is associated with economic

growth and reduced volatility. Albania must diversify the FDI and international trade with other countries from South East Asia, Latin America and Middle East. Much more must be done to attract Green-field investment from USA and newly emerging countries, like China, Malaysia Arab Emirates etc., regardless of their distant geographical location.

Government institutions with its favourable policies like trade agreements should create a suitable environment for FDI's originating from emerging countries. These measures would bring more foreign exchange and increase employment in the country that are so necessary for the economic development, reduction of immigration and brain drain.

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Does the Albanian legal framework meet the needs for protection from cybercrime?

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Abstract

Cyberspace has become an essential component of modern society. Citizens as well as critical social infrastructure, the financial sector, government services, the security sector, schools and hospitals are increasingly and irreversibly dependent on the interconnection and global network of information technology.

The continued evolution and spread of computer technology has created a new class of threats – so-called “cyber threats” – that societies must contend with. These cyber threats can be broadly defined as the use of computer technology to engage in activities that may endanger a society’s ability to maintain internal or external order (at government level, business level, individual, community, etc.).

Keywords: Evolution, cyber threats, computer technology, infrastructure.

Introduction

According to the legislation of various countries in the world, there is an increasing number of cybercrimes. Cybercrime has even reached the proportions of cyberwarfare. However, countries must be prepared to combat any potential crime that occurs in cyberspace due to the multidimensional impact within and across national borders. Developing countries, such as Albania, are in their infancy when it comes to adopting strategies as well as complete legal frameworks to combat cybercrime, cyberterrorism and cyberwarfare, because they are more vulnerable to these phenomena in the situation of a weak supervisory capacity, as well as economic, technological and social capacities. In this context, in Albania’s efforts to protect people’s lives, the economy, public order and the security of the state recently, the commitment and fear is much greater compared to previous years.

Historically, societies have used a strategy to maintain the order they need to survive and thrive on information. In general, cybercrimes can be local or international. And states for the same reason establish rules and criminal laws to maintain both internal and external security, drawing up and enforcing a set of proscriptive rules (“cybercrime criminal rules”) ¹that prevent members of a society from interfering and creating problems, and from interfering in ways that undermine order. Computing technology today seeks the empirical realities that created and sustained this dichotomous approach to maintaining internal and external order. This so-called traditional approach to cybercrime, it assumes that societies occupy a territorially defined physical reality in which threats are easily identified as “internal” (crime)

¹ Dictionary.com (2021). Cybercrime.<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/cybercrime>.

or external (war). Computer-mediated communication threatens the validity of this assumption because it makes territory increasingly irrelevant (McConnell International, 2000).²

In the twenty-first century, those intent on undermining a society's ability to maintain order can use the Internet to launch virtual attacks from almost anywhere in the world. They may also launch attacks that may not fit neatly into the internal or external threat dichotomy. Cybercrime, or other forms of it such as cyberterrorism and cyberwar can affect the internal and external order of a state as much as in the world order today, although as a concept cybercrimes are crimes committed in cyberspace, its impact is much wider than just this virtual space.

1. Cyber attacks and their types

In today's world, everyone benefits from advanced cyber defense programs. At an individual level, a cyber security attack can result in anything from identity theft to extortion attempts.³ All of these depend on essential infrastructures such as banks, hospitals and money service firms. Everyone benefits together from the work of cyber threat researchers, like the team of 250 threat researchers at Talos (N. S. Incorporated, 2018),⁴ who investigate new and evolving threats and cyberattack strategies. They have increasingly discovered new vulnerabilities, educated the general public on the importance of cybersecurity, and strengthened open source tools. Their work makes the internet safer for everyone.

A cyberattack is an attack launched by cybercriminals using one or more devices against single or multiple computers or networks. A cyberattack can maliciously disable computers, steal data, or use a damaged computer as a launching point for various attacks. Cybercriminals use a variety of strategies, along with malware, phishing, ransomware, denial of service, among other methods.

To achieve the goals of cyberattacks to gain access or disable operations, a number of different technical strategies are used by cybercriminals. There are new strategies being added all the time, and some of those categories overlap, however, these are the terms you are most likely to hear discussed.

2. Cybercrime

It should be noted that although not all authors distinguish between computer crime and cybercrime, the distinction between them can be useful for analytical purposes. Computer crimes can be classified into computer crimes in a broad sense and computer crimes in a narrow sense. Computer crimes in a broad sense are traditional crimes that are committed through computer mechanisms or the Internet. Accordingly, information and communication technologies have expanded the contexts or means of execution of some traditional crimes, such as fraud or sexual abuse, which can now also be carried out through computers or the Internet. Consequently, computer crime in a broad sense is also called crime committed "through" computer systems (Marberth-Kubicki, 2010).⁵

Computer crimes in a narrow sense, on the other hand, are new crimes committed against computer systems or the Internet. Generally, these are actions directed

⁵ Marberth-Kubicki, A. (2010). Computer and Internet criminal law (In German). Munich: Beck.

against the software. For this reason, this phenomenon has also been described as a crime committed “against” computer systems. For this reason, this phenomenon has also been described as a crime committed “against” computer systems (illegal access or acquisition of data or software) and computer fraud (alteration or manipulation of data or software) (Jijena, 2008).⁶

Cybercrimes are computer crimes (in a broad or strict sense) that are committed over the Internet. Unlike computer crimes, which are committed “through” or “against” computer systems, cybercrimes are always committed in a specific context: cyberspace. In this sense, what defines a cybercrime is not its commission through or against a computer system, but a specific “place” or “medium” of commission. The categories “computer crime” and “computer crime” are not mutually exclusive and can be present together. Therefore, the dissemination of child pornography through the Internet constitutes a cybercrime and a computer crime in a broad sense, while the destruction of data from computer systems carried out in cyberspace constitutes a cybercrime and a computer crime in a narrow sense (Clough, 2010).⁷

The simplest definition of “cybercrime” is “crime committed on a computer network”, it varies according to the legal framework of different countries as well as according to the general legal framework that connects legal systems in the world. In the case of cyber fraud, it can be assumed that “cybercrime” it is nothing but the commission of a traditional “crime”, by different means, i.e. the use of a computer network (Dictionary.com, 2021).⁸

Until the twentieth century, there were two ways of cheating: face-to-face or through the regular postal system. Then, in the twentieth century, telephones were used for communication including deception. In the twenty-first century, the phenomenon of fraud has migrated to the Internet. Traditional physical crimes, such as theft, harassment, vandalism, rape, etc., have already spread on the Internet. The same cannot be said for murder as a crime. There is still no documented case in which computer technology has been used to take human life. However, this can be thought of and happen. Speculators, in such cases, have warned, for example, that if someone checks a hospital database, it could kill people by changing the basis of their medicines. This would be an indirect murder and it could happen that the crime was never discovered or if it was discovered it would be very difficult to determine which of the victims was the target of the unknown killer. Much of the cybercrime that has occurred to date is simply committing traditional crimes with new tools. However, this is not always true. An example of a new cybercrime is the “Distributed Denial of Service Attack” (DdoS). Such an attack overloads computer servers and effectively shuts down a website. For example, in February 2000, a DdoS attack caused the shutdown of Amazon.com and eBay among other sites. The purpose of such attacks is extortion. When such an attack starts on a website, the responsible person stops the attack and explains to the owner of the website that the attacks will continue until the owner pays a sum for “protection” against such attacks. This simply represents the commission of an old crime (extortion) by new means. However, this type of crime is not considered traditional, but a new type of crime: cybercrime. Therefore, DdoS attacks or other “new” crimes should be clearly defined in countries’ legislative

⁶ Jijena, R. (2008). Crime, punishment and process (In Spanish). In: Computer crimes, internet and law (In Spanish), 145-162. Santiago: Jurídica.

⁷ Clough, J. (2010). Principles of Cybercrime. New York: Cambridge University Press.

⁸ Dictionary.com (2021). Cybercrime.<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/cybercrime>.

frameworks.

Although the use of computer networks is perhaps the default pattern of cybercrime, it is also possible that computer technology, not network technology, can be used for illegal purposes. A computer without a network can be used, for example, to counterfeit currency or counterfeit documents.⁹ In each case, a computer - but not a computer network - is being used to commit a crime. Regardless of form, cybercrime uses computer technology to commit "a crime," that is, to engage in activities that threaten a society's ability to maintain internal order.

Finally, ordinary crimes are all those that cannot be classified as computer crimes or cybercrimes, or in any other way in particular. Thus, their definition is always determined by the process of elimination. If these crimes are committed by means of a radio-controlled drone, they are not classified as cybercrimes. Radio Control is a closed system and thus extends outside the Internet. Although both examples can be performed using technology, they escape the phenomenon of computation or execution in cyberspace.

An entity belonging to a terrorist organization can carry out all the activities discussed above, that is, computer crimes (in the broad or narrow sense), cybercrimes or ordinary crimes. However, to be classified as terrorist conduct, the structure, harm principle and elements of terrorism must be present. Additionally, for cyber terrorism, the terrorist conduct must be committed "in" or "through" cyberspace.

Consequently, not all computer crimes (in a broad or strict sense) committed by a "terrorist" constitute terrorism or cyber-terrorism. Not all cybercrimes executed by someone belonging to a terrorist organization should be described as terrorism or cyberterrorism.¹⁰ And, of course, not all common crimes committed by a "terrorist" are intended to be considered terrorism or cyberterrorism.

Conclusions

Considering the particular physical and virtual geography of criminal offenses committed in cyberspace, in the Convention of the Council of Europe "On Cybercrime" some rules have been established to determine the jurisdiction. Since the convention has been ratified by the Albanian state, its regulations will also apply to the Albanian authorities. However, the applicability in practice may be difficult precisely because of the weaker capacities to protect against cyberattacks in Albania. Also, in the internal law, the jurisdiction for criminal offenses in the cyber field is chosen based on the general rules on the assignment of jurisdiction provided by the Code of Criminal Procedure, with overlapping.

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Cybercrime and cybersecurity: Technical-legal aspects in the field of cybercrime

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Abstract

During the evolution of psycho-social relations and the functioning of the rule of law, the primary function is the interaction between the citizens and the institutions guaranteeing security and public order. With the advancement of technology, the guarantor report of the rights of citizens in cyberspace and the prevention of criminal phenomena becomes more necessary and requires increased attention from the state. Thus, now, the state structures have the task of controlling not only the physical space of exercising their duties but also the so-called cyberspace, where attention is particularly focused on cybercrime phenomena and their consequences in the community.

In recent years, the development of phenomena that cause cyber incidents in the field of cybersecurity have perfected the transformative ability and adapted to different systems and levels of security. This has led to damage to computerized systems with unpredictable, rapid and often indeterminable economic consequences. The problem of cybersecurity and cybercrime is also related to the definition of the geographical area "*locus commissi delicta*" from where the cyber attack can come. And precisely in this spirit, the special normative system in the cybersecurity and cybercrime sector applied by the institutional cooperation between the production and protection organizations of security systems and the police forces with their areas of specialization, play a very essential role for network control and interaction in the prevention of cybercrimes.

Keywords: cybercrime, cyberspace, cybersecurity, INTERPOL, collaboration, law.

1. Introduction

The rapid development in the last decade of forms of online communication and the advancement of technology has highlighted the phenomenon of the so-called "cybercrime", as part of the cybersystem, where the essential role is played by the totality of the technological tools that states have decided to use to guarantee cybersecurity (Contaldo A. – Peluso F., *Cybersecurity*, Pacini Giuridica, Pisa, 2018, fq. 1).

The phenomenon of cybercrime, as part of cybersecurity, is a sub-branch of several communication areas included in cybersecurity and regulated by law.

But specifically, what is cybersecurity?!

The independent use by network operators of technological space, communication by means of "online" or "word wide web - w.w.w" has become the primary form of interaction in all sectors of life, both economic and socio-political.

Cyberspace in its entirety, including here cyberspace, cyberdefense and cybercrime, has had a "boom" of activity that, now, with the time of globalization, has exceeded the land borders.

Thus, the more network communication is perfected, the more the potential for cyber

incidents increases, which makes their prevention become one of the main pillars of the inter-community cyber war, both at the level of the European Union and of each country. seeking to become part of the B.E. and not only.

Cyber incidents, part of cybersecurity, with their extension without predetermined physical boundaries, cause chaos in society and the entirety of services, which can have a devastating impact on information systems, communication networks and the economy as a whole.

The development of phenomena that cause cyber incidents, in the field of cybersecurity, have a transformation and adaptation capable of causing unpredictable, rapid and undetermined damage, specifically from which geographical area the cyber attack can come.

Thus arises the need for the cooperation of all state structures engaged in the field of cybersecurity, which must coordinate and distribute information with all contact points predetermined by agreements, conventions and/or regulations.

So much for the purpose of preventing and coping with any type of action by "cyber attackers" that can cause damage to the normal functioning of the online communication system and the services provided by this system.

2. Cybercrime and normative acts undertaken by the European Union

Cybercrime is a sub-branch of the maxi-area of cybersecurity, which is related to cybercrimes that are carried out through the use of the computer system - the Internet, or closed communication systems in the network.

Thus, cybercrime is related to those criminal acts, which are provided by the criminal code or special laws and which are carried out by means of electronic communication tools, computer networks and information systems.

Cybercrime is divided into three typologies of definition (European Commission, Cybercrime, 2022):

- a) – crimes committed exclusively through the use of the Internet (eg. phishing, fake bank addresses to steal e-banking information);
- b) –online fraud, which is carried out by means of phishing, identity theft, sending spam emails or other forms of communication with the purpose of deceiving and obtaining information from the selected victim;
- c) – obtaining from the network pedopornographic materials with minors, inciting racial hatred, xenophons and calling for violent actions, terrorism, etc.

These are only some of the most well-known phenomena related to cybercrime, but in reality the world of the Internet and the criminal skills that can be developed in it are endless and often the legislation of different countries is not in line with the perpetrators of criminal offenses. conducted on the network

Thus, the European Union in relation to the fight against cybercrime has adopted a series of normative acts, related to the EU strategy in the field of cybersecurity, which can be mentioned ([Eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content), 2022):

- a) - EU Regulation n. 679/2016 on the protection and handling of personal data
- b) – EU Regulation n. 2019/881 on the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity and Cybersecurity Certification for Information and Communication Technologies;
- c) – EU Directive n. 2016/1148 on the security of the network and information systems in the European Union;

c) – EU Regulation n. 910/2014, in the field of electronic identification and trusted services for economic transactions in the internal market.

d) – EU Directive n. 92/2011 against the abuse and sexual exploitation of minors through the use of new forms of technology – internet and minor pornography;

dh) - the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime, the Budapest Convention, entered into force in 2004 (Crossborder, Budapest Convention, 2022)

That's just some of the more specific normative acts of the field, where there are also other directives, which are indirectly related to the cybersecurity activity and the protection that follows as a function of the cybercrime war.

3. What is cybercrime?!

Cybercrime is any criminal activity that involves computers, the Internet, the hard network and any other communication network that serves to exchange information and put it on the network.

The figure of the cybercriminal – or “hacker”, aims to damage or destroy these computer systems in order to obtain information illegally or damage them as well as the distribution of criminal activities on the network, such as images that may violate integrity and dignity of the person or the distribution of materials of a criminal nature, provided by the criminal code as a criminal offense.

The most likely activity of the hacker is that of capturing information related to the financial field, with the aim of using this information to blackmail the legitimate holders of the information.

Both in the United States of America and in the European Union, the attention of supervisory authorities in the field of cybersecurity is focused precisely on the prevention and prosecution of criminal offenses aimed at illegitimate capture of data, destruction of communication networks, damage to computer systems. This is due to the fact that these criminal actions cause economic consequences for service providers, copyright infringement, etc.

Cybercrime can also be used by criminal organizations for the purpose of trafficking in narcotic substances, trafficking through the network of goods stored by registered “brands”, production, possession or distribution of child pornographic materials involving minors, etc.

Carrying out these activities in the network - internet, caused the crime to take an undefined cross-border form, which no longer needs their perpetrators to be physically present in the implementation of the criminal action.

Mainly, with a higher margin of action, remain cybercrimes in the economic field, in particular the breaking of e-banking access codes, the manipulation of activities in the field of e-commerce, stalking and cyberbullying, as well as the falsification of personal data with the purpose their use for other activities that are carried out in a certain territory, such as by stealing personal data, which help to create and clone credit cards capable of being used by “hackers” in different banks.

Cybercrime can be carried out either by a single individual or by a group of people, as long as they have computer skills capable of illegitimately obtaining information. They can break security systems and steal, doing this, other important data for the continuation of the criminal iter that they intend to carry out.

Another essential element of the criminal profile of hackers is the fact that they choose

to operate in countries where the level of cyber security and criminal laws in the cyber field are weak or non-existent. (Marchetti R., Mulas R, 2017, 42)

This made their activity difficult to catch and even more punishable, since the country's legal protection in this field remains low or non-existent.

3.1 How cybercrime is committed?!

Cybercrime evolves along with other forms of communication. Thus, every working method in the network becomes the object of study and inverse analysis by hackers, who every time perfect their cognitive technology in relation to the various systems that are under their attack.

Some of the most popular methods used by "hackers" are (Search Security Tech Target, 2022):

- Distributing DDoS system, this type of system guarantees the hackers to shut down the network communication system, such as Intranet or closing communication on the network - internet, paralyzing the entire communication system.

In general, this is the easiest attack by hackers who, after this maneuver, often seek to extract other information, destabilizing the victim and making the hackers have easier access to the communication system in an attempt to reopen the communication system and capture in this way the information they seek.

- Infecting systems and networks with viruses, such as the well-known Trojan. By distributing viruses, hackers aim to infect the system and decrypt information, so they can use the information obtained from the attacked system or network quickly and without much effort. The release of these viruses is often created specifically for the system being attacked.

- Phishing is another well-known hacking phenomenon in the network. It is carried out through online platforms, where the method used is that of sending fake emails specially designed to capture information and destroy the work system. In particular, this form is used for companies equipped with an electronic communication system, whether internal, intranet, or external, by sending links or emails containing false information to obtain and decrypt the security codes of the system that is required to be hacked.

- The identifying attack aims to steal the personal data of the subjects, whether these are physical or legal persons, who use their sensitive information on the network, such as they have access to e-banking sites from where they perform economic transactions, they have access to e-commerce sites where they perform commercial transactions, etc.. The attack is mainly carried out by installing encrypted keys with software or by analyzing the weaknesses of the software used by the victim. The data center is then attacked directly.

- Another criminal activity carried out through cyber-attacks is that of interfering with online data banks, such as data that work in the network of taxes, universities, banks, state police, etc.. By interfering with the systems of these entities, hackers are able to modify data, delete it or steal it for resale to a third party in the form of blackmail. Therefore, for structures of this level, cyber protection also requires a very high level of professionalism in the field of IT and the programs used to protect against attacks.

- Another criminal profile related to cyber attacks is to obtain data directly from commercial companies, mainly those that provide services in the field of intellectual property patenting, banking services as an intermediary (e.g. Paypal), other data

sensitive protected by law, etc..

- Finally, cybercrime is closely related to the category of *cyberspionage* (Peyry Y.M., 2017, 93).

The latter is aimed at capturing information of an industrial-technological nature developed by large companies, such as Apple, Microsoft, Huawei, or other giants in various fields such as in the field of development of military, space technologies or heavy metal industry, etc..

Cyberespionage activity consists of installing closed-circuit cameras, installing spy viruses to capture data, emails, text messages, messages sent through social networking platforms and any other form of communication capable of extracting information that can be captured through a closed system or network - the Internet (Teti. A., 2018, 85).

3.2 The figure of the Hackers

Continuing our research in cyberspace, the figure of the hacker plays a primary role, which carries terminological definitions.

Hackers are individuals who have specific skills regarding the world of computing. They are experts in programming, languages and technological operating systems, able to penetrate and discover the weaknesses of security systems.

Hackers have natural technological skills, which use them to stealthily access various operating systems and, consequently, generate various types of problems in these systems.

Hackers being computer experts, use technology to provide advantage to themselves or to others, in the event that their services are requested by third parties (Petherick W.A., Turvey B.E., 2012, 41). Usually the hacker carries out criminal activities punished by the law of the state against which he acts.

Hackers are divided into three categories (Enrici I., Ancilli M., Liroy A., (2010)):

a) **Crackers**: they are those who penetrate the most complex computer systems and at multiple levels of protection. They are usually subjects with extraordinary computer skills who act to infect the operating system in which they access or steal data to obtain their own economic advantage.

b) **Hackers**: subjects that penetrate into computer systems with a good level of security but not infallible and impenetrable. They are experts in identifying flaws in the system and attacking.

c) **Rodents**: subjects with basic computer skills, usually self-made, and that their mastery is mostly manifested in stealing passwords and private data, such as I.D. or credit card numbers entered online on e-commerce sites. Regarding the psychological profile of hackers, that is the reasons that push a hacker to act, the doctrine has identified 5 types (Lafrance Y., 2004):

1. **Occasional Hackers**: subjects who usually test their skills in the IT field, as an emotional rather than an intellectual drive.

2. **Political hackers** (driven by political reasons, of an emotional nature, in which they want to demonstrate their values and political beliefs)

3. **Organized crime** which uses hackers as its members and / or their collaborators to obtain economic benefits.

4. **Squatters**: they have the reason to access databases with relevant and sensitive information and then sell the data to the highest bidder.

5. **Insiders:** subjects who work for the company and act on the information system from within.

5/1 **Intruders:** subjects who illegally enter the company to extract information from the company's computers.

3.3 *The psychological profile of cybercrime*

Previously, we saw various types of criminal conduct which can be committed using the network and the computer connected to it. In this sense, even from a criminological point of view, the subject acting in the world of cybercrime has specific characteristics, sometimes very different from the common criminal.

In fact, in cybercrime it is noted that the agent has a very different perception of crime from how he would experience it in reality. In fact, very often he uses the Internet, but in some situations he does not even know that he is committing a crime, as the perception of illegitimate conduct is less felt. In this sense, even the perception that the victim is really being hurt is not perceived as real and as a situation liable to punishment. The fact that the computer intervenes between the agent and the victim means that the seriousness of the criminal conduct is also reduced (Douglas, J. E., Ressler, R. K., Burgess, A. W., Hartman, C. R. 1986, 401)

In cyberspace, he acts in order to carry out activities considered if not criminally relevant at least humanly such, he feels free and out of any legal restrictions. From a psychological point of view these subjects have their own characteristics such as: non-violent behavior, aptitude to control one's movements and construction of an action scheme; tendency to operate in solitude; less ability to conceive of oneself as a criminal; computer skills aimed at facilitating their work to achieve their interest.

4. *The role of INTERPOL in the field of cybercrime*

Analyzing the above, it is clear that the fight against cybercrime must be constant and sophisticated at investigative levels and disciplined within the proper legal framework. Thus, based on the fact that cybercrime is a borderless and widespread criminal activity that can be carried out from every corner of the globe, police forces, in particular the INTERPOL network, have developed a cooperation strategy focused precisely on the prevention and prosecution of cybercrimes.

Thus, through the *Global Cybercrime Strategy*, all the countries that are part of the structure of INTERPOL have the possibility of development and cooperation with the respective structures of the member countries of the network in order to fight against cybercrime.

The primary objective of the cooperation with INERPOL is precisely that the lack of a precise territorial definition, which brings for the police forces difficulties in action and immediate intervention, as often as communication systems, network security or unauthorized access to them are attacked by "hacker", must be communicated and solved with other specialized bodies and capable to identify the problem in real time (Global Cybercrime Strategy, 2017)

In this sense, INTERPOL, with the drafting of the cooperation strategy, has identified 5 areas in which countries cooperating with INTERPOL have the possibility of coordination (Cybercrime INTERPOL Strategy, 2019).

Thus, the 5 areas of interaction are:

- a) – Analysis and identification of typologies of cybercrime, trends of cybercrime and forms of its spread in the network;
- b) – access to digital data in cooperation with other government structures and the private sector in order to monitor data traffic and the level of their protection;
- c) – the creation of e-evidence, in the form of a data bank for the purpose of investigating and prosecuting the perpetrators of criminal offenses in the cyber field;
- ç) –coordination of collected digital information and physical information (criminal profiling) of hackers and their requirements about why, how, where, when and how they transmit, use or dispose of the information captured on the network and how they reuse it this information;
- d) –harmonization and interaction between the structures of all states (190 states) as part of the cooperation with INTERPOL for the creation of data uniformity and the enrichment of e-evidence not only with information but also the creation of a uniform criminal legislative structure, with the aim of prevention and prosecution of the perpetrators of criminal offenses in the cyber field, regardless of where they carry out their attacks.

5. *Results and discussion*

Based on the analysis of the structure of cybersecurity and its development in relation to the world of crime and the criminal figures that arise within it, it is clear that the field of cybersecurity is a multi-level habitat in which criminal activities of any kind and typology can be configured.

The fact that states, through legal techniques, seek to prevent, direct and in other cases punish “network abusers” shows that technology is both useful and dangerous to the normal functioning of life activities carried out through electronic communication networks and providing services to citizens regarding the use of technology.

Given the importance of computer systems, network security and the protection of sensitive data held in it, the prevention of crimes that can be committed through the use of the network, forces states to increase the level of information security, advance with research in the field of technology and the implementation of new forms of surveillance and intervention in the network.

Conclusions

From a legal point of view, Cyberspace is very vast, full of pitfalls and lacking precise regulation aimed at combating negative phenomena that arise from time to time.

The rapid evolution of technology is also transforming the *modus operandi* of criminals, who are increasingly exploiting IT outlets in order to perfect their criminal actions.

With this in mind, the internal security system of the states must also be updated, modified and adapted to the new network requirements. The cyberspace is creating new types of crimes that can be committed online, which many times, even if they have elements of a criminal matrix, do not find correspondence in the reference legislation.

The problem of violating computer systems, especially in countries where security barriers are weak, means that the citizens of that state are “naked” in front of possible

hackers, who benefit from it both for themselves and for third parties. It is therefore up to the legislator to introduce new laws aimed at guaranteeing a peaceful and serene “journey” into the world of technology, which without adequate prevention and protection measures would risk turning into a criminal arena, even if not visible in its traditional form of demonstration.

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Public procurement in Albania. Legal and institutional overview of public procurement from the perspective of European integration within Cluster One of EU negotiations with Albania

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Abstract

In February 2020, the European Union published the New Enlargement Methodology, which was approved by the Member States in the Council in March 2020. This Methodology groups the 35 chapters into 6 thematic groups of chapters. Group 1 of chapters (Cluster One) called "Fundamentals of the Enlargement Process" will open first and close last. Chapter 5 on Public Procurement is also included in this group.

EU rules ensure that the public procurement of goods and services in each Member State is transparent and open to all EU companies on the basis of non-discrimination and equal treatment. According to the European Commission Report for 2022, Albania is moderately prepared, the country has made good progress, especially by adopting further implementing legislation and creating an electronic complaints system. The report highlights that further efforts should be made to improve procedural compliance and prevent corruption in the procurement cycle. The new law on public procurement, which entered into force in 2021, is well aligned with the 2014 EU Directives on public procurement, while the law on concessions and public-private partnerships is partially aligned with the EU Directive on the award of concession contracts. The purpose of this article is to present the steps that Albania should take in the field of public procurement during the negotiation process with the EU. The article will focus on the legal analysis of the existing legislation, its degree of alignment with the *acquis communautaire*, the strengthening of the implementation and monitoring capacities, emphasizing the legal and institutional steps that Albania should take in this direction.

Keywords: public procurement, public contract, negotiation, European integration.

I. Introduction

After the 1990s, the public procurement law operating in Albania was Law no. 7971, dated 26.07.1995 "On Public Procurement".

In 2006, Albania signed the Stabilization-Association Agreement¹. For this reason, it was necessary for the legal framework to be more in line with this document and the new Law no. 9643, dated 20.11.2006 "On public procurement" was approved. This law was drafted and approved in order to address some of the problems encountered at that time. This law underwent continuous changes² since its entry into force, changes that aimed at further improving public procurement in Albania and increasing transparency. and bearing in mind that, starting from 2009 onwards, all public procurement procedures began to be developed electronically through the Electronic Procurement System (SPE).

The reform in the public procurement sector is one of the priorities for Albania

to move forward within the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union, and to ensure that public procurement complies with international standards and best practices. The reform began with a comprehensive analysis of the existing Albanian legal framework, which showed the need to improve primary and secondary legislation. This analysis also revealed the lack of clarity in the Law on Public Procurement, which caused a complicated and non-unified implementation of the different stages of a procurement procedure, depending on the contracting authorities³.

As a consequence of these problems, as well as with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of public contract review procedures, it was assessed as necessary to take further steps for the path that Albania has taken for EU integration, the approximation of Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and Council, dated February 26, 2014, on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC, and Directive 2014/25/EU of the European Parliament and Council, dated February 26, 2014, on procurement by entities that operate in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors and which repeals Directive 2004/17/EC and Directive 2007/66 EC of the European Parliament and Council, dated December 11, 2007 amending Directives 89/665/EC and 92/13/EC.

The Assembly of Albania adopted a new law, law no. 162/2020, dated 23.12.2020, "On public procurement". This law came as a new act, consolidated in relation to the many changes that public procurement legislation had undergone over the years, and partially aligned with several directives of the European Parliament and the Council. The new law entered into force on January 1, 2021, and aimed at creating an institutional framework of several levels that would oversee every public procurement process from the beginning to its end, with the aim of avoiding abuse, discrimination and corruption.

II. Albanian legislation on public procurement

The law on public procurement is one of the main instruments that the government has to achieve economic and social objectives, through a responsible, effective and transparent system of good use of public funds.

The express purpose of Law no. 162/2020 "On public procurement" is to improve the regulatory framework of public procurement in Albania, taking into consideration the various findings and recommendations of international organizations, such as: European Commission, World Bank, OECD/SIGMA, etc., facilitating the procurement process, both for contracting authorities and for economic operators⁴.

It has been prepared based on EU Directive 2014/24, Directive 2014/25 and Directive 89/665 EEC, 92/13/EEC 2007/66/EC on legal remedies and administrative review, with the aim of approximating Albanian procurement legislation with the relevant EU acquis.

Referring to the report of the law that was deposited in the Parliament of Albania by the Council of Ministers on 10.08.2020, the specific objectives that are intended to be

³ Treska, K., PHD Thesis "Management of public funds and public procurement" 2022, p.41, unitir.edu.al/doktoratura.

⁴ Council of Ministers, Report "On the draft law "On public procurement"" Section 1, p.1, accessed the link; <https://www.parlament.al/Projektligje/ProjektligjeDetails/52450>.

achieved with the approval of this law are:

- a) Align the Albanian legislation with the EU acquis, by transposing or adapting the specific directives, which cover procurement procedures in the classic sector, sectoral and administrative review directives;
- b) To significantly improve the current regulatory framework in the field of public procurement;
- c) To facilitate the participation of economic operators in procurement procedures;
- d) To avoid the blocking of the procurement process, due to the prolongation of the administrative appeal process;
- e) Sustainable procurement, in compliance with the principles of social and environmental protection;
- f) Ease in the procurement of social services and other specific services;
- g) Performance increase in the implementation of contracts, through strengthening the monitoring of this process.

The law has a technical character and is planned in the National Program for European Integration 2019-2021, approved by the Council of Ministers with decision no. 201, dated 10.4.2019⁵.

The need for this law came as a result of the necessity of adjusting the legislative framework for public procurement, based on the various recommendations of international organizations, such as: European Commission, World Bank, OECD/SIGMA, recommendations left by the High State Control, such as the result of various problems encountered in practice during the procurement process or even requests for changes from different institutions, according to the respective fields of competence⁶.

This law, according to its own relation⁷, brings innovations in several directions, such as:

- Clarification of the scope of application of the law, specific exceptions and mixed procurement contracts;
- Provision for the first time of the concept of reserved contracts and contracts between entities within the public sector. It is positively evaluated that in the provision on the object of the law, the meaning of procurement is clarified, which is broken down in the law as the purchase of works, supply of goods or services through a public contract by one or more contracting authorities or entities from the economic operators that are chosen by these authorities or contracting entities, whether or not the works, supplies of goods or services are used for public purposes.⁸
- The provision of preliminary and periodic information notices, as instruments that increase transparency, and enable economic operators to familiarize themselves with

⁵ Council of Ministers' Decision no. 201, dated 10.4.2019, "National Program for European Integration 2019-2021".

⁶ Treska, K., PHD Thesis "Management of public funds and public procurement" 2022, p.146, unitir.edu.al/doktoratura.

⁷ See: Këshilli i Ministrave, Relacion "Për projektligjin "Për prokurimin Publik"", Seksioni III, faqe 2. Mund të konsultohet në faqen zyrtare të Kuvendit, në link-un: <https://www.parlament.al/ProjektLigje/ProjektLigjeDetails/52450>. Akseluar së fundmi më: 23.9.2022.

⁸ Këshilli i Ministrave, Relacion "Për projektligjin "Për prokurimin Publik"", Seksioni III, faqe 2. Mund të konsultohet në faqen zyrtare të Kuvendit, në link-un: <https://www.parlament.al/ProjektLigje/ProjektLigjeDetails/52450>. Akseluar së fundmi më: 23.9.2022.

the data of a specific planned procurement facility in advance;

- The law defines low and high monetary limits, where for all procedures above the high monetary limit the provisions of the directive are preserved, while shorter deadlines are foreseen for procedures below this limit, that is, for national procedures;
- Provision of procurement procedures, according to relevant EU directives, providing for new procurement procedures, with stages, such as: competitive procedures with negotiation, competitive dialogue and partnership for innovation;
- More simplified procedures in the procurement of sector activities. The law treats in its entirety, both the procurement of the classical and the sectoral activities, with definitions in the articles that apply to both sectors, as well as a special chapter, with specific regulations for the sectoral activities (which includes activities that have to do with transport services, water, energy, gas, postal services, ports and airports);
- Facilitating the participation of economic operators in public procurement procedures, through the use of the summary self-declaration form, instead of some certifications issued by public authorities or third parties;
- Provision of the use of the evaluation criterion “the most economically advantageous offer”, which is identified on the basis of price and cost, using the cost effectiveness method;
- Submission of bid insurance, as a protective measure for the contracting authorities, in case of withdrawal of the bidder;
- In reference to the provisions in the directive, the law recognizes for the first time the concept of reducing the number of qualified economic operators in phased procedures, if such a thing is defined as a possibility by the contracting authority in the tender documents;
- Reduction of the minimum term of the period of exclusion of economic operators from the right to win public contracts, starting from 3 months;
- Anticipation of the waiting period, during which the contracting authority cannot sign a contract, a period which starts from the announcement of the announcement of the winner;
- Ease in the procurement of social services and other special services, which are subject to a special, simplified procurement regime;
- Increasing the controlling role of APP in terms of verifying the implementation of legality in procurement procedures, including canceled ones, and monitoring the implementation of contracts;
- Complaining of economic operators, both to the contracting authority and to the Public Procurement Commission, shortening the process of administrative review of the complaint deadlines;
- Provision for the first time of the concept of modification of contracts, as well as cases of invalidity of contracts.

The law partially approximates Directives 24/2014 and 25/2014 of the European Union, as well as administrative review Directives.

The law is divided into 17 chapters and 136 articles.

Chapter I includes articles that provide for the purpose, principles, and definitions for the terms used in the law.

It is worth noting that, in its entirety, the law was drafted for the procurement procedures of the classical and sectoral sectors. In this context, the terms “contracting authority” and “contracting entity” are used in the law, respectively for the classical

and sectoral sectors, making the application of its provisions clearer, according to each sector.

In Article 3, “Principles of selection” of the law, in contrast to the principles provided for in the previous law, other principles have been added, such as the principle of proportionality in procurement procedures, the implementation of obligations defined in the fields of environmental legislation, social and labor, and in the provisions of international agreements and conventions, ratified in accordance with the Constitution.

These forecasts are in accordance with the provisions in the relevant EU Directives⁹.

In Chapter II “Field of application and exceptions” and Chapter III “Specific situations” of the law, the scope of application for mixed contracts, mixed procurement covering some activities, exceptional cases, and specific situations is provided.

In addition to the exceptional cases that were provided for in the previous law, other cases that provide for both directives, both the classic sector and the sectoral, have also been adopted.

More specifically, this law clearly separates the special exceptions, which are not subject to the application of the law, provided in its article 7, as well as foresees for the first time the applicable provisions in the case of mixed contracts, which have as object two or more types of procurement, for work, supply or service.

Likewise, the legal regime applicable in the case of mixed procurement covering some procurement activities, of the classic sector, sectoral, defense and security or concessions, is provided.

Meanwhile, regarding international obligations, an exception from the application of the law is defined when the procedures are defined in international agreements/ international organizations or when contracts are fully financed by an international organization or international financial institution. For the first time, it is foreseen that, in case of co-financing, the parties decide on the applicable rules.

Also, the concept of contracts between entities within the public sector is also a new provision, where a contracting authority can award a contract, without being subject to the provisions of this law, to a legal entity over which it has a controlling role. This form of contracting (known as “in house procurement”) gives the contracting authorities the right to secure supplies, services or public works, using the capacities of the legal entities under their jurisdiction.

The law provides for the applicable legal regime in specific situations, where, especially for the first time, it is specified that for work contracts and service contracts related to public works contracts, subsidized by the contracting authorities, in more than 50% of the value, it is mandatory implementation of the procurement procedures provided for in the law. Meanwhile, if the authorities subsidize less than 50% of the value, they are obliged to take into consideration the selection principles established by the law, despite the fact that they are not obliged to apply the procurement procedures, provided by this law.

A provision to be evaluated in the law is the one according to which the authorities or contracting entities may reserve the right to participate in public procurement procedures to economic operators whose main goal is the social and professional integration of persons with disabilities disabled or persons in need or provide that

⁹ Treska, K., PHD Thesis “Management of public funds and public procurement” 2022, p.146-152, unitir.edu.al/doktoratura.

these contracts are implemented in the context of programs for the employment of persons with disabilities, provided that at least 30% of the employees of these economic operators or programs are disabled workers or employees in need, according to the provisions of the legislation in force.

Conclusions

According to the Annual Report for 2021 of the European Commission, Chapter 5 on Public Procurement «has an average preparation» and there has been good progress, especially through the adoption of the new law on public procurement and the national strategy for public procurement. In this report, it is emphasized that the recommendations given in 2020 have been implemented to the greatest extent. Albania is considered moderately prepared in public procurement and has made good progress.

Even according to the European Commission Report for 2022, «In terms of public procurement, Albania is moderately prepared, the country has made good progress, especially by adopting further implementing legislation and creating an electronic complaints system.»

The Report underlines that the legal framework on public procurement is largely in line with the 2004 EU directives on public procurement and procurement of utilities. The law on public procurement, further aligned the framework with the 2014 EU public procurement directives, but thresholds set for competitive procurement of goods and services, according to the Report, remain higher. Also, the Report states that the Law on concessions and public-private partnerships (PPPs) is partly aligned with the EU Directive on the award of concession contracts. Also, it states that all legal and financial instruments used in the area of public procurement and concessions, including inter-governmental agreements concluded with third countries for the implementation of joint projects, should comply with the principles of transparency, competition, equal treatment and non-discrimination.

Also, the Report provides the overview of the situation of public procurement in Albania: Albania has a central electronic public procurement portal on which it publishes tender and contract notices and other important information and guidance. Use of the portal is mandatory, including for low-value procurement.

The procurement plan register is prepared and posted online. By the end of 2021, the PPPs/concessions registry contained information on 229 contracts, six of which had been signed in 2021. The technical skills and capacity to design and assess concessions and PPPs require further development. The PPA applies a monitoring system to assess procurement performance, procurement compliance and contract implementation. In 2021, in line with the new law, contracting authorities submitted contract implementation plans for signed contracts to the PPA.

The new contract management electronic system, covering the full lifecycle of contracts, is being piloted. The contracting authorities need to continue to build capacity to manage public procurement processes in line with the new law through training of more officials in contracting authorities than in the previous year (1 555 persons trained in 2021 as compared to 970 in 2020)¹⁰.

Regarding integrity and conflicts of interests, the PPA issued instructions on the

¹⁰ European Commission Report for Albania 2022.

declaration of conflicts of interest by procurement officials and adopted a regulation on prevention of conflicts of interest in the exercise of public functions in the PPA. The State Audit Institution (SAI) reported 64 irregularities in public procurement, with an estimated loss to the state budget of around EUR 3.1 million (as compared to EUR 2.8 million in 2020, based on a smaller sample). In 2021, the PPA imposed fines on 102 employees and proposed disciplinary measures for 145 employees.

The Constitution and the Law on public procurement contain provisions on the right to legal remedy that are mostly in line with the Remedies Directive. The remedy system is easily accessible to economic operators, without discrimination, though subject to a fee. The PPC is an independent review body and its decisions can be challenged before the Administrative Court of Appeals.

The processing of complaints within the legal time limit improved further in 2021 to 89.2 % (as compared to 78 % in 2020) with a similar number of complaints received (768, as compared to 741 in 2020). In October 2021, the PPC launched a new e-appeals and e-complaints management system for electronic submission and management of cases as well as e-signature of documents and acts. The new system provides real-time statistics, monthly bulletins and information for interested parties, including for visually impaired people through a special access engine.

The capacity of the PPC and the Administrative Court to deal with a high number of appeals needs to be further improved.

The National Strategy for Public Procurement, as approved by the Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 850, dated 4.11.2020 constitutes the strategic framework for the development of public procurement in the Republic of Albania. This Strategy aims to identify all the main strategic objectives in terms of further improvement of the procurement system, as well as the necessary measures to be taken to achieve these objectives¹¹.

In February 2022, the Council of Ministers approved the National European Integration Plan (NEIP). In this document, the main achievements in the field of public procurement are reflected and there is a summary of the steps that Albania must undertake in the coming 3 years in the framework of fulfilling the obligations for membership in the European Union¹².

The NEIP underlines that the Public Procurement Acquis is based on general principles such as transparency, equal treatment, free competition and non-discrimination derived from the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), Part Three, Title IV and Title VII, Directive 2014/23/EU, Directive 2014/24/EU, Directive 2014/25/EU, Directive 2009/81/EC, Directive 89/665/EEC and 92/13/EEC, and from the jurisprudence of the European Court of Justice (ECJ)¹³.

Law No. 162/2020 “On Public Procurement”, approved in December 2020, broadly transposes EU directives as follows:

¹¹ National Strategy for Public Procurement, approved by the Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 850, dated 4.11.2020.

¹² National European Integration Plan 2022-2024, February 2022, Official Journal.

¹³ Also, it is noted that the requirements of the Stabilization and Association Agreement, which are included in Article 74 “Public Contracts”, determine that Albania and the EU will consider opening up the awarding of public contracts on the basis of non-discrimination and reciprocity, especially in the context of the WTO , as a desirable target.

- Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and the Council, dated February 26, 2014 "On public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC", as amended".
- Directive 2014/25/EU of the European Parliament and the Council, dated February 26, 2014 "On procurement by entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors and repealing Directive 2004/17/EC", as amended".
- Council Directive 89/665/EEC, dated December 21, 1989 "On the coordination of laws, regulations and administrative provisions regarding the implementation of review procedures for the awarding of public supply and public works contracts", as amended".
- Council Directive 92/13/EEC, dated February 25, 1992 "On the coordination of laws, regulations and administrative provisions regarding the implementation of Community rules for the procurement procedures of entities operating in the water, energy, transport and telecommunications sectors ", changed".

The legal framework in the field of public procurement is supplemented by other by-laws:

1. Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 285, dated 19.05.2021 "On the approval of public procurement rules";
2. Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 384, dated 30.06.2021 "On the form of communication in public procurement procedures";
3. Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 457, dated 30.07.2021 "On the approval of the common procurement vocabulary";
4. Standard tender documents;
5. Instructions, Recommendations, Technical Manuals

Part of Chapter 5 on Public Procurement is Law No. 125/2013 "On concessions and public-private partnership", which regulates concessions and public-private partnership in the Republic of Albania. This Law is partially aligned with Directive 2014/23/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of February 26, 2014 on the awarding of concession contracts.

The legal framework in the field of concessions and public private partnership is completed by other by-laws:

1. Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 280, dated 7.4.2020 "On the approval of the regulation on the way of operation of the concession/PPP project selection committee and the criteria for evaluating the requests of the contracting authorities for support with specialized expertise";
2. Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 285, dated 10.4.2020 "On the organization, operation as well as procedures and the level of service fees to be offered by the Concessions Handling Agency (ATRAKO)";
3. Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 420, dated 27.05.2020 "For some changes and additions to Decision no. 575, dated 10.7.2013, of the Council of Ministers, "On the approval of the rules for evaluation and awarding with concession/public private partnership", amended".

Regarding procurement in the field of defense and security, Law No. 36/2020 "On procurement in the field of defense and security" is estimated to be partially aligned with Directive 2009/81/EC of the European Parliament and the Council, dated July 13, 2009 "On the coordination of procedures for awarding certain contracts for work, supplies and services by contracting authorities or entities in the fields of defense and security, and which amends Directives 2004/17/EC and 2004/18/EC".

The legal framework for procurements in the field of defense and security is supplemented by other by-laws:

1. Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 1170, dated 24.12.2020 “On the approval of procurement rules in the field of defense and security”;
2. Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 1085, dated 24.12.2020 “On determining the rules for concluding contracts for the purchase of equipment/tools specially designed or adapted for military purposes, as well as weapons, ammunition or combat materials for operational purposes, including technology and software related to these goods, as well as for the composition, organization and functioning of the special commission for the classification of these contracts”;
3. Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 542, dated 29.09.2021 “On the rules, procedures and requirements for the protection of classified information during procurement in the field of defense and security”;
4. Standard tender documents.

Through the adoption of the new Law on public procurement in 2020 and all other by-laws, a very significant approximation of Directive 2014/24/EU and Directive 2014/25 has been achieved. / EU. Whereas, as far as the review of complaints is concerned, a very significant approximation of Directives 89/665/EEC and 92/13/EEC has been achieved.

Regarding concessions and public-private partnerships, the degree of alignment with Directive 2014/23/EU has been assessed as partial. Addressing the legal deficiencies and amending the law for the widest approximation of the Directive is necessary.

As for procurements in the field of defense and security, through the adoption of Law 36/2020 on procurements in the field of defense and security, the rules for procurements in this field in December 2020, as well as other by-laws, is achieved a very significant approximation of Directive 2009/81/EC.

In general, the EU acquis on Chapter 5 has been aligned to the widest extent by means of recent legal changes, with the exception of the area of concessions which will require further alignment.

By 18 April 2016, EU countries had to transpose the following three directives into national law: Directive 2014/24/EU on public procurement; Directive 2014/25/EU on procurement by entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors; Directive 2014/23/EU on the award of concession contracts;

These new rules simplify public procurement procedures and make them more flexible. The EU public procurement reform aims for less bureaucracy and higher efficiency¹⁴.

Albanian legislation is considered moderately aligned with these Directives. It is the duty of the Albanian institutions to fully align the Albanian legislation as soon as possible in fulfillment of the duties for Chapter 5 on public procurement, as a very important chapter within Cluster One of EU negotiations with Albania.

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¹⁴ https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/single-market/public-procurement/legal-rules-and-implementation_en

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Law No. 162/2020 "On Public Procurement";

Law No. 125/2013 "On concessions and public-private partnership";

Law No. 36/2020 "On procurement in the field of defense and security";

Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and the Council, dated February 26, 2014 "On public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC", as amended";

Directive 2014/25/EU of the European Parliament and the Council, dated February 26, 2014 "On procurement by entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors and repealing Directive 2004/17/EC", as amended";

Directive 2014/23/EU on the award of concession contracts;

Council Directive 89/665/EEC, dated December 21, 1989 "On the coordination of laws, regulations and administrative provisions regarding the implementation of review procedures for the awarding of public supply and public works contracts", as amended";

Council Directive 92/13/EEC, dated February 25, 1992 "On the coordination of laws, regulations and administrative provisions regarding the implementation of Community rules for the procurement procedures of entities operating in the water, energy, transport and telecommunications sectors ", changed".

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Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 285, dated 19.05.2021 "On the approval of public procurement rules";

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Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 285, dated 10.4.2020 "On the organization, operation as well as procedures and the level of service fees to be offered by the Concessions Handling Agency (ATRAKO)";

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for military purposes, as well as weapons, ammunition or combat materials for operational purposes, including technology and software related to these goods, as well as for the composition, organization and functioning of the special commission for the classification of these contracts”;

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Factors influencing the career choice in public and private sector

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Abstract

Newly graduated students face difficulty regarding the choice of workplace: where do I want to work? Every student looks for a suitable organization that matches his competences and personality. On the other hand, both the private and public sectors seek to recruit the most talented potentials, which leads to increased competition between these two sectors. Before choosing a career path, students should consider several factors. The purpose of this paper is to study and identify the main factors (internal and/or external factors) that push students towards a career in the public or private sector.

In this study, the target population is the students and the instrument used for data collection is the questionnaire with closed questions, which was distributed to 320 students (284 responses resulted valid). The analysis used is the logistic (or binary) regression. The results of the analyses show that external factors are statistically significant in influencing or encouraging students to choose the private sector for their career or employment, but the salary is not the main factor of their decision. The regression analysis shows, too, that the family has not the expected influence on the career choice of the students, they value more their skills and personal development for their career path. This study can be useful for companies to adapt to the needs of young skilled employees.

Keywords: career path, public sector, private sector, external factors, internal factors, students.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to identify the factors that more influence the career choice between private or public sector among students. Researchers have focused attention on comparing private sector with public sector and this study tries to find out which sector the students are oriented towards and what are the factors that push them towards this choice.

There is an increased interest among researchers on studying the performance of public and private sector. A great contributor of success in these sectors are definitively the employees. So, they have to be prudent while recruiting the employees and creating a pleasant work environment for them.

Many studies have been undertaken with the intention of identifying the factors that influence the career choice. O'Reilly & Caldwell, (1980), Thomas & Wise, (1999) studied the impact of both internal and external factors on career choice, but there are other researchers that only have listed the factors that impact the career choice.

People with strong interest in a specific field turn out to be successful professionals (Ilgen et al., 2003). Moreover, a person's skills have a strong influence on career determination (Bandura et al., 2001). According to many researchers, financial rewards, the opportunity to advance, to learn and develop, the public (including the family), the perception of the sector and the work environment are some of the main factors influencing the decision to choose a career.

According to (Chetkovich, 2003) the uncertainty of choosing an appropriate career path leads students to move between sectors until they stabilize in one sector. A suggestion would be for students to create as many experiences as possible in each

employment category or sector and gain as much experience as possible in the labor market until they focus on a specific and desired field.

2. Public sector versus private sector

Different studies have compared the employment in public sector versus the employment in the private sector. Researchers have highlighted many differences between public and private organizations, such as organizational differences, differences in employees motivation, perceptions, and behaviors. In most cases, the public and private sector does not produce the same goods, which makes difficult the direct comparison between them. The private sector is perceived to be more competitive than the public sector and therefore the work climate will be different (Graaf & Wal, 2010).

Employees in public versus private sector

The public sector is generally less competitive than the private sector in attracting and retaining a large number of qualified employees. Private sector employees tend to have more salary increase, more career choices, greater opportunities for promotions, and less job security. The public sector employees are paid through government taxes. Karl & Sutton, (1998) achieved some important results regarding employees' perceptions about the workplace. Employees in the private sector rated salary as the most important factor, while employees in the public sector ranked it in the second place. Public sector employees valued the work environment and interesting job more than private sector employees. The study also found no significant differences between sectors in terms of work safety. Which means that both sectors value this aspect of work. According to Stillo, (2011) in the study conducted for the public administration in Albania and the private sector, the interviewed employees were trained 4.13 times, while those in the private sector averaged 3.87 times. So there is an increase in training in the public administration, which shows a predisposition to increase the quality of the services offered.

Wages in public versus private sector

Buelens & Broeck, (2007) in their study have concluded that private sector employees value financial rewards more than public sector employees. Salary is a more important motivator for private sector employees than public sector employees. Snir & Harpaz, (2002) from the analysis carried out, have concluded that the main difference between the employees of these two sectors is that while the public sector employees were more concerned about safety at work and suitable hours, the private sector employees were more "materialistic".

Work environment in public versus private sector

Posner & Schmidt, (1982) in their study concluded that the personal and professional values and personality traits of employees in the public sector are not fundamentally different from those employed in the private sector. However, the work environment of these two groups is different in the way that 1) individuals perceive the opportunities associated with each sector by their professional profile; and, 2) the work environment in the public sector is perceived to be less favorable than that of the private sector. But Israel, (1992) notes that stable and convenient working hours are one of the main advantages of public sector employment for those with a high need to control their time at work, such as working mothers.

Efficiency in public versus private sector

An important role in terms of efficiency is thought to be played by motivation. Managers of private entities tend to maximize profits, while managers of public entities tend to maximize public interests. However, according to Mihaiu et al., (2010)

we cannot balance the efficiency of the public and private sectors. If we are going to do so, then it should only be done if the objectives are completely identical.

3. Factors affecting the carrier path

The career planning process includes job selection, organization selection, and self-development (Gutteridge, 1986). O'Reilly & Caldwell, (1980) categorizes the factors that affect the career path into external and internal. External factors are family influence, advice from others, salary and job location, while internal factors are personal feelings about work, interest in work, responsibility offered by work and the opportunity to learn more.

Hugh. J Arnold, (1978) has categorized these factors into 'work' and 'organization' factors. Work factors include: the opportunity to use skills and abilities, the possibility for autonomy and independence, responsibility; while organizational factors include: providing services and products to the public, salary and other benefits and flexible schedule. Also Thomas & Wise, (1999) have categorized the factors into work, organizational, diversity and recruitment factors. Unlike other researchers, who have categorized influencing factors, Jurgensen, (1978) does not categorize the factors, but simply lists them in opportunities for development, salary, good working environment, work safety, holidays. Similarly Rowe, (1976) does not categorize the factors but simply ranks them in opportunity to learn new things, salary, desired work location, opportunity to advance in career.

Wittmer, (1991) in his study found that employees in the public and private sector differ significantly in terms of preferences for wages, in helping others and their status. The study conducted by Chetkovich, (2003) shows that the uncertainty towards choosing an appropriate career path leads students to move between sectors until they stabilize in one sector. Many students believe that it will be easier to move from the private sector to the public sector rather than vice versa, the best way to start is in the private sector; salary, although it is not a main factor, is often mentioned by students as an incentive for choosing the sector; students with a public sector bent want to focus on a particular area and be able to make a difference. Zeger van der Wal, (2013) in the study conducted in Rotterdam and Amsterdam for the master's students in Business Administration, reached the conclusions that the motivations, values and perception that the students have about the public sector as well as the private influence their choice. The perception of the sector remains the main influencer.

As we can see from all these researchers, financial rewards, the opportunity to advance, to learn and develop, the influence of the public (including the family), the perception of the sector and the work environment are some of the main factors influencing the decision to choose a career path.

4. Methodology

The methodology consists of a combination of primary and secondary research. Based on the literature review and our understanding of the concepts, we created a questionnaire with close-ended questions, which is distributed online via email to students. Our sample has N=320, respondents, who have filled out the questionnaire, but 284 of the questionnaires filled resulted valid. They were selected through a random sampling of participants/students. The questionnaire consists of two main

parts. The first part had questions on the demographic profile of the respondents and the second part list the external and internal factors that influence students' choice. Specifically, 2 groups of factors have been defined. The *first group of internal factors* with skills/abilities, personal interests, and perception on the sector. The *second group of external factors* with *family influence variables*, which include the educational level of the parents, the profession of the parents, the income level; and *work environment variables*, which include wages, responsibility, opportunities for development and training, job security, responsibility, schedule flexibility. The measurement of these factors was carried out through a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was simple, easy to understand and completed by the students.

To answer the research question “what are the factors that more influence the choice of a sector by students?”, it is raised the hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: External factors have more influence on sector choice than internal factors.

Hypothesis 2: External factors do not have more influence on sector choice than internal factors.

5. Results

Multiple linear regression analysis, the most common model is used to explore the relationship between variables. The typical goal was to build a model using the best variables to explain the greatest variability in the response, and to accurately parameterize regression coefficients for those variables (Graham M., 2003).

5.1 Categorization of variables

Factor analysis was carried out, by using the Varimax rotation analysis method. Questions were measured based on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (not important at all – very important) and they resulted in a component.

The variable « *internal factors* » was measured as an average of three questions as in the table 1, after dropping the « gender » item, because its factorial weight was 0.214. This factor explained 47.18 % of the total variance. The results of the reliability analysis indicated a Cronbach alpha of 0.63

Table 1: Internal factor measurement questions

Questions	Factorial weight
Abilities and skills	.612
Personal interests	.640
Perception of the sector	.793

From the factorial analyses, the variable “*family influence*” results divided in 2 factors that explain 63.2% of the total variance (table 2).

Table 2: Family influence measurement questions

Questions	Weights Factor 1	Weights Factor 2
Educational background: Mother	.781	
Family income level	.748	

Educational background: Father	.678	
Parents' employment: Father		.901
Parents' employment: Mother		.675

To continue further with the analysis, we named the first factor "*educational level*" and the second factor "*parental employment*" (table 3&4). 58.3% of the total variance is explained by the first factor "*educational level*". The results of the reliability analysis indicated a Cronbach alpha of 0.695.

While the second factor "*parental employment*" explained 67.6% of the total variance. The results of the reliability analysis indicated a Cronbach alpha of 0.621.

Table 3: Educational level measurement questions

Questions	Factorial weights
Educational background: Father	.813
Educational background: Mother	.766
Family income level	.708

Table 4: Parental employment measurement questions

Questions	Factorial weights
Parents' employment: Father	.822
Parents' employment: Mother	.822

The variable « *work environment* » was measured as an average of six questions as in the table 5. Factor analysis resulted in a single factor with factor weights above 0.4. This factor explained 40% of the total variance. The results of the reliability analysis indicated a Cronbach alpha of 0.702.

Table 5: Work environment measurement questions

Questions	Factorial weights
Opportunities for advancement and training	.658
Schedule flexibility	.638
Responsibility	.637
Salary	.530
Autonomy	.509
Work safety	.500

The dependent variable "the students' choice of the public or private sector" is measured by one question, therefore it is not necessary to perform factorial analysis or reliability test. In our case, the dependent variable "*sector choice*" is a nominal variable that has only 2 categories; public sector and private sector.

5.2 Regression analysis

The logistic regression was performed to test the hypothesis. From the table 6, we see

that both independent variables taken into consideration are statistically significant. Among these two variables, external factors ($\beta=2.586$) have more influence than internal factors ($\beta=1.225$). This is also explained by the exponential function of the regression coefficients (ExpB). For the internal factors Exp(B) is 3.405 which means for every 1 unit or 1 point increase of this variable, the chances of students choosing the private sector increase by 3.405 times. For the external factors Exp(B) is 13.276 which means for every increase of 1 unit or 1 point of this variable, the chances of students choosing the private sector increase by 13.276. This means that external factors are more important in choosing the sector. The coefficient of determination $R^2 = 0.238$ which means that these two variables explain 23.8% of the variance of the dependent variable sector choice.

Table 6: Regression analyses for internal and external factors

Variables	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Internal factors	1.225	.345	12.602	1	.000***	3.405	1.731	6.698
External factors	2.586	.582	19.722	1	.000***	13.276	4.240	41.563
Constant	-13.063	2.107	38.436	1	.000***	.000		

Note ***: statistically significant at the .000 level.

The regression equation can be presented as follows:

“sector choice” = $-13.063 + 1.225$ “internal factors” + 2.586 “external factors”

The regression coefficients are positive, which means that the more the influence of external factors increases, the more students will be encouraged to choose the private sector. From this analysis, it results that external factors have more impact than internal factors in choosing the sector. With a 95% confidence interval, we say that *hypothesis 1 is accepted*.

Conclusions

The purpose of this paper was to identify the main influencing factors in the choice of a sector by the students. The process of choosing a career is a difficult one and students are faced with many factors that affect their carrier choice. They tend towards a sector that best meets their needs and requirements.

Based on the results of the analyzes carried out, there was a positive correlation of both factors with the sector choice. But we can say that the external factors ($\beta=2.586$) are considered more important by the students than the internal factors ($\beta=1.225$). The family influence, which includes the educational level of the parents, their profession, and the level of their income, did not have a great impact on the students' decision. Among the internal factors, skills and abilities had the greatest impact on career choice.

This paper provides even some strong recommendations to both students and institutions. Based on the analysis carried out above, students evaluate their skills and abilities as influencing the choice of their career, therefore it is suggested that young people develop these skills as much as possible through various courses, seminars, or trainings.

Public and private sector encounter obstacles in the recruitment, selection, and motivation of employees with the right skills for their organization. From the results of the analysis, the students evaluate and consider the external factors related to the

work environment more important.

Companies and institutions should develop more training programs so that employees can develop and become more skilled in the workplace. Also, the method of rewarding based on 'skills, knowledge and job performance' can be more efficient than just a good salary.

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ROC Curves and logistic regression in cardiology data

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Abstract

Nowadays it is a difficult task integrating statistics and other areas of research for a non statistical expert. An interesting use of statistical knowledge and statistical software and programming languages is a ROC (Receiver Operating Characteristics) curve.

A ROC analysis is very useful for evaluating the performance of diagnostic tests and also for the accuracy of a statistical model (for example logistic regression model). ROC curves have become a challenge these recent years because they are an interesting usage of statistics in medicine, radiology, natural hazards and also machine learning.

In this study both ROC Curves and Logistic Regression are used to determine the model fit for the impact of the risk factors in studying the significant factors in the survival of the patients with heart disease.

Keywords: ROC, AUC, statistics, cardiology, logistic regression.

Introduction

Nowadays it is a difficult task integrating statistics and other areas of research for a non statistical expert. An interesting use of statistical knowledge and statistical software and programming languages is a ROC (Receiver Operating Characteristics) curve. A ROC curve is a plot that depicts the trade-off between the sensitivity and 1- specificity across a series of cut-off points when the diagnostic test is continuous or on ordinal scale [5]. The AUC (area under ROC curve) is widely used to evaluate the performance of the classifiers and it performs well as a general measure to predict accuracy [9]. A measure of goodness of fit that is often used to evaluate the fit of the logistic regression model obtained is based on the simultaneous measure of sensitivity (the True Positive) and specificity (the True Negative) for all possible cut-off points [10]. Each point on the ROC curve represents a sensitivity/specificity pair corresponding to a particular decision threshold.

The AUC (Area under the Curve) provides a measure of discrimination and it is a good indicator for the model fit. AUC it ranges from 0.5 and 1 with larger values that indicate a better fit. As a general rule, an AUC of 0.5 suggests no discrimination, a value from 0.7 to 0.8 is considered acceptable, from 0.8 to 0.9 is considered excellent and more than 0.9 is considered outstanding (See [1]). Stent thrombosis is a thrombotic occlusion of a coronary stent. This is usually an acute process. While stent thrombosis can be a devastating event, fortunately is a rare event after percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) (See [8]). Several studies are conducted with these data with the intention to examine the impact of the risk factors in patients survival and stent thrombosis (See [2], [3], [4]). The focus has been in comparing the performance of several programming languages and statistical softwares and also using bootstrap in finding a good logistic regression model. But in this study the focus is on using the ROC curves in the case of logistic regression model in order to obtain an overall measure of goodness of model classification.

The dependent variable considered is Stent Thrombosis (coded 0 and 1), with value 1 that indicates the patients with stent thrombosis. There are 16 explanatory variables

in the model. Not all the variables are significant in the model, but only ten of them. SPSS is used to obtain the logistic regression model and also to construct a ROC curve. There are some difficulties that associate this study: First, it is not easy to find an appropriate logistic regression model to determine the significant factors and to obtain important conclusions in the area of study. Second, it is necessary to apply and interpret correctly the results obtained from ROC curves. And last, the results obtained must be compared with similar researches in this area. Nevertheless, in this study it can be noticed that the logistic regression model obtained is associated also with a very good value of AUC and there are important findings about the impact of the risk factors in stent thrombosis and the health of the patients studied.

Objectives

The aim of this paper is to use ROC curves in logistic regression in a study with data from cardiology. From the medical point of view it is considered very important indicating the significant factors in the logistic regression model and to identify the risk factors for stent thrombosis of the patients. From the statistical point of view it has its importance to construct a good logistic regression model and to examine the impact of using ROC curve to determine the model fit.

Various risk factors have been associated with stent thrombosis, so in this study a large number of variables is considered to analyze their impact in stent thrombosis of the patients.

Not only a logistic regression model is constructed to observe the risk factors for stent thrombosis of the patients, but also ROC curves are used to determine the model fit.

Methodology

1. Data in the case study

Study population is the group of the patients undergoing coronary intervention procedures at the Heart Catheterization Center in University Medical Center of Tirana "Mother Teresa" Albania.

Data records from the Cardiology Department are used in this study with a total of 2201 patients that include the following variables and: Gender (Male/Female), Age, Coronary Artery Disease-CAD (Type 1, Type 2 and Type 3), Diabetes Mellitus (Yes/No), Ejection Fraction-EJ (less than 40%) (Yes/No), Body Mass Index- BMI (greater than 30) (Yes/No), Smoking (Yes/No), Dyslipidemia-DYSLIPID. (Yes/No), Post Myocardial Infarction-PostIM (Yes/No), Dissection-Dissec. (Yes/No), Lesion type B2C (Yes/No), Diameter of Stent, Length of Lesion, Dual Antiplatelet Therapy (DAPT) (Yes/No), Stent type (Drug-eluting stents-DES, Bare metal stents- BMS) and Arterial Hypertension-HTA (Yes/No). Many of them are considered as risk factors for heart failure.

The main interest is to examine the impact of using ROC Curves for an overall measure of goodness of fit of the logistic regression model to determine the impact of these risk factors in the case of stent thrombosis of the patients studied.

2. ROC Curves

As described in [7], a ROC curve is a graph showing the performance of a classification model at all classification thresholds. This curve plots two parameters: True Positive Rate and False Positive Rate. True Positive Rate (TPR) is defined as follows:

False Positive Rate (FPR) is defined as follows:

(Where TP indicates True Positive, TN indicates True Negative, FP indicates False Positive and FN indicates False Negative)

A ROC curve plots TPR versus FPR at different classification thresholds. A logistic regression model could be evaluated many times with different classification thresholds to compute the points in an ROC curve, but this would be inefficient. Fortunately there is an efficient sorting based algorithm that can provide this information called AUC (Area under the curve). AUC measures the entire two dimensional area underneath the entire ROC curve from (0,0) to (1,1) and provides an aggregate measure of performance across all possible thresholds. AUC can be interpreted as the probability that the model ranks a random positive example more highly than a random negative example and it ranges in value from 0 to 1. A model whose predictions are 100% wrong has an AUC of 0; one whose predictions are 100% correct has an AUC of 1 (See [1], [6], [7], [9] for more about ROC curves).

3. SPSS

SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) is a statistical package and it is used by researchers to conduct advanced statistical analysis. In this study SPSS is used to obtain the results for multiple logistic regression model and also for the ROC curves and AUC. This choice is based in good results obtained from using SPSS in logistic regression in other studies.

Results and discussion

A total of 2201 patients hospitalized were included in this study. The covariates are: Gender, Age, Coronary Artery Disease, Diabetes Mellitus, Ejection Fraction, Body Mass Index, Smoking, Dyslipidemia, Post Myocardial Infarction, Dissection, Lesion type B2C, Diameter of Stent, Length of Lesion, Dual Antiplatelet Therapy, Stent type and Arterial Hypertension. Based on recent researches, many of them are considered as risk factors for stent thrombosis.

The main interest was to construct a model that determines the impact of these risk factors in stent thrombosis of the patients studied and especially to use ROC Curves in this study. The dependent variable is Stent Thrombosis, and it is a dichotomous variable with value 1 that indicates the patients with stent thrombosis and the value 0 that indicates the patients without stent thrombosis.

SPSS was used to perform multiple logistic regression to determine which factors are significant in the model, and the impact of each of them in the dependent variable following the hospitalization of the patients with heart failure. The following results are obtained:

Table 1 Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients

	Chi-square	Df	Sig.
Step	418.871	17	.000
Step 1 Block	418.871	17	.000
Model	418.871	17	.000

The Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients is used to check that this new model is an improvement versus the null model. The test gives a p-value 0 for our model (See Table 1), so our new model is significantly better. Cox & Snell R Square value is 0.173 and Nagelkerke R Square is 0.486 (See table 2).

Table 2 Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	552.185	.173	.486

Hosmer and Lemeshow Test of the goodness of fit gives a p-value equals 0.669 (See Table 3) which is greater than 0.05. So this suggests that our model is a good fit to the data.

Table 3 Hosmer and Lemeshow Test

Step	Chi-square	df	Sig.
1	5.803	8	.669

The Classification table gives an Overall Percentage 95.9 (See Table 4), so our model is correctly classifying the outcome for the 95.9% of the cases.

Table 4 Classification Table

Observed		Predicted		
	Stent Thrombosis		Percentage Correct	
	Yes	No		
Step 1^a	STH^b	Yes	2060	14
		No	77	50
	Overall Percentage			95.9

a. The cut value is .500

b. STH indicates Stent Thrombosis

There are 16 explanatory variables in the model, but only 10 of them resulted significant in the model. The significant variables in the model are marked with an asterisk in the table below (Table 5).

Table 5 Coefficients estimations, odd ratios, 95% confidence intervals (C. I) for the Odd Ratios (OR) and other results

Variables in the Equation									
Coeff.	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	OR	95% C.I. for OR			
						Lower	Upper		
	CAD*			38.446	2	.000			
	CAD(Type 2)*	1.395	.398	12.265	1	.000	4.036	1.849	8.811
	CAD(Type 3)*	2.482	.418	35.287	1	.000	11.965	5.276	27.139
	EF <40%(1)*	1.194	.252	22.373	1	.000	3.299	2.012	5.410
	Smoking(1)*	1.172	.345	11.543	1	.001	3.228	1.642	6.347
	Dyslip.(1)*	-2.738	.342	64.242	1	.000	.065	.033	.126
	PostIM(1)*	1.727	.276	39.168	1	.000	5.621	3.273	9.653
	AHT(1)*	-1.314	.313	17.579	1	.000	.269	.145	.497
	LesionB2C(1)*	-1.402	.321	19.055	1	.000	.246	.131	.462
	DAPT(1)*	-3.589	.414	74.995	1	.000	.028	.012	.062
	Diameter*	-2.112	.422	25.012	1	.000	.121	.053	.277
	Length	.008	.013	.439	1	.508	1.009	.984	1.034
	Gender(Male)	-.281	.273	1.059	1	.303	.755	.442	1.290
	Age	.024	.021	1.372	1	.242	1.025	.984	1.067
	Diabetes	.175	.259	.459	1	.498	1.192	.717	1.980
	BMI (>30)(1)	-.212	.303	.488	1	.485	.809	.446	1.466
	Dissec.(1)	1.046	.620	2.841	1	.092	2.845	.843	9.597
	Stent(DES)*	1.243	.340	13.335	1	.000	3.464	1.778	6.749
	Constant	3.495	2.066	2.863	1	.091	32.958		

SPSS is also used to perform ROC analysis. The results are as follows:

Table 6 Summary table from ROC Analysis

Case Processing Summary		
Stent Thrombosis	Valid N (listwise)	
Positive	127	
Negative	2074	

Table 7 AUC results from ROC Analysis

Area Under the Curve				
Test Result Variable(s): Predicted probability				
Area	Std. Error ^a	Asymptotic Sig. ^b	Asymptotic 95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
.920	.013	.000	.895	.945

a. Under the nonparametric assumption
b. Null hypothesis: true area = 0.5

ROC curve and the AUC value is presented in the figure above:

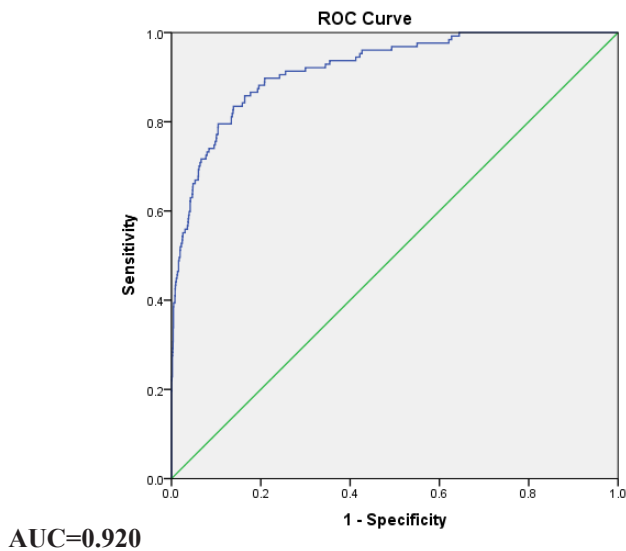


Figure 1 ROC Curve and AUC value for the Logistic Regression model obtained

Based on the above results the significant factors are: Coronary Artery Disease, Ejection Fraction, Smoking, Dyslipidemia, Post Myocardial Infarction, Lesion type B2C, Diameter of Stent, Dual Antiplatelet Therapy, Arterial Hypertension and Stent type. This is determined by the p- value in the corresponding column in the table, a p-value less than 0.05 indicates a significant factor in the model. An interpretation of the results of the Logistic Regression Model is as follows:

CAD (Coronary Artery Disease) is a significant variable in the model and as a reference category is the first type of disease. Based on the odd ratios, patients with the second type and the third type of disease are more likely to have stent thrombosis compared to the patients with the first type of disease and also the patients with the third type of disease are more likely to have stent thrombosis than those with the first and the second type.

Ejection Fraction less than 40% (EF in the table above) it is also a significant variable in the model. The patients with the value of Ejection Fraction less than 40% are more likely to have stent thrombosis than those with the value of Ejection Fraction more than 40%. In the case of Smoking based on its odds ratio a patient who smokes is

more likely to have stent thrombosis than a patient who does not smoke. For a patient with dyslipidemia, as noticed in the table above, a patient with dyslipidemia is not more likely to have stent thrombosis than a patient without dyslipidemia. In the case of Post Myocardial Infarction (Post IM), which is also a significant variable, a patient that is post myocardial infarction is more likely to have stent thrombosis than a patient that is not post myocardial infarction.

A patient with arterial hypertension (HTA) is not more likely than a patient without hypertension to have stent thrombosis based in the odds ratio. A patient hospitalized that had Dual Antiplatelet therapy is more likely to not have stent thrombosis than a patient that not had Dual Antiplatelet therapy. Also based on the value of odds ratio, a patient with Lesion type B2C is more likely to not develop stent thrombosis in comparison with a patient without this type of lesion.

Stent type is a significant predictor, and as can be seen in the table above, a patient with DES is more likely to develop stent thrombosis compared to a patient with BMS. Another significant predictor is the variable Diameter of Stent that is not a categorical variable like other predictors. The odd ratio value is 0.121, so for each additional increase of a one unit in the diameter of stents is associated with a decrease in the odds of having stent thrombosis (See [2]-[4], [10] for more about odd ratio interpretation in similar studies).

The results using ROC curves indicate a good model fit for the data. The Area under the Curve (AUC) is 0.92 which is a very good value (it is considered outstanding), with a 95% confidence interval]0.895; 0.945[and the AUC is significantly different from 0.5 since the p-value (Null hypothesis: True area equals 0.5) is $p=0<0.05$. This means that this logistic regression classifies better than by chance and it is obtained a very good model fit confirmed by using the ROC curves.

Conclusions

The main objective in this study was to use ROC Curves in Logistic Regression using real data from cardiology. Multiple logistic regression with SPSS is used with 16 covariates to construct a model to predict the *Stent Thrombosis* of the patients studied. Based on the results the model obtained is a very good model. The *Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients* indicates a significant model, *Hosmer and Lemeshow Test* indicates that the model fits the data and the overall percentage must be at least 80% (in the model this value is 95.9%). Factors that are significant in the model are: Coronary Artery Disease, Ejection Fraction, Smoking, Dyslipidemia, Post Myocardial Infarction, Lesion type B2C, Diameter of Stents, Dual Antiplatelet Therapy, Arterial Hypertension and Stent type.

Results from using ROC Curves indicate a good model fit for the data. The Area under the Curve is 0.92 which is a very good value (it is considered outstanding) and the AUC is significantly different from 0.5 based on the p-value. This means that this Logistic Regression model classifies better than by chance and it is obtained a very good model fit.

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Human security and its elements

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Abstract

Citizens of the world do not find themselves in a completely safe environment. Many individuals are threatened, not necessarily by military aggression or nuclear war, but by violence perpetrated against them by their own states, sometimes with foreign support. Moreover, many lives are threatened, not by military forces, but by the forces of nature, disease, poverty, crime and terrorism.

People have the right to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair. All individuals have the right to freedom from fear, freedom from want, equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and to fully develop their human potential. For this purpose, the need has arisen to discuss and define the notion of human security.

Human security means protection of basic human freedoms, freedoms that are the essence of life. Human security means protection of the vital essence of all human life in order to expand human freedoms and fulfill them. In contrast to state security, human security places the individual at the center of debate, analysis and policy.

Human security can be considered “an evolving right”, which consists of the individual’s claim to protection against seven types of threats and insecurities, identified by the 1994 United Nations Development Program Report. The United Nations has identified seven categories of human security: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political.

The concept of security has received little theoretical attention compared to what it deserves, as well as compared to other concepts such as justice, freedom, equality, obligation, representation and power. For these reasons, security is seen as a neglected concept by many authors.

Keywords: Human security, freedom from fear, types of threats.

Introduction

The concept of human security was first addressed by the UN, in 1994, in the United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report.¹ Through this Program, it was intended the change of the concept of security, not interpreting it simply as territorial, national, or global security, but focusing on expanding human security, including its seven components: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, political security.

The Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Program of 1994 constitutes a cornerstone and is an important achievement in the field of protection of human life and dignity and human security. In this program it is argued that ensuring “freedom from poverty” and “freedom from fear” for all people is the best way to tackle the problem of global security.²

The United Nations Development Programme, based on the Preamble of the United Nations Charter (1945), “to promote social progress and improve the standard of living in freedom”, argued two conditions that motivated the promotion of human security: freedom from fear and freedom from want.

A very important act issued following the work started in 1994 and further in 2005, is Resolution 66/290, October 25, 2012, of the UN General Assembly.³ This Resolution, which is based on the human security paragraph 143 of the 2005 World Summit, recognizes that development, human rights as well as peace and security are three interrelated and mutually reinforcing pillars of the United Nations. According to this Resolution, human security has two main aspects: Security from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression; Protection from unexpected and harmful interruptions in daily life, at home, work, or communities. Human security requires people to be the center of attention, regardless of state or community. Human security is closely related to peace, development and civil, political, economic, social and cultural human rights. Many attempts have been made to define “security”. In some cases, these efforts have taken the form of proposals to give high priority to issues such as: human rights, the economy, the environment, drug trafficking, epidemics, crime, or social injustices, in addition to the traditional approach with security from external military threats. Often the concept of security has been treated only to justify the interruption of civil liberties, the conduct of war and the distribution of income. The concept of human security, as a need of time, progress, development and human dignity, moved away from both the concept of security from external threats and the concept of state sovereignty. In contrast to state security, human security places the individual at the center of debate, analysis and policy. The individual is primary and the state is a collective instrument to protect human life and enhance human well-being.⁴

This is essentially what distinguishes human security, putting the individual at the center. According to Annan, this shift of attention from state to the individual should affect everything and not just the way of thinking about security. Anan writes about this in “We the people” that: No change in the way we think or act can be more critical than this: We must put people at the center of everything we do. There is no nobler gesture, and there is no greater responsibility, than making it possible for men, women and children, in cities and villages, all over the world, to have a better life.⁵ The concept of security has received little theoretical attention compared to what it deserves, as well as compared to other concepts such as justice, freedom, equality, obligation, representation and power. For these reasons, security is seen as a neglected concept by many authors.

Security is valued by individuals, families, states and other actors. One way to determine the value of security is to ask what life would be like without security. The most famous answer to this question is the one given by Thomas Hobbes, on the effect of life without security, “lonely, poor, dull, and short”.⁶ By this we mean that security is a precondition for enjoying values such as prosperity, freedom and whatever else.

Human security is essentially an effort to build a global society, where the security of the individual is at the center of international priorities, where international standards

³ United Nations, General Assembly, A/RES/66/290. (25 October 2012). docs.unocha.org/.../GA%20Resolutions.

⁴ Ramesh Thakur, (October 2011). The People vs. the State. The People vs. the State by Thakur, Ramesh (ebook) (ebooks.com).

⁵ Report of the Secretary-General. (27 March 2000). <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/410974>.

⁶ Thomas Hobbes, (05 August 2016). The Leviathan (1651), Part I, Ch. XIII. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/memory-arts...>

for human rights and the rule of law are advanced and built into a coherent network for the protection of the individual.⁷ The concept of human security also helps to narrow the differences between countries with developed democracies and countries with fragile democracies. The discourse and implementation of the principles of modern standards of security, institutional stability, order, law, relationship with the environment, majority-minority ratio, etc., strongly influence the alignment and comprehensive integration between states and peoples. The concept of human security aims to present the individual as an important factor in state life and beyond.

Components of human security

Human security as a human-centered concept seeks to address the root causes of insecurity. The concept of human security continues to develop and is constantly enriched from a theoretical point of view. By various researchers, in the field of security in general and especially that of human security, the latter is studied in its seven main components, which are:⁸ Economic security; Food security; Health security; Environmental security; Personal security; Community security; Political security.

1. Economic security

Security and economy are interdependent and in close interaction with each other. Where security is lacking, countries and regions are exposed to, or involved in, wars and conflicts. Any strategy of economic development or modernization of these countries has peace, the fight against organized crime and security as a prerequisite. Just as influential on security is the impact of economic development. Where there is no development, the risks of conflicts, instability, anarchy and political crisis increase significantly, seriously undermining security. History shows that the destruction of the economy in the countries of the former Eastern bloc was followed by the destruction of their security.

The interdependence of the economy and security was proven during the last global crisis, where countries with higher rates of poverty and weak institutions were affected by increased political risk and instability. The Covid-19 emergency was unprecedented in modern history. Officially declared a pandemic on March 11, 2020, it caused a crisis in public health, the global economy and political governance.

As a result of the pandemic, poverty increased and economic destruction caused consequences in many countries. Measures taken to contain the spread of the virus, such as repeated shutdowns, brought economic ruin, threatening almost half the workforce with the loss of their livelihoods.⁹

2. Food security

Food security is treated as the physical, social and economic opportunity of the

⁷ Lloyd Axworthy, (2001). Human Security and Global Governance: Putting People First,” Global Governance, Vol. 7.

⁸ Human security in theory and practice, (2009). Handbook_2009.pdf. hdr.undp.org/en/media/HS_ ↗.

⁹ Marco Di Liddo, (May 2021). The impact of Covid-19 on Human Security. <https://www.cesi-italia.org>.

individual to guarantee sufficient, safe and quality food, in order to meet vital needs and food preferences, for an active and healthy life.¹⁰

The World Food Summit of 1996 defined that food security exists “when all people, at all times, have access to sufficient food and calories to maintain a healthy and active life.” In many countries, health problems are related to severe food shortages, as well as many diseases due to malnutrition. There is a great debate in the world today about the ability of the Earth to feed its population. Some think that the world does not have enough food for everyone. The rest think that the world has the possibility to feed even more people than this, but the problem is in distribution.

Food security, access to basic food, is closely related to economic security. Many people who lost their jobs, or had their hours reduced during the Covid-19 pandemic, lost income and became food insecure. The lack of social protection, moreover, had consequences for people in both poor and rich countries.

3. Health security

Health security means access to health care and living in a safe environment. It aims to guarantee a necessary minimum of protection from diseases, especially from infectious, epidemic and poor living conditions. Health security is threatened by the poor health conditions of a given country and its neighbors; the increasing communication of individuals; emergence and re-emergence of transmissible diseases; extreme situations of natural and technological disasters, social violence; little social care for human health, etc.

According to the World Health Organization, 25% of preventable diseases are caused by poor environmental quality. The tendency to be affected by these diseases increases progressively in malnourished people. Three of the eight main Millennium Development Goals are for improving health.¹¹

In post-conflict societies, the interdependencies between health and security are more apparent. However, the spread of infectious diseases can be more deadly than world wars. In today's times, rapid urbanization and large interactions make us all more vulnerable to infectious disease threats that cross national borders.¹²

The last time the world was hit by a pandemic was between 1918 and 1920. Compared to World War I, which was one of the deadliest conflicts in human history, with more than 20 million civilian and military deaths, the Spanish flu of 1918, killed 50 million people.¹³ At the time of the appearance of the Spanish flu, the First World War was ending. Calculating the economic, social and political impact of the Spanish flu was not easy, since this impact overlapped with that of the First World War. A century later, the world once again faced a new pandemic phenomenon, the one caused by the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

First identified in China in December 2019, the virus quickly spread around the

¹⁰ Food Security, (1996, November 07), *The World Food Summit of 1996*. www.who.int/trade/glossary/story02.

¹¹ United Nations Millennium Development Goals. (2000). www.un.org/millenniumgoals/.

¹² Kathryn E. Bouskill and Elta Smith, (2019) *Global Health and Security: Threats and Opportunities*, Rand Corporation., <http://www.jstor.com/stable/resrep19904>.

¹³ Niall P. A. S. Johnson and Juergen Mueller. (Spring 2000). Updating the Accounts. *Global Mortality of the 1918-1920 “Spanish” Influenza Pandemic*, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*. Vol. 76, No. 1. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44446153>.

world. In the case of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is believed that there were several factors that influenced the spread of the virus: the underestimation at the beginning of the risk of spreading outside of China; the speed and globality in the movement of goods and people as well as the lack of preparation of national health systems for a very high number of infected people. The outbreak of the pandemic has had economic, security, social and psychological consequences. The measures taken by governments to stop the contagion have had direct consequences on the world labor market, on the productivity of the global economy, on the growth and education of younger generations and on the mental health of individuals.¹⁴

The pandemic is a phenomenon that does not only influence the security of states and cannot be addressed only at the state level. The idea that infectious disease control cannot only be a priority of national public health systems, but must also be coordinated through multilateral institutions, is a 20th century phenomenon.¹⁵ This phenomenon became more visible with the creation of the World Health Organization in 1948.

4. Enviromental security

Environmental security as a concept is concerned with the need to protect people from destruction and deterioration of environmental conditions in the short and long term.

Al Gore in 1992 would identify natural threats in several categories, similar to the level of military operations: Local or tactical threats - the risks that come from water pollution, air pollution, illegal waste disposal, etc.; Regional risks – problems such as acid rain, groundwater pollution, oil pollution; Strategical risk – global warming. Now, in the conditions of unforeseen technological developments, environmental security is considered as a matter of special importance of national security and directly affecting human security.¹⁶

5. Personal security

Personal security is a limited concept within the broad field of human security, which deals with the protection of the individual from physical violence and various abuses, by state, non-state, or individual actors. Personal security means the various conditions and factors for the individual to feel safe.

The founder of the theory of individual security, William Blatz,¹⁷ treats individual security as an issue that accompanies a person throughout his life, starting from childhood, as a personal conviction of the permanent presence of threats and insecurity. According to researcher Buzan, individual security today more than ever is treated as “freedom from fear”.¹⁸

¹⁴ Global Health Security Index 2019, (October 2019). <https://www.ghsindex.org/>.

¹⁵ Katheryn E. Bouskill and Elta Smith, (2019) Global Health and Security: Threats and Opportunities, Rand Corporation., <http://www.jstor.com/stable/resrep19904>.

¹⁶ Institute for Environmental Security, (May 2004). “What is Environmental Security?”. www.envirosecurity.org.

¹⁷ Mary D. Salter Ainsworth. (2010). Security and Attachment. www.psychology.sunysb.edu/.../ainsworth_security.

¹⁸ United Nations Development Program (UNDP). (1994). “New Dimensions of Human Security

Personal security is related and interdependent with economic, food, environmental health, community and political security. All these components complete the links of human security and directly affect personal security. Individual or collective actors and factors, internal or external, state or non-state, directly or indirectly affect personal security.

6. Community security

Community security, unlike other components of human security, deals with the freedom and security of a person, or a group of people, to protect and develop their social identity. This concept took off especially after the end of the Cold War, when they emerged dangers and threats of ethnic and nationalist natures.

Social threats, related to social identity, can be found within any given country. Weak states are more vulnerable to problems of cultural identity and community insecurity.¹⁹ Social security is closely related to the characteristics of the society and community in which one lives. The members of a certain community have common values and identities, have special relationships among them, they cooperate closely for the benefit of their social group. These communities try to identify themselves, as well as preserve their common values created for a long time, in the face of any threat that could endanger them. National minorities are what mostly binds and separates at the same time, the countries they are between.

In Albania, we have lived together with our neighbors, who can not be changed, for centuries, with good and bad. Europe has wonderful examples where age-old enemies have turned into reliable friends, relying also on the role of national minorities. In our concept of dealing with national minorities, it is good that they are always treated as bridges of cooperation, not only national minorities, but also ordinary individuals, events and various historical dates. It is important to deal with those issues that unite us and not that divide us.

7. Political security

Political security for people means that they live in a society that respects basic human rights.²⁰ The concept of political security is based on democratic governance and the protection of human rights. According to the two basic principles of democracy, all citizens are equal before the law and enjoy universally recognized rights and freedoms. Democracy, among other things, includes political pluralism, equality before the law, civil and human rights, due process, and the elements of civil society. Violations of human rights in most cases are committed by the state itself, with the aim of protecting "national security". Such a policy often leads to the loss of government legitimacy and eventually the collapse of the state. Control of information and media, physical repression, threats of detention or imprisonment during political protests are examples of political insecurity.²¹

“(New York: Oxford University Press).

¹⁹ Barry Buzan. (2008, March 01). People, States and Fear, p.120.

²⁰ Marco Di Liddo, (May 2021). The impact of Covid-19 on Human Security. <https://www.cesi-italia.org>.

²¹ Lily Hamourtziadou. (2019, December 01). Security challenges of the 21st century: new challenges and perspectives, Journal of Global Faultlines. <https://www.scienceopen.com/hosted-document?doi=10.13169/>

The Covid-19 pandemic was not only a health and economic crisis, but also emerged as a political crisis, in which authoritarian leaders used the pandemic to suppress opponents and tighten their grip on the levers of power. Authoritarian governments have used power to limit human rights and expand surveillance.

Conclusions

Human security aims to protect people from critical situations and threats. Human security aims to effectively address human aspirations. This means the creation of political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together enable people to build the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity.²²

The concept of human security is relatively new and as such needs to be developed, studied and better understood, both in relation to general state security and in relation to human rights. Security does not mean absence of threat, but protection against a threat. If there are no threats, security will not be necessary and the global social and political game, must be reestablished. The concept of human security makes it possible to expand the concept of security in general, including within it not only problems in relations between states, but also those within states. Risks and threats of a non-military nature that may exist within a state have direct consequences at the local, regional and global levels. Governments have the primary role and responsibility to ensure the survival, well-being and dignity of their citizens. The international community should provide the necessary support to governments, at their request, by strengthening their capacity to respond to threats. Human security requires greater cooperation and partnership between governments, regional and international organizations, and civil society.

Many of the threats to human security are not new, so it is unjustifiable to consider such threats as poverty and disease as “a sad but inevitable aspect of the human condition”.

Human security is considered more comprehensive and more important than state security. Human security puts people in the center, its primary aspect is to monitor how people live in society, how much they freely exercise their choices, how many social and economic opportunities they have, whether they live in peace or in conflict.²³

Economic security means having a stable income, preferably through paid work, but also other measures that provide income for those who are unable to earn on their own. Food security requires adequate access to food, food that is vital to health and well-being. Health security means having access to health care and protection against diseases, especially those related to malnutrition and environmental degradation. Environmental security addresses environmental challenges caused by climate change, deforestation, ecosystem damage and human conflict.

Personal security concerns threats of physical violence by a person’s state, other states or groups of people through war, terrorism, torture, sectarian violence, genocide or

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²² Commission on Human Security, Human Security Now. (2003). www.unocha.org/humansecurity/human-security-now.

²³ Human Development Report. (1994 January 01). Human Development Report 1994 | Human Development Reports (undp.org).

ethnic cleansing.²⁴ Community security is the security that individuals receive within a group, creating a sense of belonging and identity that is based on shared values and policies. Political security requires the freedom to govern in a way that respects the basic human rights protected by democratic institutions.

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The impact of monetary and financial changes after the Covid-19 period - Comparative analysis of systems in developed countries and in Albania

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Abstract

This study examines the factors determining the profitability of commercial banks in Albania. These factors are categorized into two groups, which include internal factors, which are specific banking factors, and external factors, as the influence of macroeconomic factors. The main objective of the study is to determine the internal factors that affect the profitability of Albanian commercial banks and to make recommendations, which will help the banks for the strategies that they will take or actions from the most different for the policies that they will choose to follow. The analysis is based on the quantitative research method, but it is also supplemented by a qualitative method. These quantitative data were obtained from the financial statements of selected commercial banks, from INSTAT, the Bank of Albania, the Association of Banks, in order to make the empirical analyses necessary to identify and measure the determinants of banks' profitability. Multiple regression analysis with dummy variables was also used, which helps us to measure the effect that the selected factors have on the banks' profitability.

Keywords: Quantitative and qualitative data, Profitability, ROA, Banking specific factors, Macroeconomic factors, Albania, banking system.

1. Introduction

The banking sector worldwide has experienced major transformations in its operating environment. Various countries have eased controls on interest rates, reduced government involvement and opened their doors to banks. Due to this reform, companies from developed countries have become more visible in developing countries through their subsidiaries and branches. Since 1980, many foreign banks have established their branches or subsidiaries in different parts of the world. Even in Albania in the last decade, the number of foreign banks has increased significantly and the number of domestic banks has decreased.

The role of the bank remains at the centre of financing economic activity and its efficiency can exert a positive influence on the overall economy, as a profitable and healthy banking sector is better able to withstand negative shocks and contribute to the stability of the financial system.

The development of the private sector¹ is essential in ensuring the continuity of economic growth. Of course, given that the vast majority of the private sector consists of small and medium enterprises, it is understandable that the multidimensional support of their development is at the heart of the development philosophy of this sector. The development of small and medium enterprises is a primary element for creating a sustainable economic development, reducing poverty and alleviating social problems by bringing about a more equal distribution of income and an increase in employment.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the financing strategies used mostly by financial difficulties of businesses in the city of Tirana, Vlorë, Durrës, Shkodër, Elbasan etc, and to analyze the financing challenges that these businesses face most at a time when economic growth is negative.

More specifically the objectives of this study are:

- a. To present the financing methods which are mostly used by activities and businesses in the city of Tirana, Vlorë, Durrës, Fier, Shkodër, Elbasan etc.
- b. To present the level of investments made by Albanian businesses on post covid period.
- c. To present the challenges and barriers faced by businesses in Albania
- d. To present the level of loans received by businesses in the city of Albania
- e. Analyze the impact that the tax burden has on credit to enable the expansion and incentive of businesses.

In the study hypothesis we will focus on the research question such as: What strategies do small businesses use in Albania in order to increase profit and attract new customers?

- a. What are the most successful activities in Albania and the strategies they use?
- b. What impact is the COVID-19 pandemic having on these businesses?

The Quantitative methodology was used to conduct this study as the analyzed data to derive the results and conclusions of the study are numerical data. The resources used are primary and secondary. Primary data were collected through questionnaires, while secondary data were obtained from the Bank of Albania, Institute of Statistics Albania (INSTAT), World Bank, Municipalities of Tirana, Vlorë, Durrës and Fier regions and for the literature part books and other materials were used by foreign authors and Albanian authors.

2. Methodology

In some studies, based on the methods used, the information obtained may be of a qualitative and quantitative nature. The study is based on obtaining information through questionnaires, which are constructed with closed-ended questions. The data obtained from them are quantitative and qualitative in nature; therefore statistical techniques can be used for their processing based on the objectives of the study.

1. Quantitative research is pervasive in nature and is used by researchers to understand the effects of various promotional inputs on the consumer, enabling marketers to “predict” consumer behaviour.
2. This type of search addresses questions about who, what, when and where consumers buy.
3. Research can be considered exploratory or confirmatory. Confirmatory research tests hypotheses.
4. The results of these tests aid in decision making, suggesting a specific course of action. Exploratory research takes different approaches. They may be needed to develop ideas, leading first to the development of research hypotheses.

3. Brief history of the banking system

In Albania, due to the backwardness in the level of development of capitalist relations in production, the heritage in the field of market economy institutions has been poor and their creation was done later than other European and Balkan countries.

The performance of the banking system can be grouped into three moments:

- a) Creation of proper commercial banks;
- b) The development of banks after the collapse of pyramid firms
- c) The development of banks after the start of the process of privatization of state banks.

In terms of total assets, in 2020 there was an increase in the share of banks with Albanian capital and a decrease in the share of banks with European capital. This increase in the share of banks with Albanian capital was found both in the loan portfolio and in deposits, whose weight increased. In December 2020, these banks account for 30.58% of the total assets of the banking system and 35.42% of the total loan portfolio. During 2020, the assets of the banking system increased by 7.22%, while the loan portfolio increased by 5.76%. The quality of the loan portfolio marked a slight improvement during the year, where the indicator of non-performing loans decreased by 0.26 p.p. reaching the level of 8.11% at the end of the year.

The activity of the banking sector during 2021 has expanded. The increase in activity is a result of the increase in investments in securities and loans for the economy. The assets of the banking sector expanded by about 8% during the period and by 12% compared to a year ago. The banking sector has developed normally the main functions of the activity and has supported the economy with financing.

The reported value of assets increased by ALL 130 billion during the period, reaching approximately ALL 1,770 billion. The main contribution to the growth of assets has been given by the expansion of investments in securities by about 60 billion ALL and the lending activity by about 50 billion ALL.

The Bank of Albania estimates that in the second half of 2021, the activity of the banking sector developed in a stable manner. Deposits and loans grew rapidly, credit quality continued to improve, and other indicators of financial stability remained at appropriate levels. As a whole, the banking sector's exposure to risks was presented as controlled. The economic developments throughout 2021 were quite positive, although the economic growth, the decrease in the unemployment rate and the shocks from the supply side were accompanied by increased inflationary pressures at the end of the period.

The financial system has an irreplaceable role in economic activity. This system performs two main functions:

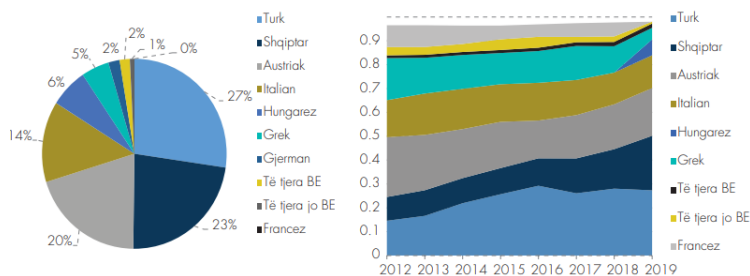
- The financial system makes it possible to create means of payment in the economy.
- The financial system realizes the process of financial intermediation: the channeling of savings (of households) into loans and investments (firms).

The financial system of a country is composed of financial markets (non-banking sector) and financial intermediaries (banking sector)..

- **Financial markets** were the places where the exchange of financial assets was carried out. Recently, the birth of new information technologies has made the financial market more understood as a set of systems and procedures that enable the exchange of financial assets, rather than a geographical space.

○ **Financial intermediaries, or financial institutions,** perform the mediation function through the collection of funds of individuals who wish to invest their savings and make these funds available to companies or firms seeking financing. Financial intermediaries are participants in the financial market.

Non-bank financial entities are financial institutions that carry out financial activities, defined in the legal and regulatory framework, such as lending, microcredit, factoring, financial leasing, payment and money transfer services, issuing electronic money, currency exchange, etc. The non-banking sector has its early beginnings quite modestly, since 1996 with the creation of the state stock exchange (Tirana Stock Exchange), which was never included in the privatization process, keeping the capital market in a phase of stagnation. Also, the liberalization of the insurance market began only after 1998, while the first stages of the development of collective savings and investment schemes (pension and investment funds) began to be created after 2012.

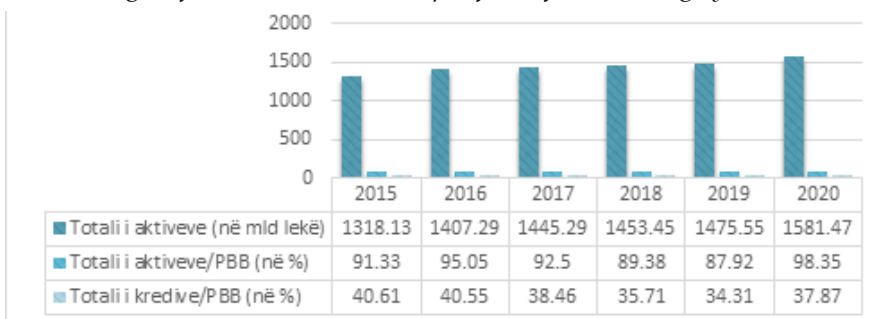


Graph 1: Source: Capital structure in the banking system, according to origin and its progress over time, 2020, pg 29, Albanian Bank Report

Based on these two definitions for the types of financial system, it is clear that our country belongs to the first category of financial systems based on the bank, so we are a financial system centered on the banking system and as part of the non-banking financial sector, Albania has a market where the capital market is almost absent, even though many market operators are licensed (brokerage firms, custodians, investment funds, pension funds, life insurance, etc).

On the other hand, despite a clear presence of collective savings schemes (investment funds and pension funds, life insurance schemes) over the last 5 years, their further development has been strictly hindered by the lack of a market internal capitals and alternative investments.

Graph 2: The weight of total assets and loan portfolio of the banking system to GDP



Source: Capital structure in the banking system, according to origin and its progress over time, 2020, pg 11, Albanian Bank Report

The banking system is the core of the financial system in transition economies. Therefore, its correct regulation and operation are matters of great importance in the stability of the financial system. This role has been entrusted to the Central Bank, which is the guarantor of the stability of the banking system.

○ **Information technology.** The application of the latest IT technologies will be the main force behind the development of the banking industry in the future. The computerization of information processing will reduce the cost of transactions and, through electronic banking (e-banking), will change the way customers communicate with banks.

The result of this is the taking of a greater risk by the banks.

Numër	Bankat	Degët	
		2020	2019
1	Alpha Bank Albania	34	33
2	American Bank of Investments	21	23
3	Albnaian National Bank	61	67
4	"Credins" Bank	58	58
5	FIB Albania	14	14
6	"Intesa Sanpaolo" Bank Albania	35	35
7	Pro Credit Bank	5	5
8	Raiffeisen Bank Albania	74	76
9	OTP Albania	38	37
10	Tirana Bank	35	35
11	Union Bank	32	33
12	United Bank of Albania	6	6
	TOTAL	413	422

Traditionally, the banking industry has been a highly protected and regulated business. Finally, deregulation (the trend of reducing and simplifying laws) has changed the face of the banking industry around the world. Instead of controlling deposit interest rates or credit limits, the focus of banking regulation and supervision has now shifted to defining appropriate procedures and systems to eliminate risk. In the past, the banking segment enjoyed an almost monopolistic situation within the financial intermediary sector. Today, an increase in competition is being observed not only in the banking sector but also in the financial sector.

○ **Consolidation.** Deregulation of the sector has led to a rapid consolidation of the sector and an increase in bank mergers. These mergers are justified by the economies of scale and cost reductions they provide. This does not mean that a small bank cannot be efficient, but the number of such banks will decrease in the future..

○ **Privatization and foreign ownership.** Privatization, mostly in foreign ownership,

is another clear trend in the banking industry. State and “national” banks are losing ground as a result of globalization. This process requires a broader vision and an international strategy to survive in this sector.

○ *The changing behaviour of banks.* A recently observed trend is the fact that firms are increasingly turning to the financial market for funding (mainly stock exchanges), bypassing banks. However, a number of companies, mostly large ones, have the real opportunity to go directly to the financial market. Small and medium-sized businesses will continue to rely on banks to secure financing.

Licensing and Supervisory Authority	Albanian Bank			Financial Supervision Authority			Financial intermediation
The financial system	Banking sector	IFJB	SHKK	Insurance company	Pension funds	Investment funds	
2011	86.1	2.6	0.8	1.5	0.0		91.0
2012	86.9	2.7	0.8	1.6	0.0	1.2	95.4
2013	91.4	2.6	0.7	1.6	0.0	3.7	100.2
2014	92.7	2.8	0.8	1.8	0.0	4.6	102.7
2015	91.9	2.7	0.7	2.0	0.1	4.7	102.0
2016	95.5	2.8	0.6	2.0	0.1	4.5	105.5
2017	93.2	2.9	0.5	2.0	0.1	4.7	103.4
2018	88.8	3.2	0.6	1.9	0.1	4.2	98.8
2019	87.2	3.9	0.6	2.0	0.2	4.0	97.9
2020	97.8	4.2	0.7	2.4	0.2	4.2	109.5
2021	93.8	4.0	0.7	2.2	0.2	4.1	105.1

Tab1: The weight of the segments of the financial system to the GDP* in years (%)

Secondary data. For the realization of this study a methodology was used that combined primary data with secondary ones. Among the secondary data, an important place is occupied by the contemporary literature on the impact of the pandemic in the world and its impact on businesses, especially activities taking Albania as a concrete case. This literature served to formulate the hypotheses and theoretical model presented and tested in this paper. Also, in the study, other sources of secondary data were used such as: reports of international organizations; various publications and articles. to serve the chapters that deal with the panorama of this issue. Some of the secondary data were provided through the use of electronic libraries of American and European universities.

Primary- data. Special attention was paid to the primary research conducted online which is a novelty for this study. Often times the information needed to solve the problem is not found in the internal or secondary data so we have to rely on the primary data. The research was designed in such a way as to ease the cost of gathering information and at the same time to achieve satisfactory results that would help to draw the most accurate conclusions. Primary data include the questionnaire conducted with the help and advice of the lead lecturer. After structuring it and working on Google Doc, it was possible to provide primary data.

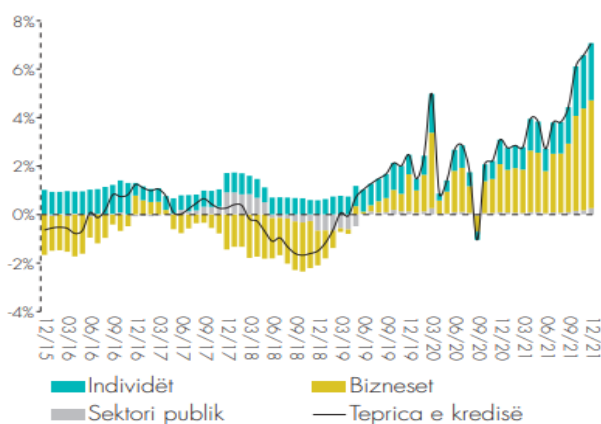
The questionnaire, as explained above, was piloted, so there was no ambiguity

regarding the questions posed in the completed questionnaires. It was then built into Google Forms and distributed electronically to applications such as: email etc.

The disadvantage of this technique was that the owners / managers could not be contacted in shopping malls, supermarkets, markets, streets, houses, workplaces as the situation itself does not allow us to be close to other people and have close contact with them. Maybe this was a limitation to fill out more questionnaires, but the important thing was that his goal was achieved.

The results indicated a positive relationship of capital adequacy and profitability with strong statistical significance in the ROA model.

This conclusion is consistent with expectations, since a bank with a strong capital position is able to pursue business opportunities more efficiently and has more time and flexibility to deal with problems arising from losses. Unexpected, also bringing increased profitability.



The stock of credit granted by banks has expanded rapidly during the period of 2021. The credit surplus at the end of the period reached 670 billion ALL, being 7% and 10% higher than six months and a year ago. The main impact on the expansion of the loan stock during the period was given by the increase from the new loan, which during the period was about 40% greater compared to the new loan registered during the first half of the year. All types of loans according to term, maturity and subject, have increased during this period. The biggest growth was recorded in the portfolio of foreign currency loans (10%), business loans (6%) and short-term loans (15%). The annual change in the stock of foreign currency loans was 12%.

For the analysis of the relationship and statistical significance of the beta coefficients of the independent variables, we looked at the values obtained by the probability P, so we reach the conclusions that:

- Return on Assets has an impact on banks' profitability.
- The number of assets has no impact on banks' profitability.
- Loans granted have no impact on banks' profitability.
- CAR has an impact on banks' profitability.
- The number of employees has no impact on the profitability of banks.

Recommendations

Internal banking variables appear very important in the profitability of banks; however, it is very important to include external factors in studies to learn how they affect banks. Therefore, I recommend for all banks to take into account the macroeconomic environment when designing strategies and to have macroeconomic factors under control if they want to increase profitability.

- The adequacy of capital was a very important indicator of the profitability of commercial banks in Albania and greatly influenced the increase in profitability; it is also an indicator that increases the security of the bank in the public. Therefore,

I recommend that focusing on the improvement of this indicator can increase the possibility of improving the profitability of commercial banks, as well as their performance. The banks themselves should have it in the focus of all their activity.

In the statistical analysis of this study to investigate the determining factors that affect the profitability of commercial banks in Albania, not all possible factors that may be influential have been included. Therefore, I recommend that other studies include factors such as ownership, deposits, government policies, number of branches, interest rate, technology, taxes, etc.

- In the Albanian banking system, the phenomenon of reducing the number of banks from year to year is being verified. This will reduce the number of banks in the banking system and will increase the size (assets) for the banks that are in the market and in this way we will have an increase in their profitability, therefore it is very important to monitor the internal and external indicators that affect the increase or decrease in profitability.

- Banks during the last years are focusing on the development of technology and innovation of banking services. Banks are moving towards digitization and online services, reducing operational costs and this brings benefits in profitability, so this investment is something very positive to have as a goal in the future.

- I also recommend conducting studies every year to measure the performance of the Albanian banking system and ranking the banks according to this criterion would be something very positive. In this way, we can analyze in detail the performance of each bank and the contribution that each makes to the entire banking sector.

- I recommend that the banks should also pay attention to the loans granted since it results as a variable that negatively affects the profitability of the banks. Attention should be paid to the loans given to the business sector, precisely the weight of their portfolio, which should be monitored since an excess can bring big losses for a bank. As for the individual sector, a higher diversification in their loan portfolio is advised.

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Evidence of burnout among health care workers in the regional hospital “Xhaferr Kongoli” Elbasan

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Abstract

Burnout and stress are frequently used interchangeably, however according to the ICD-10 (International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th Revision), burnout is a distinct medical disease (Adnan Agha 2018). Health care professionals frequently experience burnout. Clinical staff members are at high risk because to the demanding nature of the health care setting, which includes time constraints, a lack of control over work processes, role conflicts, and poor interpersonal interactions with leaders and other groups (Audrey Lyndon, PhD 2015). The aim of our study is to describe and identify the departments with the highest rate of burnout among health personnel in the regional health center “Xhaferr Kongoli” in Elbasan. A sample of N=130 health care workers, mainly doctors and nurses, from five different departments of Elbasan Regional Hospital was drawn. The questionnaires were randomly distributed using Maslach inventory, which consists of 22 statements measuring 3 dimensions and rated on a Likert scale of 0-6. Data collection was conducted using the SPSS statistical package - version 21. The results of the evaluation of these questionnaires showed us that the highest level of burnout exists in the emergency department and the oncology department because in these departments there is direct and immediate contact between the patient and the doctor. The oncology department deals with the emotional and psychological state of the patient, not only with the disease. The emergency staff is in first and direct contact with the patient, but even in other departments, the presence of burns in the work environment is not excluded.

Keywords: Burnout, health workers, Ward, depersonalization, emotional exhaustion.

Introduction

Burnout Syndrome is a condition that is caused by continuous stress in the workplace, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). There are three elements that contribute to burnout: lack of energy, inefficiency, and exhaustion. (Adnan Agha 2018). In 2019, the World Health Organization found that about 75% of healthcare workers have experienced workplace burnout (WHO2019). The tendency to burnout is very common among health care workers. These characteristics include pressure during working hours, lack of control over the process, conflict between employees, including dependence on the manager, working conditions and occupational hazard. (Emily Nagoski, PhD, Amelia Nagoski, DMA:2020). Depersonalization is a cold, apathetic attitude toward coworkers. It presents itself negatively, exhibiting uncaring, cynical, and unprofessional conduct. Additionally, disregard for patients' empathy is evident. (Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. & Leiter, M. 2001). Emotional exhaustion is a chronic condition characterized by emotional and physical impoverishment in the workplace. This exhaustion is characterized by ongoing tension, emotional exhaustion, and exhaustion. (Wright TA, Cropanzano R June 1998). In essence, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) is a psychological assessment tool

that consists of 22 elements that help identify professional burnout. Christina Maslach and Susan E. Jackson were precisely those who developed the original structure of the MBI. They evaluated the experience of individuals in different professional fields focusing more on health workers. Forms. MBI is the instrument that measures three dimensions of burnout, which are emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal achievements. A total of 10 minutes are required to complete the instrument. (Maslach, C.; Jackson, S.E.; Leiter, M.P. (1996–2016). MBIS-HSS (MP) - Maslach Burnout Inventory for Medical Personnel MP is an adaptation of the MBI-HSS that is tailored to the needs of medical personnel. MBI-HSS (MP) scales also measure emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal achievement. (Christina Maslach, Susan E. Jackson. 1981). Some research, Prevalence of burnout in health care professions: Case study in Iran. The aim of this study is to analyze and demonstrate the high level of Burnout in the healthcare profession. In this study, a total of 539 (N=539) people were interviewed for this study. The individuals included in the study were doctors and nurses from a regional hospital in Iran. The instrument used to collect these data is the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), which consists of 22 items divided into three subsections: emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (DP), and personal usefulness (PA). The results of this study were very high, where 90.5% of the medical staff showed high depersonalization, 55.3% showed emotional exhaustion, and 98.9% had very low scores on personal utility. (Ehsan Zarei, Fariba Ahmadi, Muhammad Safdar Sial, Jinsoo Hwang Phung Anh Thu and Sardar Muhammad Usman 2019). Prevalence of burnout in health care professions: Case study in Lithuania. The aim of this study is to reveal and evaluate the prevalence of the source in the working environment in the regional hospitals of Lithuania. In this study, a number of 647 physicians and nurses (N=647) were used as evaluation factors. This study was conducted in 2018. The questionnaire is based on the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI). In the study, analyzes emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (DP), and personal usefulness (PA) are analyzed. Where emotional exhaustion (EE) occurs in a relatively moderate percentage of 35.1%, depersonalization (DP) occurs in a percentage of 46.7%, which statistically shows the highest percentage, and personal usefulness (PA) is converted in a percentage of 44.8%. (Rasa Žutautienė Ričardas Radišauskas, Gintare Kaliniene and Ruta Ustinaviciene:2018).

Elsa Vitale, Erika Cesano, Federico Germini 2020), Prevalence of burnout in health care professions: Case study in Italia. The aim of this study is to analyze the level of burnout in Italian hospitals. This study was assessed according to the Survey of Human Services (ASGIN) according to the Maslach Burnout Inventory with 22 items. To conduct this study, 300 health professionals (N=300) were selected as samples. A total of three dimensions were studied, with 32% reporting high levels of emotional exhaustion, and 30% reporting moderate levels. It follows with Depersonalization, where 28% have it at a high level and 26% at a moderate level. The third dimension is Personal Accomplishment where 18% have a high level of Personal Accomplishment and 27% have a moderate level. Wanchun Xu, Zijing Pan, Zhong Li, Shan Lu and Liang Zhang 2020. Prevalence of burnout in health care professions: Case study in China. In this study, 15,627 health professions (N = 15,627) were taken in 459 regional hospitals in central China. The study was conducted in 2020. Burnout was measured according to the Maslach Inventory survey with 22 items. The purpose of this study is to measure the level of burnout in the healthcare profession. There are 3 dimensions:

emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (DP), and analyzed personal analysis (PA). The results appeared to us in this way: a percentage of 47.6% had a moderate level and another 3.3% had a moderate level in the 3 dimensions analyzed. Emotional exhaustion (EE) was reported at a level of 21.83%, depersonalization scores (DP) were at a level of 6.71%, and 33.99% reported high levels of personal relationships.

Metodology

Our study's aim is to characterize and pinpoint the departments of the "Xhaferr Kongoli" regional health facility in Elbasan that have the greatest levels of burnout among medical staff.

Hypothesis: Prevails a high degree of burnout among health workers in the regional hospital of Elbasan "Xhaferr Kongoli".

Objective

- Analysis of gender-based burnout among healthcare professionals in Elbasan's regional hospital's five various wards.
- Examine the division of labor between nurses and doctors in the wards under investigation in terms of burnout.
- Analysis of burnout levels among health workers from five different departments was conducted.

The display of the resource level for health workers, disaggregated by gender and the appropriate wards, is what makes this study significant. Data collection for this study used a quantitative methodology. The Maslach instrument, which consists of 22 statements divided into 3 separate dimensions and divided on a Likert scale from 0-6, was used to collect this quantitative data. Using the SPSS statistical package, version 21, data were collected. N=130 health care professionals from five different departments of the Xhaferr Kongoli regional hospital in Elbasan, mainly doctors and nurses (N = 130), served as the sample of the study. N=58 women and N=72 men who made up the final sample are the ones who will be the subject of the analysis. There are N=80 nurses and N=50 doctors in the doctor-nurse ratio. The Maslach Inventory was used to observe consumption generally. The MBI has been utilized in the majority of research investigations on the topic of burnout in the workplace. The Maslach inventory uses a scale called the Likert scale to quantify consumption. From 0 (never/never) to 6 (every day), this division is performed. The 22 assertions that make up this inventory, as was already explained, are used to gauge how much doctors and nurses consume.

Results

A sample of N=130 healthcare professionals was included in the data collected for this investigation. At terms of numbers, the study included a sample of 50 doctors and 80 nurses from the "Xhaferr Kongoli" medical center in Elbasan's regional hospital. The profession of nurse consists of 37 (46.25%) males and 43 (53.75%) females. Regarding the field of medicine, in this study there are 22 (44.00%) women and 28 (56.00%) men respectively.

In accordance with the first objective, the results presented in table 1 are fully

satisfactory.

Table.1. Gender distribution of participants.

Table 1. Burnout variability between genders				
Females Males		Gender		Total
Doctors	Percentage	N=22 44%	N=28 56%	N=50 38.46%
	Liker scale	4	3	4.2
Nurses	Percentage	N=43 33.07%	N=37 53.75%	N=80 61.53%
	Liker scale	6	4	4.7

N=130 healthcare professionals were counted throughout five wards of the regional hospital in Elbasan. The pediatric ward had 9 doctors and 10 nurses, the oncology ward had 10 doctors and 16 nurses, the emergency ward had 13 doctors and 20 nurses, the orthopedic ward had 7 doctors and 9 nurses, and the surgical ward had 11 doctors and 25 nurses. In accordance with the second and third objectives, the results presented in table 2 are fully endurable.

Table.2. Compartment of doctors and nurses according to five wards.

Table.2. Compartment of doctors and nurses according to wards			
		Doctors	Nurses
Pediatrics	Total number	N=9	N=10
	Burnout	4	5
Oncology	Total number	N=10	N=16
	Burnout	6	6
Emergency	Total number	N=13	N=20
	Burnout	6	6
Orthopedics	Total number	N=7	N=9
	Burnout	3	4
Surgery	Total number	N=11	N=25
	Burnout	5	5

Based on the aforementioned research, which shows that healthcare professionals experience moderate to high levels of burnout. Burnout is more likely to occur if psychological aggression towards healthcare professionals grows. Thus, the study's major hypothesis—that psychological aggression and consumption are positively correlated among health professionals at the provincial hospital in Elbasan—is demonstrated (see Table 3).

Table.3. Descriptive statistics (minimum, maximum, average) for burnout in Elbasan regional hospital.

Table.3.Descriptive statistics (minimum, maximum, average) for burnout in Elbasan regional hospital

Elbasan regional hospital	NR	Minimum	Maximum	Average
Health workers	N=130	31.00	121.00	99.1200
Valid	N=130			

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine and show us the level of burnout among health workers according to the respective wards in the regional hospital of Elbasan. Also from table 1, nurses according to all the reports we received in the study, we see that female nurses (6= every day) show a higher level of burnout compared to male nurses (4= most of the time). On the other hand, the Liker scale for male and female doctors is shown in this way as the level of burnout. Male doctors (4=most of the time) and female doctors (5=almost every day). This research looked at the rate of burnout in five wards at the “Xhaferr Kongoli” regional hospital in Elbasan. The emergency department and oncology have the highest rates of burns, according to Table 2, which is separated into 5 wards, including pediatrics, oncology, emergency orthopedics, and surgery. The Liker scale’s maximum value is shown (6; health workers feel the presence of burnout every working day). Professional physicians and nurses who speak to us about the stress levels in these facilities bring up this point. Oncologists endure the greatest rate of burnout because of the vulnerable situations of their patients, which includes the emotional strain and physical difficulties they face. Staff at emergency rooms deal with the most difficult circumstances, hence the emergency department.

As a result of the overload in consumption development, women are reported to have higher burnout scores than men. This result is driven by the fact that women are subjected to greater levels of emotional abuse, harassment, and workload. It can also result from multiple family issues and unfavorable work situations. Based on the aforementioned research, shows the presence of burnout is a worrying problem for all healthcare professionals at work, where everyone is vulnerable to being a victim of burnout. Regardless of socioeconomic status, similar research conducted in many countries around the world found that health professionals had a significant level of burnout. A result that is fully consistent with our theory. Looking at Table 3, we can see that the minimum and maximum points are (31.00) and (121.00) respectively, with an average of (99.1200) for the full sampling. Different types of literature show that there is a positive relationship between psychological violence and consumption. Regarding the level of consumption in the Elbasan Regional Hospital, a high level of experience of consumption in the workplace was found, which further supports the validity of the hypothesis established in this study. This result is not only from the data collected in this study, but also from the literature and studies mentioned above. In conclusion, we can conclude that health professionals working in each of the wards show signs of burnout and emotional exhaustion, including irritability, withdrawal, stress, tension, depersonalization and negative attitudes. These issues, such as low

productivity and self-confidence, are immediately reflected in work performance and personal failure. Ultimately, this study is considered important because it focuses on the relationship between emotional exhaustion and depersonalization in the health sector.

Recommendation

An answer to the raised hypothesis is given in this study, we admit that the Regional Hospital of Elbasan has high and moderate levels of burnout, according to the conducted studies. This indicates that the majority of burn victims are physicians and nurses who work in oncology and emergency departments. Despite the fact that the results are so concerning, there hasn't been much research on burnout in Albania, thus there isn't yet a definitive concrete answer to the issue.

Based on this high level of violence in the five wards of the Regional Hospital of Elbasan, we give these recommendations:

- Awareness and education of health care workers about burnout in the workplace and the negative outcomes it presents to them. Therefore, it is they who must prepare to reduce the use of this behavior.
- Various courses on handling difficult circumstances, emotion regulation, etc.
- By creating suitable regulations for the management of these behaviors in a new regulation, the healthcare organization might reduce burnout.
- Further studies should be conducted on burnout among health professionals as well as those in other professions

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Socialist realism – a discourse that covers up the Albanians’ spirit and all fields of art

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Abstract

This article explores in what ways the Albanian totalitarian system censored and shaped the creative process in literature for half a century during the 20th century. Literature along with many other forms of art and expression, were a means of propaganda and as such, were forced to communicate only ideas and narratives in correspondence with the political beliefs of the socialist realism, under strict ideological pressure. Both dimensions of the artistic reality of the writer, the content and style in the works, were affected by the schematic, uniform and superficial reflections on the existence and the world. The ideological discourse and the politicization of literary texts did not offer new knowledge about the world and existence; on the contrary, it widened the gap between empirical and dogmatic knowledge. In this paper, we have evoked the theme of love as an illustration of this phenomenon, a universal theme which deserves to be treated in such a severe and delicate social and literary context. The second part of the paper deals with the principles of this aesthetic method, which correspond to the totalitarian socialist political ideology. We will also shape and define the literary outcome of the writers’ pen in Albania for the second half of the 20th century.

Keywords: socialist realism, literature, ideological discourse, schematic, theme of love.

Introduction

During the second half of the 20th century, Albanian literature was violated and distorted due to the context of the severe rule of communism. A totalitarian regime which lasted for nearly five decades had a major impact on multiple aspects of the lives of Albanians, including literary and artistic expression of writers and other artists. By being censored, schematized and synchronized with the development of political news, Albanian literature in those years took five new directions.

In this article, we will focus on the fifth direction: the literature of socialist realism. *We will explore the following topics:*

The theme of love and how it was represented in artistic creations of the time, with Eros and sensuality being considered as foreign elements, almost like a forbidden apple. Love concluded in simple acts such as looks or gestures. The characters dressed according to the aesthetic tastes which were determined by the communist ideology, serving this same ideology.

Further on, we will explore the five principles of the artistic platform determined by the communist regime at the time, how this methodology affected the creativity and originality of the works of art and how it determined the path literature would take during this period.

Methodology

The study corpus of my work is mainly based on the Albanian books and bibliography written about the period of socialist realism.

The methodological approach is mostly illustrative, descriptive and analytic. The

main body of this paper contains information about the way of conceiving the literary work, painting, sculpture or films so that the authors respect and follow the principles of socialist realism. To put into light its principles we have carried out a diachronic study, as well.

Albanian literature during the half of the 20th century

The fate of Albanian literature during the half of the 20th century was as tragic as the fate of the Albanian people. After 1944, Albanian literature was violated and distorted due to the context of the severe rule of communism. In those years, the literature in Albania took five new directions.

1- The literature of exile represented by Ernest Koliqi, Martin Camaj, Arshi Pipa, Bilal Xhaferri, etc;

2- The forbidden and denied literature represented by At Gjergj Fishta, Faik Konica, Vinçens Prenushi, Lumo Skëndo, Lazër Shantoja, Pader Anton Arapi as well as the whole French-Jesuit literary tradition, the heritage of Albanian intellectual thought from the 1930s ;

3- Albanian literature officially refused or neglected as literary fact represented by Mitrush Kuteli, Lasgush Poradeci, Petro Marko, Frederik Rreshpja, Vexhi Buharaja, Mustafa Grebllushi;

4- The literature of prisons and severe punishments represented by Et'hem Haxhiademi, Gjergj Bubani, Qemal Draçini, Ndoc Nika, Sejfulla Malëshova, Kasëm Trebeshina, Musine Kokalari, Pano Taçi, Astrit Delvina, Trifon Xhagjika, Fatos Bulonja, Bashkim Shehu, Vilson Bloshmi, Genc Leka, Havzi Nela, and so on;

5- The literature of socialist realism represented by Ismail Kadare, Dhimitër Shuteriqi, Fatmir Gjata, Dritëro Agolli, Fatos Arapi, and so on;

Distanced from tradition and the national genetic literary code, detached from the European and global literary process, the literature of socialist realism remains a "tumor" in the history of Albanian literature, a total overthrow indeed. By means of censorship, the Labor Party's literary prizes, titles, slavish literary criticism, the reader was subjected to the philosophy of the literature of socialist realism which covered up the man's soul and his brain. The totalitarian system insisted above all on the synchronization of literature with the development of political news, according to Lenin's watchword adapted to the Albanian context: "Anyone who does not sing with us, is against us". The writer or poet was supposed to create under the pressure of the mummified literary and stylistic formation of socialist realism (Mensur Raifi, 1998, p.157). The content, as a dimension of the artistic reality of the work would be reduced solely on the concept of binary oppositions of exclusive realities according to the diagrams: positive-negative (A. Hoxha, 2011, p.61), which resulted in a schematism, a uniformity and a superficiality of reflections on existence and the world. Therefore, Arben Hoxha affirms that the mechanical character of the socialist realism literature, in the contemporary Albanian literature, will be the first step towards the transition from a relationship of independence to a relationship of dependence with the other parties. Andrej Sinjavski gave an interesting formulation in his article "What is socialist realism": "...a semi-classical semi-art, not very socialist and not at all realistic". (cited by Agron Tufa in <http://gazeta-shqip.com/lajme/2017/04/11/mbi-dogmen-origjinen-dhe-trashegimine-e-realizmit-socialist/>). We rightly could affirm that the ideological discourse and the politicization of literary texts do not offer new knowledge about the world and existence; on the contrary, it widens the gap between empirical and dogmatic knowledge.

The theme of love

According to the so-called architect of the new Albania (Enver Hoxha), the artists in the front line of the Albanian state propaganda, as a contribution to the cause, should address this theme in their artistic products, such as novels, paintings, feature films and documentaries. Eros and sensuality were foreign elements. One of the principles of socialist realism was the exaltation of the new man. "Love in young people was seen as a promoter of the spirit of the new man who on this basis (love) founded the new family, the structural basis of socialist society. Love was more and more often confused with love of fatherland and party, becoming simply a gearing element of the social structure of Albanian socialist realism (in <http://www.arkivalajmeve.com/Dashuria-erosi-dhe-morali-ne-Realizmin-Socialist-shqiptar.1047548341>).

It is to be regretted that there were only looks and gestures as part of artistic creations in this period because love as a sexual act was "a banished apple" (title of one of the stories by Migjeni, a great Albanian prose writer of the 1930s).

To become a leader of the people and at the same time its servant, according to Majakovski, the artist or the writer had to be faithful to the directives of the party, thus refusing inner freedom, without which the creative process is simply impossible. In case the books were written without inspiration and not in favor of the Enver Hoxha's party conjecture (Enver Hoxha was the leader of the Albanian people for about five decades), even if those books indulged the reader, they were not considered as literary works and often their sale was banned under a supreme order of state authorities. The ties with previous works of Albanian literature were strictly broken. Consequently, the literary process was worsened due to the great influence of the totalitarian form which imposed itself on any deviation from the imposed models. The method of socialist realism-imposed uniformity in all fields of art by principles established according to the directives of the ruling party.

The characters dressed according to the aesthetic tastes which were determined by the communist ideology. The ideal model of Albanian clothing was the red thread of this ideology. For example, a heroine mother had white hair covered by a black scarf which only covered the hair, so that it did not look like a veil. The partisan would have a braid and would wear partisan breeches just like the man. The communist activist who could be a high school or college student who would be characterized by simplicity, with her modest things, despite her economic situation; poor or rich.

A farmer woman or a worker would clearly be distinguished by her virile appearance due to men's clothing and the nature of work which had previously been done by men. The girl living in the city would be modest and simple in appearance (without makeup), which took away her femininity as well as her eroticism. These were the values embodied by the positive character according to the communist ideals. On the other hand, if the woman wore extravagant clothing or make up then she embodied the negative character which would be "corrected" by the social entourage at the workplace, in the neighborhood or elsewhere, so that she would be standardized with the others. Such was the outline of the characters' molding.

In paintings or films, young people (girls, women, boys and men) would present themselves as hardworking and smiling people, with either pickaxes or shovels to build socialism with their own strength or with guns to protect the fatherland from sudden attacks from the great powers.

Regarding the topic, it would obviously be the red thread of the totalitarian communist doctrine that ran through all artistic work. At the center of literary and artistic discourse we identify the partisan struggle and the construction of the socialist country, while getting rid of the "Western cosmopolitan costume". The political message was very

clear: in order to survive, it was essential to enhance the glory of the socialist world and the virtues of the new man and to fight against the remains of the old world (thus erasing the glorious past from Albanian literature) and the revisionist and capitalist world. Therefore, Albanian literature of that time would undo itself to wear a uniform that would take away all freedom from the artist. The poems, novels, plays, films or paintings created during this period by this new generation of poets, writers, painters, sculptures or filmmakers would all circle around the common thread of communist ideology. This lasted until the 1960s, which on the one hand marked the break with the Soviet Union along with their literary and artistic models and on the other hand opened a window to new directions.

The efforts made to widen the literary horizon in search of novelty inevitably led to a literary and political confrontation between those who were in favor of the unchangeable standards of poetics of the time, considering free verse as anti-national. On the other hand, those who insisted on the regeneration of literature towards new themes and a new stylistic in order to make the difference between the framework of socialist realism and individual creativity and originality. However, "the costume of socialist realism" squeezed the artist to such an extent that it took his breath away, which resulted in a lack of creative productivity and lifeless works. It should be noted that the artist or writer did not lack talent and potential; they lacked a positive atmosphere where they could develop their artistic inclinations. It was a real mortal ordeal of pain. We can mention the 11th Albanian song festival, a real intellectual and spiritual massacre towards singers, composers, and artists in general. The rhythmic songs accompanied by the singers 'movements and gestures, the lyrical texts which sang of love as a sublime feeling were harshly criticized and condemned.

A new aesthetic platform was created. The essence of this platform was that it proclaimed socialist realism as a new method and literary orientation of the artistic presentation of reality, being considered as a further enrichment of the traditional realist method. From now on, this platform would be considered by critics as a rhetorical approach of ideological and revolutionary nature which aimed at the enhancement of the communist system through literature and art in general.

Principles of this method

When we were at school we had thoroughly studied these principles and read most of the books that were inspired and influenced by this literary orientation which proved to be very imposing and not such interesting and realistic.

To expose these principles, I have been based on Dalan Shaplllo's book entitled *Vështrime teorike-letrare* (*Theoretical-literary considerations*).

First, the principle of proletarian party spirit. This principle took root and embodied itself in the depths of artistic works, such as the novel, poetry, painting, sculpture, opera, ballet, determining their breath, plot, ideological problems by means of the language of art. This party spirit determined the position of the creator, his philosophical attitude. Far from any cold or neutral objectivism, he had to evoke social phenomena of the working class development in order not to submit to the bourgeoisie and other opposing classes. Since the working class was considered the driving force of communist society, the literary or artistic work had to evoke the struggle that this class waged for the final establishment of communism. At worst, the writer or artist had to rely on working-class moral and political values based in a method where extra-literary factors were paramount. The first Albanian author who implemented this principle was Shëfqet Musaraj with his work *Epopeja e Ballit Kombëtar* (*Epic of Balli Kombetar*), in which he reflected his class attitude while

unmasking the traitors, the upper class society, and in which he emphasized the folks spirit perceived through the intelligence and wisdom of the people's representatives (D. Shaplo, 1978, p.55-56).

Secondly, the ideological dimension based on the Marxist-Leninist doctrine would become the most powerful poetic myth in Albanian literature, a myth which would act as a certain "bulletproof vest" to protect the artist, the writer or the poet from the influences of "decadent and revisionist" literature. Even in the field of art, snobbery was seen as a manifestation of the influence of foreign ideology. According to Llambi Blido, when snobbery appears among artists, it becomes disturbing not so long as it remains in the external appearance, but when it moves to his work. Such an artist, infected by the disease of snobbery, may confuse the innovative spirit with snobbery in art, with formalism. Snobbery is the scourge of the bourgeois and revisionist way of life (LL. Blido, 1987, p. 96-97).

Third, every writer or poet would follow a historical perspective characterized by historical optimism. According to this principle, the writer would take care to pose a problem, to treat it, but what was more important, he would be careful to solve it in accordance with the interests of the society while opening a clear and certain perspective towards the construction of socialism. In this context, he would mobilize himself entirely in order to create characters who saw life in rose-colored glasses and to imagine subjects and events which offered happy endings. A relevant example of the implementation of this principle was *The monument of Independence* made by the sculptors K.Rama, Sh. Haderi and M.Dhrami under the directives of Enver Hoxha who advised them to create a work where the atmosphere of the time and the historical perspective would convey a unity of thought and art (D. Shaplo, 1978, p.56). The image of the worker as a hero of the era of socialist construction occupies an honorable place in the paintings of Vilson Kilica, alongside the heroic image of the communist partisan and militant. (LL. Blido, 1987, p. 56).

Fourth, at the center of each work would be the positive hero who embodies the best values, whether in the moral and social field, whether in the political and ideological field (D.Shaplo, 1982,p.72). This hero would be the impeccable man, and the model to follow. Imagine all the heroes dressed in the same "utopian uniform of perfection and virtuosity". Ultimately, he presented himself unchangeable, strong, and even invincible. We even dare to affirm that he was only a mannequin in "the windows of the socialist realism store" Meanwhile, the negative characters would always be presented as wicked, vicious, weak and ugly morally, spiritually, even physically. However, in this narrative, a few of them were able to be corrected and integrated with the healthy part of society. This aesthetic requirement in the literary field led to the creation of a typology of characters, a kind of white and black uniformity.

Fifth, the watchword would be: socialist content and national form. Same conclusion: a claim that is more political and ideological than aesthetic. In their works, writers were supposed to evoke the issues, themes and motifs related to socialist life, reality and social relations and all this through national stylistic and artistic forms. One example is the theme of the siege, of waiting for numerous aggressors by keeping ready the edge of the sword and the muzzle of the rifle. A less innovative technique in the field of form was considered the influence of the capitalist world and of the decadent and revisionist art. Moreover, it was called a manifestation of abstract sensibility above class and a disdain for national heritage. Everything was explicitly declared: dealing with national themes in accordance with the artistic forms dictated by the Communists. Therefore, the work would be simple, free from all complexity, but infiltrated by a well-defined ideology, far from any ambiguity.

Sixth, revolutionary class polarization placed the problems of the working class and

peasantry who had political power at the center of artistic works. On the one hand, the writer, poet or playwright was expected to openly express sympathy and admiration towards the characters who represented the ruling classes and on the other hand he was expected to mock and even caricature them as representatives of the wealthy classes, such as: merchants, bourgeois, landowners as well as representatives of religion. This class differentiation and negative representation had its direct impact on novels, poetry, short stories, stories or episodes of films or plays. Despite lacking artistic and human sensitivity, their human characters were openly treated as rags and unjustly offended and hated.

Lately, another aesthetic requirement imposed on the writer not to polish or blacken reality. It was strictly forbidden to evoke the great contradictions demonstrated in socialist daily reality, because according to the aesthetics and especially the official ideology, even some "defect" of socialist life and relations was "passing", "temporary", "difficulty of growth and progress" and "which did not emanate from the essence of the system", but "from the efforts made for economic and cultural development". Under any dictatorial regime, the target is the writers because it is them who can influence their people with their pen. A small spark of deviation could cost them dearly. It is worth mentioning numerous internments, imprisonments, even shootings. For instance, Mitrush Kuteli, founder of modern Albanian storytelling, was imprisoned. Even the first woman writer, Musine Kokalari, graduated in Rome, the first woman dissident in the entire communist empire, founder of a democratic party, was imprisoned, then exiled, worked as a construction worker and died alone. The poet and researcher, professor Arshi Pipa, an open opponent, after getting out of prison, escaped with his poems he had secretly written on thin cigarette rolling papers. The first director of Albanian radio, the journalist and translator, Gjergj Bubani, was put in prison. Even the author of the first opera, Preng Jakova, committed suicide after being released from prison and living with the mania of persecution, etc. Nevertheless, the aesthetic dissidence which proves to be opposition at best and the avoidance or softening of the non-literary principles of the socialist realism method. It quietly and secretly penetrates the waxy capillaries of the solid principles of this method.

Despite censorship, artists: writers, poets, playwrights, filmmakers or painters managed to find the paths of communication with their precedents or their contemporaries abroad. It would be worth admitting that this statement is valid only for authors who could pierce the labyrinths of a single censorship, which sometimes wore the garb of a naive nationalism, sometimes the garb of different periods, following the course of fashion of this realism of extremes. In an interview by mapo.al Dhurata Shehi mentions the example the most representative, the great writer Ismail Kadare. As dissidence was banned by law and punishable by prison terms, Kadare found a solution by descending into the Ottoman Empire, addressing current issues in his now world-renowned style (In <https://gazetamapo.al/letersia-e-realizmit-socialist-siduhet-trajtuar>, 2012). To support this idea, we can also refer to Shaban Sinani's work entitled *Letërsia në totalitarizëm dhe "Dossier K (Literature in totalitarianism and file K)*. He affirms that in *"Nëpunësi i pallatit të ëndrrave (The employer of the dreams palace)"* the reader could find all the symptoms of the degradation of the Ottoman multinational state. in the reality he was living (Sh.Sinani, 2011, p. 100).

As a conclusion, we can affirm that the method of socialist realism imposed in our literary and artistic reality was an ideological and political discourse that covered up the works during the second half of the 20th century while diminishing, in a way, the undeniable role of aesthetic beauty. Under any dictatorial regime, the target is the

writers because it is them who can influence their people with their pen. Questions could arise today: Are these principles eradicated or do they survive in the “DNA of Albanian authors?” Are they a bad dream? The answer is clear if we take into account the diversity and modernity of the post-communist literary and artistic works that hate “wearing the ugly costume” of the socialist realism method. The collective memory can not also forget the authors who went abroad to escape from the censorship and dictatorship of the time. They preserved and enriched the inexhaustible literary and artistic heritage that resisted and still keep facing the challenges of all times.

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