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“CONNECTING SCIENCE AND SOCIETY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT”

*“Knowledge-based regional development in Albania and Kosovo – Reducing
social and economic disparities through social and economic innovation”*

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**“CONNECTING SCIENCE AND SOCIETY
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*“Knowledge-based regional development in Albania and Kosovo –
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Gilman Bakalli, PhD, Lecturer, Department of Communication and Public Relations, UET
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Erjon Curraj, PhD (c), Blerjana Bino, PhD (c), Ketrina Çabiri, PhD (c)
- 12.40 – 13.30 Discussions

Introduction

BLERJANA BINO, PhD (c)



This volume presents the articles of scholars presented in the international conference 'Connecting Science and Society for Sustainable Development', organised at the European University of Tirana in July 2015 in the framework of two projects: Tempus Consus project 'Connecting Science-Society Collaborations for Sustainability Innovations', led by the Karl-Franzens-University of Graz, Austria and the research project "Knowledge-based regional development in Albania and Kosovo – Reducing social and economic disparities through social and economic innovation", led by the Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies (wiiw).

This proceedings includes the working papers and articles as work in progress of researchers and scholars presented at the conference. In the following sections, the two projects are briefly outlined and then followed by the articles. The Consus project addresses the Western Balkan regional priority 'knowledge-triangle education-research-innovation' this project aims to establish a regional science (involving higher education and research)-society (involving practice) network for sustainability innovations in Albania and Kosovo. The project addresses the priority through establishing a science-

society network for sustainable innovations and through developing and running workshops and trainings for the target groups to foster collaborations within this network. It also gives the opportunity to develop innovations, to share knowledge and to enhance sustainability. The UET Centre in cooperation with Riinvest Institute in Kosovo and the Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies, supported by the Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI) in Austria, worked on a joint research project and workshop on the knowledge-based approach to regional development in Albania and Kosovo. This research project investigates to what extent and in what ways, if at all, strategies, and policy interventions and programmes for the development of a knowledge-based society in Kosovo and Albania could contribute to sustainable regional development. The implementation of the research project along with the dissemination strategy initiates a critical mass of researchers who are aware of and committed to the emerging topic of knowledge-based regional development.

The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies, the Austrian think tank for first-hand expertise on Central and East Europe, CIS and the Balkans, supported by the Centre for Social

Innovation (ZSI) in Austria within the HigherKos Project has mentored the research project on knowledge-based regional development conducted by a team of researchers of UET Centre and Riinvest Institute in Kosovo. Throughout the project, the Albanian and Kosovar research teams received mentoring from wiiw Economist Roman Römisch and in addition further wiiw experts provided feedback and advice on the ongoing research in the two workshops organized in Vienna. This research project investigated to what extent and in what ways strategies and policy interventions aiming at the development of a knowledge-based society could contribute to sustainable regional development in Kosovo and Albania. The project applied a combined approach of quantitative and qualitative research methods such as secondary data analysis and desk research, as well as fieldwork such as focus groups with representatives of government institutions, business entities and research organizations.

The authors identified major weaknesses preventing Albania and Kosovo to follow knowledge-based development path. These are for example the legacy of fragmented reforms, low levels of R&D, deterioration of research infrastructure and brain drain; low levels of business and research collaboration, lack of strategic policy processes, politicization and lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation of research performance. On the basis of their diagnosis, the research team defined strategic aims for a “smart growth” of the Albania and Kosovo in the context of a knowledge-based society: (i) improvement of research base and conditions for research excellence; (ii) enhancement of effective research commercialization and fostering research and business collaboration; (iii) improvement of business sector innovation and establishment of start-ups. Finally, the authors conclude that the Triple Helix model can be applied in both countries by considering the context of the research and development system as well as the socio-economic priorities of each country.

Creating Solidarity Buying Group in Albania

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ABSTRACT

A solidarity buying group is formed by a set of people who decide to meet to buy directly from the manufacturer groceries for everyday consume, to be redistributed between them. Each SBG is born to their motivations, often at the base of their choices there is a profound criticism towards the model of consumption and global economy now prevailing, along with the search for a feasible alternative immediately. The group helps to not feel alone in their criticism consumerism, to exchange experiences and support, to ensure their choices and learn from others through the documentation and sharing information and knowledge.

A buying group becomes solidarity when they decide to use the concept of solidarity as a guideline when selecting products. Solidarity that begins with Group members and extends to small producers that supply products, to the environment and the social relations. The logic of the market is such that even those who are opposed ideally they end up with food by the excessive power of consumers multinationals that control the production and commercial flows. Organize in a SBG means, therefore, engage in a profound reflection

on their consumption both as regards the influence of these on the environment and health, both as regards the ways and the actors of the production and distribution of what we consume.

Key words: Solidarity, Power, Consumer, Group, Albania

INTRODUCTION

What is it about? One of the many situations in which you are making an alternative conception of the economy, now present in various parts of Europe in a more or less structured form. We call them Solidarity Buying Group to distinguish them from purchasing groups tout court, which may not have ethical connotations, but just be a means of saving. The ethical aspect, or supportive of these groups is the most important side, that connotes them as experiences in the field of critical consumption. But in fact it is not the only relevant aspect. A life where human relations and sharing with friends and neighbours once again have primary importance; the return to the flavours of the past; the pleasure of eating good things they do well, harmony with other human beings and

with nature. What is perhaps what each of us always wants to achieve! It is only to try. It is an experience for everyone.

SBG may therefore constitute one of the aspects of a new lifestyle, next to critical consumption and ethical saving, it provides a possibility of real commitment for anyone who wants to start working in daily life for a new development model built from the bottom. Hopefully, with this short paper, to arouse in you the desire to groped. This paper contains some common aspects for the identification of a SBG.

When a group of people decide to come together to reflect on their consumption and purchase everyday products, start using as a guideline the concept of justice and solidarity give life to a SBG. Purpose of a SBG is to provide for the purchase of goods and services trying to build a more human conception of the economy, that is nearest to the real needs of man and the environment, formulating an ethic consume critically combining the people instead of keeping them apart, which leads to the sharing instead of locking each in an own world of consumption.

Be a SBG therefore does not mean only save money by buying in large quantitatively. But above all, ask yourself what's behind a certain good and consumption: if those who produced it had respect natural resources and the people who have produced it: what part of the final cost goes for paying the work and how much to the adverts and distribution: what aims the impact on the environment in terms of pollution, packaging, transportation. To build a SBG you have to take consciousness for the need of change in small reality and to reflect on the approach to have when you shop. The SBGS are born from the need to create an alternative way of consuming a little carefully: the goal that goes far beyond is that the SBG would be in the future a tool that we cannot do without it, when the conditions will create a different market.

THE POWER OF THE CONSUMER

What is meant by "consumer power"? First let us reflect on the meaning of these two words that perhaps are used too much and too often

improperly. Power is the ability to influence decisively persons or situations, as well as representing a real chance to do something. The consumer are those who consume it, namely those on the market demand of goods and services and is willing to pay a price for them. The pivotal moment in which the consumer can exercise his power is represented by the act of purchase. The strength, seemingly limitless of manufacturing industry, particularly multinational companies, actually has an inherent weakness as the ability to develop business and create profit, because it depends on the behaviour of consumers when they purchase products or services.

The act of shopping is not an action without meaning, a private act that only affects the consumer, his tastes, his desires, and his wallet. It can have a strong and clear social, economic and policy value. Becoming aware of this power allow us to develop a strategy of conditioning the procurement policy, production and distribution business.

To arise social objectives, it is necessary to appropriate capacity of free and unconditional choice of products. This must be implemented on the basis of criteria relating not only to the quality of goods, price, or worse image, the evocative power of the status symbol of the product, but rather the evaluation of policies carried out by companies in terms of: social impact: respect for safety standards and workers' rights, type of reports adopted by the oppressive regime, environmental impact: respect for nature and its rhythms, compliance with regulations and international conventions, choices regarding packaging and recycling, animal testing etc. May we strive to understand what effects produce our purchase action? It is clear that, by purchasing a product, we allow him to exist and, in addition to its existence, let his action in the world and also that of the whole chain linked to production.

The consumer, developing a critical consciousness, thus acquires a great power and just because companies are afraid of this attempt to dominate our choice will spend billions in publicity. We must therefore take back and re-evaluate the decision of the power that we have

in our hands. A power that taken individually is certainly small but multiplied by millions of people can affect multinationals or impact the whole system. Facing the rampant power of multinational companies that have a strong conditioning on consumer habits, we are gripped by a sense of helplessness and loneliness. In this scene we feel that cannot share selection criteria like careful environmental and social impact, because it is often difficult to escape from the traditional and increasingly powerful distribution channels to take independent decisions. In reality there are alternatives that allow you to come out of isolation and to establish a direct relationship between the buyer and the manufacturer. One such possibility is represented by Solidarity Buying Group, expression of the individual need to socialize with critical choices they are made in everyday life. This experience comes from the awareness that it is possible to influence the distribution company acting in a collective and strategic placing any purpose. And in fact has been proven statistically that the decrease of at least two percent of sales is sufficient to alarm companies. In this view you add the need to do comply exchanging information collected individually, with better plan purchases. The buying group can take an active role in the dialectical relationship with the companies until arriving in extreme cases to take the form of boycott. The boycott objective is to force the company to change its behaviour and is temporary abstaining from buying goods and services from it , together with pressure, organized training and structured campaigns at the regional level broad, involving the greater number of people. To this end, the purchasing groups play an important role as stepping stones of such campaigns, generating a contagion effect.

MOTIVATION AND GUIDELINES OF THE SBG CRITICAL CONSUME

Understood as a critical attitude of consumers, who do not suffer the advertisements but evaluate and choose products based on criteria

established by themselves and not imposed by the market. The products that you buy, with rare exceptions, are involved in the circle of injustice. This characterizes the most of products that are commonly found on the market. Instead SBG must activate human resources, to allow many who are outside of the economic channels and labour market to work and participate in sustainable social development.

Friendly environmental or the attention of impact on nature that the production and the consumption may have depending on the degree of compliance allocated to the environment. As regards the food products comes to choose organic and biodynamic products, obtained in deep respect for nature and its laws. Also, choose local products means reducing pollution, energy consumption and traffic for the transport of goods. In the global market goods travel from one part of the planet to another as a result of economic considerations on the cost of work and raw materials in the different places. This economic calculation done by companies does not take account of indirect costs of transport that are downloaded on the community. These costs include pollution, the use of roads, the use of fossil energy, traffic accidents, and the loss of time due to congestion traffic. If these costs were attributed directly to those who generate them, we would discover what affects the cost transport of a product and we would be naturally inclined to choose local products. In the absence of this system of cost allocation, we can compensate with our intelligence consuming local products. Stated in another way, choose such product is one of the ways to lessen our environmental load. In addition, having to travel less, food can get fresher on our tables and then require fewer preservatives. The arrival of large amounts of product, sorted and distributed among families in a homemade, as it was a time, reduces packaging or otherwise impose reuse existing ones (envelopes of paper or plastic equipment, packaging for eggs, bottles of glass or plastic, for the internal distribution of detergent oil etc.). Eating products made without the use of pesticides and herbicides is only healthy but

also encourage purchasing from small local producers who would otherwise be crushed by all that and extra-large (corporations, large manufacturers, large distribution). Consuming foods only when it is their season it is important to follow the natural rhythms. Inquire and formed the group in developing the mentality of critical consumers. In such way meetings of the group can become a real moment of exchange a mutual training. Limit the sense of frustration and helplessness that comes from living in a capitalist culture, in which the accumulation and reinvestment of capital lived in an exclusive and totalitarian way. Often the reality in which we live oppresses us, we do not respond to what we believe. Profound questions emerge and sense of anxiety about the future of humanity, in a world ruled by unjust social relations: the SBG is a possible resolution. Start changing economic relations at the interpersonal level and local level is an important first step. And certainly a tool that enables us in some way to start to change something, to build economic relations fairer around our sphere of relationship staff. In a complex system like the current one, even a small change can determine chain resulting that is not predictable.

DEVELOP AND CREATE SOLIDARITY AND AWARENESS

The solidarity is expressed from members of the group itself, to small producers that supply organic products, to include, in respect of the environment, the people of the South, and all those who, because of waste and unjust distribution of wealth, suffer the consequences of unfair. This model of development concern for the problems of the environment, the exploitation and working conditions, we gain a greater awareness of the world around us and its contradictions.

THE OCCUPATION

The producers are in general small high intensity of hand of work (hours of labour used for a

product), compared to the large companies which are mostly high capital intensity (share of funding used for a product). The choice of the first with respect to the latter is therefore an important tool to create jobs, or to make sure that the money we spend serves to pay an extent those who worked more than banks or shareholders.

THE WORKING CONDITIONS

The world economy in the era of globalization, is leading to a race to the bottom in terms of work: multinationals are relocating production where costs are lower, or where the labour is paid less and workers' rights are not respected. The low price at which we can buy a plastic toy from Asia is small consolation if we think that the seats working in other parts and they compete with vastly lower wages in some corner of the world. The only way out of this race is to require a minimum acceptable level in the working conditions that is respected in any part of the world.

SOCIALIZING

That is, the need and the desire to share with others their ideas, positions, decisions. Creating a network of friendship and solidarity among the members of the group. The attention to the reports and the exchange of ideas, over time, can be up to sharing a common lifestyle, based on daily search of essentiality and sobriety just as natural consequence of the choices made until then. Also be in the group with common goal helps to live relations and promotes the exchange of ideas. Analyse products and door manufacturers an exchange of experiences among the participants useful to define a set of criteria to guide our choices. The group provides an important psychological support, and the inevitable dinners of products traditional help the economy as a convivial experience. It can make it possible to organize a system of collective use of products.

ALLOW DIRECT CONTACT BETWEEN PRODUCER AND CONSUMER

Another advantage in choosing local products is the ability to learn more about the behaviour for the company that produces them. The buying groups seek direct contact with the producers, for example by going to get to know them and see what the working methods are. In some cases they organize the trips from the producer and tasting of local products. This makes it more difficult for a manufacturer adopts behaviours that do not share without people know them. When we know the story of a product that we eat or use, we change our relationship to it. The object or the food out from anonymity and acquire their own history.

REDUCE THE PURCHASE PRICE OF THE ETHICAL AND BIOLOGICAL PRODUCTS

Since this is often niche products, with little market and poor distribution capacity from producers, the prices are high and a disincentive for many low-income families. The SBG, over to increase market opportunities for these products, it allows to approach the critical consumption also who would otherwise be left out for financial reasons. Allow a reduction of the time needed to do the shopping, taking advantage of organization.

CULTURE

Local products often involving crops and traditional cultures of their own area; both risks disappear under the pressures of uniformity of the global market. Eat traditional products a way to extend their life and protect biodiversity, as well as preserve a world of flavours, recipes and traditions.

CONCLUSION

Families who organize themselves into a buying group do generally with the objective to drill a critical consumption. One of the benefits of their

work as a group is to overcome the limitations imposed by the practice of responsible consumption. It can happen that sometimes, the products guaranteed by a point from a social point of view can cost more than others, and those who earn little can have some difficulties to buy them. Through the buying group you will get a number of benefits, of organizational, economic and abatement costs of research and saving time. Coming together and form a group to buy directly from the producers, avoiding any intermediary, it allows you to practice a critical consumption in open access and implement consumer behaviour considered more ethical than normal purchases for example through large organized distribution.

Particularly important element of solidarity is expressed through feeling and acting critically. The meaning of the term solidarity expresses the attitude of those who produced or processed products that they are gained. Recognize the part of a human community that transcends borders and cultures, and claims as precise responsibilities of each availability to bear the inequalities that afflict the entire group. Therefore, the SBGS have a knowledge and attention to the issues of solidarity superior to other group of consumers. They have a connotation quite informal in the organization that is relationship management. The informal nature of the group derives from the way it comes together, in some cases it is born within of a group of friends, members of an association who share certain values, but other times come to life in a condominium among office colleagues etc.

Even outside of the group management often remains on the level of informal and direct knowledge of the farmer that is often used as a form of guarantee as to the product. These groups represent a real system of short chain, characterized by the stability of relations between buyers and suppliers and the search for a mutual understanding that is not found in the other channels. The buying groups often born under the initial push to join a system of consumption based on relationships with small businesses locally rooted, even in opposition to the affirmation of the big companies that

increasingly dominate the international market. In the group, and thanks to the relationships that develop within it, consumers develop a critical approach in the way we consume that frees them from those needs-led accessories and unnecessary from the perspective of the consumer-responsible advertising policies of large companies. A crucial moment in the constitution of the group is to provide the consumer the power to influence with their purchases, the policies of production and distribution business. In the choice of products to buy the critical consumer must evaluate should evaluate companies in terms of social impact, environmental and possible health effects

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Why do They Fake it? Institutional Legacies and Academic Research in Albania

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ABSTRACT

Increasingly in Albania there is an on-going debate over the credibility and usefulness of local academic research. Are the data trustworthy? Was the research actually ever undertaken? Is the academic community contributing to the country's development? Unfortunately, the debate has remained trapped in counter-accusations based on temporarily and casually confined accounts. The article argues that to account for the profound problems with academic research in Albania a historical institutionalist account is suited. The article contends that the communist legacy of state control of research and state-prescribed conclusions is one of the main obstacles impeding researchers in Albania. In addition, the continued state control of research funding puts increasing pressure on researchers to produce data that fit state policy. Therefore, the problem with academic research in Albania is not simply a matter of ethics and insufficient training; it is a problem of a structure of incentives that rewards academically questionable practices.

Key words: Institutional legacies, academic, research, analysis, Albania

INTRODUCTION

According to political analyst Afrim Krasniqi 'until one year ago [2014] Albania had 59 universities and institutions of higher education (15 public, 44 private), an Academy of Sciences, a centre of Albanological studies and about 20 other centres designated for research. For a country with only 2.8 million citizens the sheer number of academic institutions is more than enough, even higher than most other developed European countries'.

However, these numbers notwithstanding, academic research in Albania is confronted by many problems and lags behind even its immediate neighbours. Research in Albania, especially in the social sciences, remains a major weakness of the university system. Despite successive interventions in the legal framework, numerous organizational restructurings, and several attempts to gain more research funding, it is clear, and beyond debate, that academic research in Albania does not meet the standards required by the Western world. This assertion is based on a very simple 'test'. How many Albanian academics publish in international academic journals with impact factor? Sadly very few do so. Most of the publications on Albania are written

by foreign authors or Albanian academics who have undertaken most of their undergraduate and doctoral studies abroad. Albanian academics who have been educated and work in Albania have had very limited success in publishing in respectable international academic outlets. Clearly something is not working. If most Albanian academics cannot publish their research on Albania, how can we expect them to publish on other topics?

Most Albanian governments have recognised this problem and have tried to address it. Specifically, in 2006-07 a reform was undertaken in the Academy of Sciences based on the assumption that the centralisation of academic research prevented progress. As a result, it called for the attachment of research clusters at the department level which would provide the much-awaited qualitative jump in Albania. Today, however we are confronted by a reality where most researchers in Albania publish in fee-paying non-ranked journals and only a small part, most of whom live and work abroad, publish in journals with impact factor. The latest new law on higher education just approved by parliament [2015] aims to address the problems in research and claims that it provides the instruments to enable it to advance. Usually I remain sceptical of top-down fixes through legal changes. If the past is any guide, the law will have marginal effect on the quality of academic research. So the main questions remain. Why are we not able to produce science? How can we address it and move forward? I do not pretend to have the answers to these questions. Rather, the paper aims to identify the structural factors which give life to the problems with academic research in Albania.

INSTITUTIONAL LEGACIES AND ACADEMIC RESEARCH

This paper applies historical institutionalism (HI) as its main theoretical framework of analysis. HI, which is the main theoretical alternative to rational choice institutionalism, aims to understand the mediating role institutions have on policy outcomes. HI scholars argue

that through path dependent and positive feedback mechanisms even modest policy and institutional changes have feedback effects which influence and further reinforce the initial direction. Such accounts are influenced by Stinchcombe's (1968) theory stating that an event which has taken place at a certain point in time will reinforce itself, absent stronger opposing forces, in the future. For historical institutionalism, this argument means that once established the institutional rules of the game are very difficult to change and become almost self-sufficient entities which affect interests and behaviour. HI has provided many interesting and illuminating accounts of policy and institutional developments by being mindful of the power of historical legacies and by providing detailed and nuanced analyses. Many accounts of development of capitalism, institutional and ideological development depend upon this kind of thinking.¹ Being aware of the criticisms levied upon RCI, HI has also tried to be more encompassing of temporally extended processes and has been more open to non-material explanatory mechanisms of institutional developments.

HI's approaches are united by what Thelen and Steinmo (1992) would call a belief that "institutions constrain and refract politics ... [HI] point[s] to the ways that institutions structure these battles and in so doing, influence their outcomes" (3). Such belief is based upon the assumption that institutions can shape both the strategies and goals actors have in a given context. However, in order for institutions to have such influence, they need to have the capacity, the resources and the will to affect their targeted behaviour; in other words, they need to be institutionalised. That is why Thelen and Steinmo (1992) conclude that there is an "emphasis in historical institutionalism on political agency and political choice within institutional constraints" (12).

However, HI has one main short-coming which is crucial when it is used to study democratically

¹ Hall 1986, March and Olsen 1989, Esping-Anderson 1990, Immergut 1992, Steinmo and Thelen 1992, Streeck 1992, Pierson 1994, Dobbin 1994, Swenson 2002, Thelen 2004, Streeck and Thelen 2005.

incomplete post-communist states like Albania. In such states, which experience conditions of uncertainty, rationality and the capacity to endow trust are not determined in reference to one's material interests, but in reference to one's perception of such interests in a constantly evolving context. Therefore, "uncertainty means that actors' perceptions of change are key to understanding both the process and outcome of institutional design" (Luong 2002: 29). In this regard, experiences of the past, and their aposteriori interpretation, can have powerful repercussions by shaping actors' interests during periods of uncertainty. Especially for transitioning countries, we cannot grasp the importance of interests and legacies in explaining actors' behaviour if we do not consider that such interests have to be perceived in light of past experiences. Actors have to take notice and give meaning to the new surroundings in order to make use of them.

ANALYSIS

Based on HI as the chosen theoretical framework we can identify a number of legacies which shape the present difficulties of the research community in Albania.

Research is not taken seriously but often seen as an 'inconvenience' to be undertaken in order to fill out annual reports and achieve career advancement. Often-times in Albania it is common to meet academics who have published two to three books before acquiring their PhD, and two to three other books after their PhD while not having published even one single article in a journal with impact factor. This can be linked to the communist practice of 'fiction.' Since in communism the result was pre-determined by the party (amount of production, number of students to be enrolled and passed, and so on) then everything else revolved around making the pre-determined numbers happen; namely fiction. Unfortunately, this practice has endured even more than twenty-five years after the fall of communism. In a sense, academics play along doing what they need to do in a 'game' where the result has been fixed. This

means that their product can only be sold within the Albanian academic 'market.'

There is a general 'insensitivity' towards applicability and replicability. During communism science was put to the service of ideology in a way that was not experienced in most communist countries. Often researchers, especially those connected to industry were purged, even killed, when their data and results did not match state ideology or expectations. As a result, by the 1980s science had become fully subservient to politics. When communism collapsed the requirement to be politically subservient was removed, by the inclination to bend research to outside pressures continued. Therefore, most researchers were inclined to sacrifice academic rigour for personal advancement making research, and especially training in research methods, a distant after-thought.

Lastly, the long-standing practice of politicised appointments leading academic research institutions decoupled academic rigour and success with administrative advancement again putting the fate of academics and their research in the hands of politics. This de-incentivised many researchers from viewing rigorous academic training and publishing in prestigious academic outlets as conducive to success. As a result, they responded to the 'distorted' incentives they were presented, which in turn weakened their research.

CONCLUSION

So, we can say that the main problem academics in Albania is a problem of 'mistaken' incentives. There is nothing particularly wrong with Albanian academics. Many are highly educated, bright and rightfully ambitious. However, in order to progress in an environment where their advancement was often decoupled from meaningful academic discovery, they have had to adapt. The key then is to change this structure which holds academic research hostage and replace it with a permissive structure which with time will both enable and ultimately reward those who do science for the sake of academic

discovery and through such discoveries make their society better in ways they had not thought of.

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Media Construction of the Balkans, the Case of Time Magazine

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ABSTRACT

It has always been a matter of general curiosity for the western media to look at the Balkans countries. In particular, the way how western media represent and construct those countries is also a question that has been taken by scholars generally. This paper shall look more closely at the American magazine, *Time* and the coverage it has given to Albania, one of the countries of the Balkans region.

This study is based on a combined methodological approach from within the empirical tradition of the media studies and research: the textual studies and the study of the agency. Both quantitative and qualitative instruments are used to collect and analyse the data. The content analysed consists of the news about Albania featured in *Time* magazine, in terms of their frequency, placement, topics and framings; as well as the language and the discourse used to depict the country, its people and its politics.

Key words: Media construction of the Balkans, Albania media coverage, *Time* magazine, Discourse of an Albanian abnormality

INTRODUCTION

It has always been a matter of general curiosity for the western media to look at the Balkans countries. In particular the way how western media represent and construct those countries is also a question that has been taken by scholars generally. This paper shall look more closely at the American magazine, *Time* and the coverage it has given to Albania, one of the countries of the Balkans region.

The subject of Albania has been taken into account in this study as a state in its geographical, demographical, cultural, political, economic, social, cultural notions. Nevertheless, Albanians as a broader category including citizens in other states such as Kosovo, Macedonia or Albanian emigrants are not taken directly into account as units for analysis. But generalizations do apply.

The criteria for the selection of the reports to be considered for analysis have been the presence of the term Albania referring to the above mentioned variants. Those terms are either retrieved from the headings and subheadings or the first paragraphs of *Time* magazine news.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This study is based on a combined methodological approach from within the empirical tradition of the media studies and research: the textual studies and the study of the agency. Both quantitative and qualitative instruments are used to collect and analyze the data.

The content analyzed consists of the news about Albania featured in *Time* magazine, in terms of their frequency, placement, topics and framings; as well as the language and the discourse used to depict the country, its people and its politics. The study of the agency builds mainly on interviews with the staff of *Time* magazine covering Albania.

Based on the above research, the main argument of this study is that the subject of Albania is approached and constructed in a repetitive constant way over time on the part of the *Time* magazine during the years 1923 and 2013.

Therefore, this paper shall endeavour to support the thesis that, in an evolutionary historical context, the topic of Albania in the western press, exemplified in this study by *Time* magazine, remains approached and reported in a constant repetitive fashion. Its continuity and repetitiveness are imbedded in the language used in terms of key words and phrases, taglines, epithets, comparisons and other stylistic means of journalistic expression such as parody and irony. An important part is even present in the titles and subtitles.

Secondly, the quantitative data analyses show that the number of features published year after year, its classification in order of rubrics, topics, length, places, words and most mentioned personalities doesn't differ much either from one period of the study to the other.

Thirdly, the interviews with *Time* editors and their code of practices allow for some introspection linked to the theories of the social production of news and the social construction of the international news as well (Peter and Luckmann, 2011). This is to say that the press practices at *Time* particularly and its American institutionalization in terms of the production of foreign news

(Tuchman, 1978), as well as American international relations in general influence its content or its approach towards distant and foreign countries like Albania (Wasburn, 2002).

THAT "SMALL, LITTLE, TINY COUNTRY OF ALBANIA" OF TIME (1923-1944) QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

The search in the digital data base of *Time* magazine produces 65 articles out of 253 results under the typing Albania for the period between April 1923 and July 1944, sorted by order of relevance, oldest or newest¹. Those are only the selected reports where Albania is mentioned in the headings or in the first paragraphs. 31 out of the 65 features mention in their headings or their first paragraphs the name of Ahmet Zogu, the King of Albania during the period. Most of the reports appear under the rubric "Foreign Affairs News" and few others appear under Nation, War and Terrorism, Milestones, Religion and Letters. By comparison with other countries of the region during this time period, Albania is the country more frequently mentioned (253 times), while Serbia half of that (123 times), Montenegro mentioned in 65 reports, Macedonia in 47, Croatia in 68, even though they may be comprised also in a broader context, that of the term Yugoslavia mentioned in 533 articles. Countries like Greece, Romania and Bulgaria get mentioned more frequently, respectively in 975, 1021 and 464 reports. The years of political instability such as the year 1924 when Albanian governments went up and down, got most reports with 7 during this same year. The year 1927 when Albania and Italy were together in the Treaty of Tirana is also the year when the subject gets more attention with 8 reports. Even though the number of features is relatively high, the length is limited with only 6 long ones (above 1000 words), 8 medium (400 to 800 words) 49 short and one cover story. Surprisingly most of the news features, 38 out of 65, appear in the context of internal development in Albania and 25 out of 65 in the

¹ All the data are retrieved by at least September 2014.

context of international relations such as the World War Two. However, the chronics about the king Ahmet Zogu comprises a large part of the internal developments reports. 10 out of 38 reports gossip around his private life, his habits and his bachelor status, his mistresses, his sisters, his son and the queen Geraldine Appony.

Among the most mentioned personalities of this period appear, apart from Ahmet Zogu, namely Faik Konica and Fan Noli, all three politicians and officials of the Albanian state. It is interesting that the King of Albania has been mentioned twice as many as Coco Chanel during this period with other statesman like Churchill, Roosevelt, Gandhi and the dictators Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin on the top. James Joyce, Pablo Picasso and even Charlie Chaplin or Albert Einstein are among the least mentioned, if we compare them with the above political man.

Geographically speaking, the coverage doesn't go far from the administrative centers of the capital Tirana, the ports of Durres and Valona, with only episodically mentioned few other cities such as Argirocastro, Tepeleni or Mati and Scutari in the context of war battlefronts.

QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS (THE DISCOURSE AND LANGUAGE)

The texts analyzed in this paper referring to the meaning of the language used confirm a discourse of abnormalities. This discourse is largely present as a way of constructing the narratives and the story lines, as well as openly exemplified in the headings, first paragraphs and subtitles of the stories about Albania. This language is characterized first by extreme schemata relating to the territory, but even to the climate, to the people, to the nation, etc. The taglines for Albania almost in all the reports are small, tiny or little Albania and its variants such as the smallest country, the pocket-size country, the very little kingdom. Often the extreme is reinforced as in the example "the smallest nation in the Balkans" that relates to Albania as the smallest of the smallest². The language

² Time magazine, "Albania: a noose for Benito", 7 June 1943

of extremes relates also to the climate, to the poverty as well as to the political developments and to the political leaders. In a report of the 11 January 1937, Tirana, the capital of Albania has been described as "the worst hole in Europe" in the phrase: *"Tirana, the mountainous little kingdom's capital, is regarded among diplomats as the worst hole in Europe"*³. The Time report on Albania on the 21 of March 1927, depicts Tirana as *"that little, vile, ill-favored capital"*⁴. The extreme language goes on with other depictions such as in the phrase *"The almost rural silence of Tirana, the small capital perched in the mountains of the tiny Kingdom of Albania"*⁵. In other reports Time mentions the *"wild mountains behind Tirana"*⁶, or *"Through the jagged mountains of Albania"*⁷ in a report referring to the extreme reliefs as well as in the phrase *"the mountains peaks and troughs of perpendicular little Albania"* in another report⁸. In a long report that dates 17 April 1939 Time depicts Albania as *"Most primitive and out-of-the-way spot in Europe, most Oriental than Western..."*⁹. Referring to its size again, in a report of the 1924, Time writes *"Albania (about the size of New Jersey plus Maryland)"*¹⁰. As to the Albanian people Time writes *"Albanians: filthy, wretched, impoverished, fly-bitten, famine starved and earthquake stricken"* in a report titled *"Albania, President into King"* that gives a contrast between the state of Albanian people and the King Ahmet Zogu¹¹. Moreover he is referred to as the *"Bachelor King"*, *"Little King Zog"*, *"His smart little majesty king Zog"*, *"Footlose Zog"*, *"Lonely King Zog"*, *"Hoarse-voiced King Zog"*, etc. The journalistic style of Time writing is famous for its colors, boldness and parody, especially during the years studied here. Albania gets it all as a subject, but most of all is characterized by parody. Headings such as *"Albania: Footlose Zog"*, or *"Albania: Zog and Jerry"* or *"Albania:*

³ Time magazine, "Albania: Fatima or Else", 11 January 1937

⁴ Time magazine, "Albania: Agent Provocateur", 21 March 1927

⁵ Time magazine, "Albania: Birth and Death" of the date 17 April 1939

⁶ Time magazine, "Albania: a noose for Benito", 7 June 1943

⁷ Time magazine, "Zog's Choice", 7 February 1938

⁸ Time magazine, "Balkan Theatre: Children of Socrates" published on the 9 May 1938

⁹ Time magazine, "Albania: Birth and Death", 17 April 1939

¹⁰ Time magazine, "Albania: Man Sized Revolt", 23 June 1924

¹¹ Time magazine, "Albania, President into King", 27 August 1928.

International Cough," *Albania: Swiss Laws, Greek Patriarch*" are parodies in themselves. The body of the reports offers other colorful parodies such as in the constructs referring to Albanians as "*fierce-faced... hoped on scrawny donkeys*"¹² or "*baggy-trouserred clansmen*"¹³. In other expressions, Time refers to Albania as "That sharp spur-wheel, Albania: or as "ready to be prodded" (International: Scared, 28 March 1927). Ahmet Zogu himself is often the favorite subject of parody when it is called freely "bachelor king", "footloose Zog", "Italy's puppet", "His smart little majesty King Zog", "hog-tied (with a crown), "lonely King Zog" or "hoarse-voiced King Zog"¹⁴. In a longer version Time refers to him as follows: "*Though Albania may lack roads, she should never lack for royal palaces. Last week Italian workmen and engineers, sent by King Zog's patron and protector, Dictator Mussolini, laid the foundations of a new royal palace, Zog's fifth outside the grimy old capital city of Tirana...*" and below: "Albanians recalled that at the time of King Zog's coronation last year, only one expresses intention of genuine Scanderbeg descendants to slit Zog's royal gullet dissuaded the new King from adopting the title of Scanderbeg II"¹⁵.

ALBANIA, "A GLIMPSE BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN" FROM TIME (1945-1989)

QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

The second period from the year 1945 to 1989 is dominated by the communist dictatorship of Enver Hoxha. The quantitative data show fewer results for Albania for this period, with only 54 dedicated reports out of 337 largely mentioning it. 49 of the reports pertain to the rubric World and the rest to rubrics Nation, People, Milestones, To our readers and Arts and Entertainment. The isolation of the country constitutes a topic of its own for *Time*

¹² Time magazine, "Zog and Jerry", 9 May 1938.

¹³ Time magazine, "Albania; a nose for Benito", 7 June 1943

¹⁴ Time magazine, Albania: International Caough, 8 July 1929; "Albania; Supreme Removal", 21 March 1932; "Footloose Zog", 19 June 1933; "Milestones", 27 January 1936; "Albania: Fatima or Else", 11 January 1937; or "Italy: Lost and Found, 3 October 1938.

¹⁵ Time magazine, "Albania: Zog, not Skanderbeg", 17 June 1929.

magazine to report on, but only in exceptional cases the journalists have succeeded in entering communist Albania. Yet, compared to other neighbor countries like Montenegro, Macedonia and further ones like Serbia and Croatia, the subject of Albania is more present. It is clear that these countries appear more often under the federate state of Former Yugoslavia mentioned in more than 1500 report by and large. As Albania is mentioned in 337 reports, Montenegro is mentioned in 47 reports, Macedonia in 5, Croatia in 29 and Serbia in 44. However, Bulgaria, Romania as well as Greece and Italia receive much more coverage. Angela Leuker, former administrator at the Vienna Office for Time magazine during the '80-s, in an interview for this study said that the magazine didn't have many resources in covering the region of the Balkans and that the official sources coming from state agencies were untrustworthy and full of ideologies. Especially for Albania, entering the country was quite impossible¹⁶. The editor at the Vienna Office for the Eastern, Central and Southeastern Europe, James Graff also states that the coverage of Albania was low during this period and that this is also linked to the shift in interest for Time magazine and the American media in general. The human rights and the Vietnam War, not Europe after the World War Two were the subjects of the day.

Nevertheless, the content analysis based on the quantitative data show that the placement of the subject of Albania in the hierarchy of the magazine is most often respectable. Rarely covered, but when it happens, the report is on the top of the rubric World, as most newsworthy. World was the second most important rubric in Time right after Nation¹⁷.

¹⁶ Interview with Angela Leuker. She as administrator and reporter of support for the Vienna Bureau at Time Magazine, from the year 1986 to 2006. Interviewed for this study on the 3 February 2014.

¹⁷ See articles first in row like "Eagle's Country: The Land they are fighting over", 27 October 1961; "Albania, Benighted Nation", 10 August 1962; "Albania: Enver Hoxha: 1908-1985 Stalin's Disciple", 22 April 1985; "Albania. The Eagle spreads its wings", 1 December 1986. And other second in row like "United Nations: Such interesting people" 3 March 1947; "Communists, a swim in the Adriatic" or third like "Albania: Odd Man Out", 24 October 1960; "Albania: Pay now, work later",

It is evident that there were fewer reports on Albania published during this period in Time magazine, as well as the subject was developed at length. 10 out of the 54 reports, were long (superior to 1000 words), 23 were medium between 400-800 words, and 21 were short features with less than 400 words.

The thematic classification shows the prevalence of internal affairs as a more frequent angle rather than the reference to Albania in the context of international developments. This is not to say that the international references are lacking. They still prevail in 24 reports, whereas 30 others refer to internal affairs of Albania. 5 reports out of 24 refer to United Nations, 10 to international communism, 5 to developments in the Balkan region, 3 as international diplomatic topics and 1 as political literature.

The interest of Time in political figures doesn't change either for this period. With the exception of Mother Teresa, no other nonpolitical Albanian figure does appear in Time magazine pages for this period. However, Enver Hoxha, the dictator, surpasses Mother Teresa, because he appears in 39 reports versus Mother Teresa who is mentioned in 21 reports. As Albanian, she is mentioned only 4 times. All other mentioned Albanian figures are politicians from Mehmet Shehu, the prime minister under Enver Hoxha regime to Ramiz Alia, the president after the death of Hoxha, but also Hysni Kapo, Panajot Plaku, Koci Xoxe and finally Liri Belishova, mentioned once in the context of the relations with the former URSS. Only after the '90-s does a prominent nonpolitical figure like Ismail Kadare, appear in Time magazine.

Even the geography of the reports is poorer for this period, related to Albania. Only Tirana, the capital gets mentioned frequently, in 42 reports precisely, Durazzo in 3, Valona in 5 and Scutari mentioned once. Because of the isolation of the country, most often Time refers to places like "somewhere in Albania"¹⁸.

13 July 1970 or "World: East Bloc: Illusions of unity", 29 December 1980, to name but a few.

¹⁸ See for example: "Communists: Battle for the backyards", 4 April 1969.

QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS (THE DISCOURSE AND LANGUAGE)

The textual data in terms of the language, the style and the way Albania is depicted by Time Magazine, reinforce the discourse of abnormality for this period, discourse that gets more profound and gains continuity for the future decades to come. Abnormal characteristics are attributed to the people, the places and the natural features of Albania as during the first period and for this period they are even more pronounced in the style of the communist regime and its representatives. What is more evident, the extreme schemata constitute the way of seeing Albania in almost every aspect and repetitively as "*the tiniest, the poorest, most backward country*"¹⁹. The taglines for Albania remain unchanged with its size mentioned in almost all the reports in the variants "*the tiny*", "*the little*", "*the small*", "*the pocked-sized*". Extremities of the size are often associated with other extreme characteristics such as in the phrase: "*Pocked-size Albania has always been the most backward of the Iron Curtain countries*"²⁰. In another report Time states that "*Albania is the tiniest, the poorest and most backward of all communist satellites in Europe and the only one that has no common border with another state in the U.S.S.R's empire*"²¹. Further on, the enmeshed extremities go hand in hand as in the phrase "*The tiny nation that Russia and Red China are using to work off their ideological aggressions, is tucked away in a remote corner of the Balkans*" (Eagle's country: The Little Land they are fighting over, 27 October 1961).

In another report, the extreme of the extremes is depicted as follows: "*Like Dante's Inferno, Communism has its different levels of horror and misery. At the bottom of the pit, by almost any measure, lies Albania...*"²².

Similar depictions were also present in a report of the 1951 that declares: "*Albania is the most obscure, backward and isolated*

¹⁹ Time magazine, "Communists: a swim in the Adriatic", 8 June 1959

²⁰ Time magazine, "Albania: Down goes Hoxha", 2 August 1954

²¹ Time magazine, "Communists: a swim in the Adriatic", 8 June 1959

²² Time magazine, "Albania, Over the Hill, 3 June 1957

country behind the Iron Curtain"²³. In another report Time writes that *"Life in Albania can be brutish, nasty and short. 14 concentration camps and dozen jails are jammed with an estimated 30 000 prisoners – nearly 2% of the total population"*²⁴. Such depictions are not exceptional and Albania is continuously referred to as a "benighted nation"²⁵, "rugged country"²⁶, "rocky road"²⁷, "The weakest Soviet satellite"²⁸, "The only satellite isolated from Moscow by unfriendly territory"²⁹, "satellite Albania, Soviet Communism only Mediterranean base"³⁰, "Albania: the black sheep"³¹, "the most wretched country in Europe"³², "the least accessible nation in the communist world today"³³, "a minute, mountainous country... poor in living conditions, rich in anachronisms and completely alone in its bizarre comradeship with Red China..."³⁴, "the little Balkan dictatorship"³⁵, "puppet state of Albania"³⁶ or "China's sole friend in Europe... and for the last decade it has been as angry and insulated as Peking itself"³⁷, "It is Europe's poorest nation and one of the world's most closed societies"³⁸.

The list gets long, but the colourful exceptional depictions continue as in the phrase: *"It is a pedestrian heaven; Albania is quite possibly the most earless country anywhere. The people are suspicious, curious, unsmiling- testimony to the effectiveness of Party Boss Hoxha's moto: 'It is fear that guards the vineyard'"*³⁹. In another report, years later, Albania is depicted as "an

isolated, mountainous country of 2,9 million people, is a place of bleak statistics. It is Europe's poorest nation and one of the world's most closed societies. Its harsh internal policies place it among the last bastions of Stalinism"⁴⁰. A report of the late years of the dictatorship, after Hoxha's death, cites: *"Known to his citizens as the 'land of the Eagle' Albania is notable in two dubious counts: it is Europe's poorest nation and a relic of the Stalinist era"* (Albania: The Eagle spreads its wings, 1 December 1986). In another report the exceptionality is depicted in a more lightweight style: *"Last week Communist Albania accomplished an astonishing record: almost perfect parliamentary elections. Every one of the country's 1, 830, 653 registered voters cast a ballot, and all candidates selected by the Albanian Labor Party won 100% of the votes counted. But alas, a single ballot was declared invalid by officials. Wait till next year"*⁴¹. The last report for this period marks again the exceptionality of the size in the phrase: *"A Maryland-size slice of the Balkans, The People's Socialist Republic of Albania has for more than three decades peeped warily at the world from behind a stiff veil of Marxist-Leninist rigidity"*⁴².

The depiction of Enver Hoxha is not without contrasts and contradictions when Time in early reports describes him smoothly as "handsome Hoxha", "spunky fellow", "hulking, baby faced", "truculent as a small boy", "Albania's youngish (38) dictator", Enver Hoxha (rhymes with got-cha)", whereas latter on continues to describe him quite neutrally as "Albania's party boss Enver Hoxha". Only after his death, Time calls him "doctrinaire dictator Enver Hoxha". He once was even admired in a report by Time: "So he [Enver Hoxha] permitted free and secret balloting, under a system rude but effective. It functioned admirably". In another report he gains also a mostly favorable account from Time: *"This same national touchiness is continually displayed by Red Boss Enver Hoxha, and represents much of his strength. Albanians have a Mediterranean*

²³ Time magazine, "Albania, By remote control, 14 May 1951

²⁴ Time magazine: "Albania: Death to the Muscovites, 28 April 1961

²⁵ Time magazine, "Albania: Over the Hill", 3 June 1957

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Time magazine, "Albania, the rocky road", 19 July 1954

²⁸ Time magazine, "Albania: a New Stooge", 17 April 1950

²⁹ Time magazine, "Albania, Down goes Hoxha", 2 August 1954

³⁰ Time magazine, "The Mediterranean: Out of the North, 29 July 1957

³¹ Time magazine: "Albania: the black sheep", 23 June 1961

³² Time magazine, "Albania, Benighted nation", 10 August 1962

³³ Time magazine: "Albania, Lock on the Dore, 26 May 1967

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Time magazine: "Albania: Emulating Mao, 23 February 1970

³⁶ Time magazine: "China: Don't fence Mao in", 26 May 1967

³⁷ Time magazine: "The World: Fear that guards the vineyard", 6 September 1971

³⁸ Time magazine: "Albania, Enver Hoxha: 1908-1985, Stalin Disciple, 22 April 1985

³⁹ Time magazine, "The World, Fear that guards the vineyard, 6 September 1971.

⁴⁰ Time magazine, "Albania, Enver Hoxha: 1908-1985, Stalin Disciple, 22 April 1985

⁴¹ Time magazine, "Albania: what could be more perfect?", 16 February 1987

⁴² Time magazine, "Albania: Borrowing from the past, 4 December 1989 (Time Europe)

fondness for florid and denunciatory speeches, and Hoxha is recognized even by his enemies as a master of this sort of oratory. Tall and handsome, with thick, pomaded hair now greying at the temples, Hoxha draws stormy applause for his insults to Khrushchev. Hoxha's picture is plastered on just about every wall in the land. His profile adorns Albania's monetary unit, the lek, and at meetings of the Communist Central Committee (most of whom are related to each other and to the boss by blood or marriage) Hoxha speaks from a podium decorated with a plaster bust of himself. Like his country, Hoxha is full of surprises. Instead of being a rough, tough mountain chieftain, he is a former schoolteacher and was the pampered son of a well-to-do Moslem merchant. Though he has the mentality of a brigand, his manners are those of a cultivated bourgeois and reflect his education at universities in France and Belgium"⁴³.

This same romanticized depiction applies to other Albanian politicians like Hysni Kapo who is referred to as "Albania's Kapo... wearing a celluloid collar, his hair slicked down like a dancehall Romeo's"⁴⁴.

As an exception appears in *Time* even the prime minister Mehmet Shehu who is referred to as "Among the gaggle of satellite Communist bosses trotting at Nikita Khrushchev heels in Manhattan, one was conspicuously odd man out. Red Premier Shehu of Albania..."⁴⁵.

The famous *Timestyle* with its characteristic writing remains dominant in the reports about Albania for this period as well. The parody is found in almost every report, obvious in the headings, but also in the details and narrative constructions of the reports. As an example, the parody as a way of constructing the narrative about Albania is evident in this paragraph from a report on the relations between Albania and China:

"But even the somber Chinese seemed to be displaying a sense of humor in the matter of Albania. Peking's People's Daily declared that the "comradeship in arms" between China and Albania "is as deep as the Adriatic and as sublime as the

Himalayas." The Himalayas are sublime, all right, but the Adriatic Sea, which washes the shores of Albania, is notorious for its shallowness"⁴⁶.

It is also with parody and irony that *Time* reports about elections in Albania in 1987:

*"Last week Communist Albania accomplished an astonishing record: almost perfect parliamentary elections. Every one of the country's 1,830,653 registered voters cast a ballot, and all candidates selected by the Albanian Labor Party won 100% of the votes counted. But alas, a single ballot was declared invalid by officials. Wait till next year."*⁴⁷

The parody with Ahmet Zogu, one of *Time's* favorite personalities to be covered even when he wasn't king anymore, continues in a report all parody that calls him:

*"...over his tiny kingdom of Albania, former King Zog... Short on cash, Zog"*⁴⁸

Repetitive Albania of Time, after the fall of communism (1990-2013)

QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

The period from the year 1990 nowadays is marked by relevant developments both for *Time* magazine and Albania. During this period the magazine itself diversifies and the reports appear in an online publication from the year 1997, namely *Time.com*, as well as in the alternative publications of *Time Europe*, *Middle East and Africa* or *Time Asia*, whereas the core of it all is of course *Time US*.

Neither the subject of Albania is properly unified for this period with the war on Kosovo that produced a second Albanian subject for the public of the international news media. The events in Macedonia as well are often linked to the Albanian factor in the Balkans. However, this study sticks to Albania solely.

Therefore, the quantitative data show that 49 is the number of the reports that approach directly the subject of Albania in *Time* magazine for this period with 25 reports that appear in *Time*

⁴³ *Time* magazine, "World: Albania: Stalin Heir", 22 December 1961

⁴⁴ *Time* magazine, "United Nations, Such interesting people, 3 march 1947

⁴⁵ *Time* magazine, "Albania: Odd Man Out, 24 October 1960.

⁴⁶ *Time* magazine "Communists: Independent Dummy", 11 December 1964

⁴⁷ *Time* magazine, "Albania: What could be more perfect?", 16 February 1987

⁴⁸ *Time* magazine, "People; Pleasures and Palaces", 1 October 1951

US, 19 in Time.com, 3 in Time Europe, Middle East and Africa, 2 others in Time Asia. The years with most reports are the '90-'91 as the fall of the communist regime, the '97-'99 period with dramatic developments after the fall of the pyramid schemes and the 2007-2013 with events related to USA themselves like the visit of the former American president, George W. Bush to Albania and the destruction of Syria chemical arms involving USA and Albania in negotiations. Comparing to the two first periods with accordingly 63 and 54 reports, the number of 49 reports for this last period shows a fall in coverage. Even though the periods do not compound equal number of years, the tendency is toward less coverage regarding Albania as well as international coverage in general at *Time* magazine during this period. The diversified media like *Time Europe* or *Time Asia* and the online media like Time.com do not add much either.

Angela Leuker, former administrator at Time magazine, the Vienna Office, from 1983 until 2006, tells about a small bureau centered in Vienna that covered both Central Europe and the Balkans⁴⁹. The chief of the office, James Graff (1990-1995) tells that the events in the Balkans were important during these years and that he travelled to Albania by himself in the first year to cover the first free elections in the country. However, when it comes to the number of reports on Albania that indicates a limited coverage, Graff tells that Time and almost all other publications in USA have drastically shortened the staffs not only internationally but also in the country. "I have served as Chicago Bureau Chief in the mid till the end of the '90's and *Time* doesn't have an office there anymore either.... I have been to Octavo, Vienna, Brussels, Paris, London, but in two of these cities, in Octavo as well as in Brussels I have not been replaced by anyone. For more than a decade the office in Vienna doesn't operate anymore and there will be no more a Time office there..."⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Interview with Angela Leuker, administrator and supporting reporter for the Vienna Bureau at Time Magazine from 1986 to 2006. Interviewed for this study the 3 February 2014.

⁵⁰ Interview with James Graff, former editor and Bureau Chief at Vienna Bureau, responsible for the coverage of

There is also a tendency of a fall in the coverage of Albania in comparison to other countries of the region. For example Serbia gets 835 reports whereas Albania only 264 (both of them broadly mentioned, not as first subjects of content). Only compared to Montenegro and Macedonia, Albania still prevails. An Albanian freelancer and stringer at Time Magazine, Altin Raxhimi, tells that the first years of the '90's were the "flourishing" ones in coverage with Albania entering the subject of Kosovo events as well and the logistics that Time had in place in the region naming the most important members of the editorial offices in Europe like Massimo Calabresi, James Graff, but also the war correspondent Edward Barnes, as well as other senior correspondents like Sarah McLeary, without mentioning the supporting staff like drivers, fixers and stringers... Not anywhere close to CNN but still quite an army..."⁵¹.

Massimo Calabresi, the chief editor of the Vienna Office after Graff left office and Edward Barnes, a senior war correspondent for both Time and Life magazines, tell that the interest in Albania was especially high during the war events and that the coverage at the time was very expensive⁵². Even though the number of reports is relatively small for this period, the place given to the subject of Albania in the rubrics order is still important. The data shows that the reports on Albania constitute the first, the second or at least the third order of the rubrics and never the last. This is seemingly favoured by the alphabetic order as well that puts Albania first when this applies.

The words count tells shorter reports for this period with 30 among them with less than 400 words, 3 long, above 800 words. The rest are medium size reports, between 400 and 800 words. The reports on Kosovo take the most important coverage in terms of frequency and both length.

the Central Europe and the Balkans during 1990-1995. Interviewed for this study the 3 February 2014.

⁵¹ Interview with Altin Raxhimi, freelancer and former stringer and Albanian collaborator at Time magazine (1999-2011). Interviewed for this study the 3 February 2014.

⁵² Massimo Calabresi, the chief editor of the Vienna Office responsible for the coverage of the Central Europe and the Balkans during 1995-1999. Travelled to Albania and covered the 1997 events as well as the war on Kosovo. Interviewed for this study the 3 February 2014.

The reports on Albania appear under the rubrics World, Letters, Entertainment and National or Politics, but most of them in the World section of the magazine. Few pictures appear in the version online Tim.Com and very few in the Time US to be considered for analysis.

The topics were mainly internal politics, democratic changes, conflicts and turbulent events, international relations and less so Albanian phenomena or social stories. Massimo Calabresi, actual editor at Time for the Washington Bureau and former chief editor at the Vienna Office tells for this study that they were constrained to limit the number of stories and to be very selective bearing in mind the fact that the publication is weekly and that the staff was much more limited than that of the dailies⁵³. One of the most mentioned Albanian figures for this period is Sali Berisha, as leader of the Democratic Party during the '90's, as prime minister and president, the politician who has marked the period as a whole with its presence. Berisha comes third in the comparative data with 16 mentions in the selected reports, after Enver Hoxha (mentioned in 48 reports), Ahmet Zogu (in 33 reports). Other most mentioned Albanian figures are Mother Teresa (65), Ibrahim Rugova (29), Hashim Thaci (17), Ramush Haradinaj (5) and Gjon Mili, an Albanian photographer that worked for Life magazine, mentioned in 20 reports. Regarding the most mentioned geographical places, Tirana remains always on the top with other cities such as Fushe Kruja for the first time in the context of the surprising visit of the former president to the town.

QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS (LANGUAGE AND DISCOURSE)

There is a discourse of anarchical Albania in place for this period at Time magazine with repetitive crises, chaos and turbulent events. This is to say that overall the textual analysis tell again the discourse of an Albanian abnormality. The reports on the events right after the fall of

the communist regime in the '90's, as well as the episodes of the economic crises after the fall of the pyramid schemes in the year 1997 and the political events of protests like that of the 21 January 2011 constitute a large part not only of the occasions to write about Albania, but also to construct the subject as an exception, with the extreme depictions still dominant. For example in a report of the early days' Time writes: "*Paranoid, reclusive Albania is beginning to reach out and touch someone. The nation opened telephone links with 54 Western countries...*"⁵⁴ Albania continues to be referred to as the poorest, the tiniest, the most isolated as a rudiment of the dictatorship years as shows this report of 1991: "*Despite their landslide victory in Albania's first free elections last spring, the old communist rulers have had trouble holding on to power as the wave of reform sweeps over Europe's poorest and most isolated country*"⁵⁵

The serial of depictions as exceptionality continues as the below example shows: "*Only one Communist government in Europe managed to withstand the political earthquake unscathed. Now, nearly six months later, the leadership of Tiny Albania is finally loosening its ultra-orthodox Stalinist grip*"⁵⁶

Speaking of violence and crisis, here it goes in another report from the same year: "*Though the communists won a commanding 162 of the 250 People's Assambley seats... their victory ignited some of the worst violence the country has seen in more than a year of escalating unrest*"⁵⁷

The repetitive features attract Time magazine coverage years later in the same fashion with more synonymies: "*Foreigners flee as tiny Albania dissolved into Mad Max-Style Chaos*"⁵⁸

This dramatic depiction is described as following: "*Europe looked to its southeast last week to find civilization vanishing down a sinkhole. Perennially under privileged Albania suddenly was no longer an organized society*

⁵⁴ Time, "Grapevine, 14 maj 1990 (Time US)

⁵⁵ Time, "Albania: A setback for the Old Guard, 16 December 1991 (Time US)

⁵⁶ Time, "Albania and then there were none, 21 May 1990 (TIME US)

⁵⁷ Time, "Albania: It's not over by a long shot, 15 April 1991 (Time US)

⁵⁸ Time, No Law or Order in the Land, 24 March 1997 (TIME US)

⁵³ ibid

but a state of chaos... [...] what had begun as spontaneous revolts in a few southern cities turned all of the country into a Mad Max movie: children brandishing grenades and automatic rifles; wholesale looting; and frenetic, random gunfire- an utter collapse of civil authority. Small, sun-washed Albania had become the state of Anarchia"⁵⁹

Continually referred to as "tiny Albania" the tagline doesn't change for this period either as in the below citation from Time.com publication: "Tiny Albania emerged from communist dictatorship in 1990 only to tumble into a rough world of gangsters, fraudulent financial machinations and incompetent governance, exacerbated by laëless capitalism and devil-may-care politics"⁶⁰

The other epithets are also retaken like "remote country" or "the poorest" as in the below fragment from a report on the visit of former American president in Tirana: "Bush will be the first sitting president to visit the remote Balkan country, the poorest in Europe, and Albanians have outdone themselves in preparations: tens of thousands have thronged to the run-down capital, Tirana, to get a glimpse of the American first couple"⁶¹

Again the protests and the political unrest come as primary subject in an article that states: "The scandal was enough to spark last week's protests, the most violent the country has seen in almost 15 years"⁶²

Even the political figures are referred to in case they represent an exception as in the fragment below: "[Edi Rama] used his outsized personality (and physique) to transform his hometown and, with it, much of the country's politics."⁶³

Another political protagonist, Leka Zogu is depicted in an exotic fashion like in the fragment below: "Bonus Royal Factoid: In the 1960s, the self-styled royal [Leka Zogu] struck up a friendship with Ronald Reagan. As a gift, he sent

the future U.S. president a baby elephant named Gertie—a moniker deemed unrefined by Nancy Reagan, who rechristened the animal «GOP.»"⁶⁴ Finally the former queen, Geraldine Appony continues to be refereed to as: "Queen Geraldine of the Albanians, 87, widow of King Zog [...] known as "The White Rose of Hungary", this former aristocratic beauty..."⁶⁵

Regarding the style of writing, the famous Timestyle is revived during this period, especially in the Time US edition, whereas the online version is more direct and simple, adapted to a different kind of medium means of expression and audience habits.

So as to the parody, it still remains important as a way of reporting and constructing the narratives about the subject of Albania. It is found in the titles such as "Campaigning, Albanian-style" or "Albania: Please Occupy us", or "Albania, revolution by balloon", "Albania: Duty free for all", "Albania: Don't wear your tuxedo in Tirana", etc.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the above research, the main argument of this study is that the subject of Albania is approached and constructed in a repetitive constant way over time on the part of the *Time magazine* during the years 1923 and 2013.

Therefore, this paper tried to support the thesis that, in an evolutionary historical context, the topic of Albania in the western press, exemplified here by Time magazine, remains approached and reported in a constant repetitive fashion. Its continuity and repetitiveness are firstly evidenced in the language used in terms of key words and phrases, taglines, epithets, comparisons and other stylistic means of journalistic expression such as parody. Secondly, the quantitative data analyses showed that the number of features published year after year, its classification in order of rubrics, topics, length, places, words and most mentioned

⁵⁹ Time, No Law or Order in the Land, 24 March 1997 (TIME US)

⁶⁰ Time, "The Trouble with Democracy: Albania's Worrisome Vote, 21 May 2011 (Time.com)

⁶¹ Albania: "Please Occupy Us!", 10 June 2007 (Time.com)

⁶² Deadly Protests Don't End Albania's Power Play, 28 January 2011 (Time.com)

⁶³ A Mayoral Makeover, 2 October 2005 (Time.com)

⁶⁴ Life after the throne, 5 January 2008 (Time.com)

⁶⁵ Milestones, 28 October 2002 (Time Europe, Middle East and Africa)

personalities, places and type of events didn't differ substantially for each period. Thirdly, the interviews with Time editors and their code of practices allowed for some introspection linked to the theories of the social production of news and the social construction of the international news as well. This is to say that the press practices at *Time* particularly and its American institutionalization in terms of the production of foreign news, as well as American international relations in general influences its content or its approach towards distant and foreign countries like Albania.

Borrowing from a *Time* magazine report on the Balkans, Albania together with other countries are described as follows: "*The crowded area known as the Balkans have exploded regularly in unspeakably cruel wars... in the process, the Balkans: Yugoslavia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Albania, Greece and the European part of Turkey, became famous as a scene of intrigue and espionage*"⁶⁶. It comes as a conclusion, in fashion with the title of the above report that the "old script" is not easily changed and so it doesn't in the case of Albania.

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Interviewees

Altin Raxhimi, freelancer. Former stringer and Albanian collaborator at Time magazine (1999-2011). Interviewed for this study the 3 February 2014.

Angela Leuker, Administrator and supporting reporter for the Vienna Bureau at Time Magazine from 1986 to 2006. Interviewed for this study the 3 February 2014.

Edward Barnes, Correspondent at Time and Life magazines (covering the Kosovo War)

James Graff, former editor and Bureau Chief at Vienna Bureau, responsible for the coverage of the Central Europe and the Balkans during 1990-1995. He travelled in the country to write about Albania in the early '90's. Interviewed for this study the 3 February 2014.

Massimo Calabresi, former editor and Bureau Chief at Vienna Bureau, responsible for the coverage of the Central Europe and the Balkans during 1995-1999. Travelled to Albania and covered the 1997 events as well as the war on Kosovo. Interviewed for this study the 3 February 2014.

Education, a Specialised Topic in General the Press

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ABSTRACT

Education is one of the areas which has a great importance in social and social life of every society, either in the development, even in the higher stages of development.

In our country as in any other field, education is treated in a new perspective, this due to the opening of our society after the nineties. Education is seen and treated in these years by several different social groups and this has positive sides but also its weak sides. As we will express in the press release, massification of

school, especially after 2005 did that, for that was written in a general way.

This led to not have a dedicated body for this kind of field and as a result of this not having a controversial opinion but specialized simultaneously. We also have a second problem that education as a special theme to be thrive only in several stages, in the periods of adoption of laws or periods of power changes, so not to be a continuously topic of debate. Third, we haven't yet established specialized bodies to deal only with the field of education.

Constructing Knowledge-Based Regional Advantage: Implications for Regional Innovation Policy

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ABSTRACT

A focus on constructing regional advantage requires an ‘unpacking’ of what makes territorial agglomerations important for innovation and competitiveness by disclosing and revealing the contingencies, particularities and specificities of the various contexts and environments where knowledge creation, innovation and entrepreneurship take place. In order to achieve more effective regional innovation policy, this paper presents and discusses three dimensions along which such unpacking can take place. These dimensions refer to (1) specific industrial knowledge bases, (2) globally distributed knowledge networks and (3) different territorial competence bases.

Key Words: Regional, Innovation, Policy, Socio-cultural

INTRODUCTION

CONSTRUCTION OF REGIONAL ADVANTAGE

It is a well-known fact that firms have to differentiate themselves from their competitors. A key competitive advantage is the unique competence of firms that cannot easily be

copied by others. Such advantage is maintained and extended through continuous innovation activities which often will include the learning of new skills (Lorenz and Valeyre, 2006). It is also generally accepted that firms almost never innovate in isolation (Fagerberg et al. 2005). Instead, they acquire complementary, external knowledge, and engage in interactive learning processes with dedicated partners. They also manage to integrate internal and external flows into a coordinated innovation process (Lundvall, 2007). External partners and knowledge can be found in many, and distant, places. However, certain types of cooperation in innovation processes take place more easily, and certain types of knowledge flow are facilitated by face-to-face meetings and co-presence of partners (Gertler 2007). This is particularly the case as regards complex innovation activities and the exchange of tacit knowledge. It is also known that geographical proximity may stimulate cognitive, social and cultural proximity (Boschma 2005), which facilitate trust based cooperation, a factor of special importance under conditions of uncertainty and creativity (Storper and Venables 2004). Here, the concept of regional advantage becomes relevant. The regional environment can stimulate the

innovation activity of firms in two principal ways. First, regions may contribute favourable location factors, such as trained labour, specialised suppliers and research organisations, that trigger local learning processes, innovation activity and adjustment (Storper 2009). Some types of specialised information and knowledge are sticky and thus not uniformly available. Scholars maintain that “cutting-edge technology is strongly tied to the universities and research centres where it originates” (Malecki 2010: 1040), and that “the important tasks of synthesizing and integrating knowledge are not able to be located equally anywhere” (Malecki 2010: 1034). Much knowledge, therefore, has characteristics that make it very difficult to understand outside the local context in which it is generated (op. cit.). Second, socio-cultural and institutional factors can ease the diffusion and exchange of locally based skills and knowledge among players. Geographical and other types of proximity help, in particular, the exchange of tacit knowledge (Lundvall 2007, Storper 2009). Such arguments are well known from the cluster literature (Asheim et al. 2005), which emphasises that regional specialisation in one or a few adjacent industries and the related localisation economies stimulates productivity improvements and competitiveness in regional clusters. Some scholars, however, maintain that diversity and variety of knowledge bases and knowledge inputs are replacing specialisation as the main driver in the creation of new economic activity (e.g. Laursen and Salter, 2006, Boschma and Frenken, 2011). Related variety of knowledge among actors in a region – i.e. firms and knowledge organisations hold knowledge that is neither similar nor too different from each other – is seen as vital in stimulating the emergence of new industries from old industries in a region. Boschma and Frenken (2011) define the spin-off of new industries from old industries as regional branching, in which a central mechanism is the combination of existing knowledge that is turned into new productive knowledge. Regional branching based on related variety emphasises urbanisation economies, which are most pronounced in large cities, rather than localisation economies as the

main driver in the creation of new industries, or new pathdependent developments (Martin and Sunley 2010). Four building blocks of regional advantage and the relevance for small regions The perspective of constructing regional advantage emphasises the fact that advantages do not necessarily emerge automatically when similar and related firms cluster in a region. Rather, regional advantages can be stimulated and constructed through active cooperation between public and private actors. However, activities and policy tools have to be adapted to specific conditions and challenges in different regions. No ‘one-size-fits-all’ policy prescription exists to construct regional advantage in every case (Tödtling and Trippel, 2005). Policy tools have to be tailor-made for specific regional circumstances, and, in particular, four factors should be considered when adapting policy, which constitute the building blocks of the perspective of constructing regional advantage (Karlsen et al. 2011). The first building block concerns the fact that firms innovate in different ways and employ different types of critical skills and knowledge in their innovation process. In order to conceptualise the main ways in which firms organise and carry out innovation processes, differentiation has been made between three innovation modes:

- 1) Doing Using, Interacting (DUI);
- 2) Science, Technology, Innovation (STI) (Lorenz and Lundvall 2006, Jensen et al. 2007) and
- 3) Combined and Complex Innovation (CCI) (Isaksen and Karlsen 2012b).

The DUI mode of innovation is first of all based on learning from experiences and competences acquired by employees on the job as they face new challenges and problems that have to be solved. The challenges may come from the firms’ own activities, but they often relate to requirements and needs of customers and users (Lundvall 2007). The innovation process in the DUI mode mainly takes place through the daily work and results most often in incremental changes in products and ways of doing things. The STI mode has a much stronger focus on

science-based learning. The knowledge creation is in large part based on the development and testing of formal, scientific models, and includes elements of basic research. The innovation process is more characterised by the science push rather than the market pull of the DUI mode. The CCI mode characterises firms that in different ways link and adapt scientifically based and experience based knowledge from different sources in innovation projects. This combination of knowledge occurs when tacit knowledge is made explicit in firms and then mixed with scientific methods and knowledge both inside the firm and with external knowledge organisations (Hansen and Winter 2011; Isaksen and Karlsen 2012b). The innovations often include several incremental innovations in the same product or a new technological platform for the firm (Isaksen and Karlsen 2012a). Entrepreneurs often have some location inertia as their start-ups are based on knowledge, experience and contacts in specific locations, and, therefore, regions with a large number of scientists and students have advantages. Important in our context is the fact that firms and industries dominated by different innovation modes may need different types of support from the institutional and knowledge infrastructure. Demanding customers and strategic suppliers represent key external knowledge sources for DUI-firms (Jensen et al. 2007). These firms benefit then from dense contact with some customers and suppliers and from access to experience based knowledge, for example, through a local labour market. STI firms, on the other hand, acquire key, external knowledge from researchers at universities and research organisations. CCI-firms are between the STI and the DUI-firms as they combine knowledge from demanding customers and experience based, internal knowledge with knowledge from research organisations. A second building block, which exactly conceptualises the institutional and knowledge infrastructure, consists of the regional innovation system. A regional innovation system (RIS) is analytically divided into two subsystems (Cooke et al. 2000, pp. 104–105). The first consists of firms in the main industries or

clusters in a region. The second includes the knowledge infrastructure of education and research institutions as well as technology centres, science parks, incubators and so on. Included in the RIS framework is also the importance of informal institutions and policy instruments that can facilitate knowledge flow between universities, institutions and regional firms (Cooke 1998; Tödtling and Trippel 2005). The core of the argument is that DUI-, CCI- and STI-firms rely on different external knowledge sources which typify different types of RIS. A narrow definition of RIS includes mainly activities in universities, research institutes and departments (cf. Lundvall 1992; Lundvall 2007). The narrow RIS is first of all relevant for STI-firms that benefit from access to knowledge bases in advanced research institutes. This is indicated by Laursen and Salter (2006), who find that firms with radical innovations more often search for knowledge intensely from few partners. These may be found in different parts of the world. However, firms may also benefit from close geographical distance to some research institutes, both to gain early access to new research results and to recruit highly educated labour (Cooke 2002). Regional innovation systems may also be defined broadly to include all the actors and activities that affect learning, knowledge creation and innovation in a region. In this respect, universities fulfil functions other than being “immediate sources of innovation”, such as educating skilled workers (Lundvall 2007, p. 97). The broad RIS relates more to the DUI and CCI modes of innovation and includes a specialised labour market, applied research institutes, non R&D-based business services and a local technical culture where knowledge is created, maintained and shared through cooperation between firms, knowledge organisations, and specialised consulting firms and so on. This conceptualisation also leads to the conclusion that smaller regions with weak RIS will have problems in constructing regional advantages in industries dominated by the STI innovation mode. By definition such regions will not hold narrow RIS with considerable research organisations. Rather, small regions with weak RIS are able to support CCI- and particularly

DUI-firms through an experienced labour force, non R&D-based business services, etc. The third building block in constructing regional advantage emphasises the importance of diversity of regions' knowledge bases. The idea is that diversity may facilitate the linking of related knowledge, which may then increase the potential for learning between firms (Noteboom et al. 2007, Boschma and Frenken 2011). Knowledge will mostly spill over between industrial sectors that are complementary in terms of knowledge (Asheim et al. 2011). The focus on diversity and related knowledge runs against the traditional view on the importance of regional clusters in which firms gain competitiveness through specialisation and localisation economies (Asheim et al. 2011). The view rather emphasises the urbanisation effects of agglomeration economies as a key in triggering innovation processes (Gordon and McCann 2005). This also implies that related variety is primarily found in larger cities. "The higher the number of technologically related sectors in a region (...), the more learning opportunities will be available" (Asheim et al. 2011: 895), and thus more innovation activity and regional growth are expected to take place. Smaller regions, therefore, have a disadvantage with regard to related variety as these often tend to be specialised in few and mature industries (Duranton and Puga 2002). Firms in small regions may, however, bring in extra-regional, complementary knowledge, which is further discussed below along with the fourth building block of creating regional advantage. We proposed above that small regions often have comparatively few STI-firms and then relatively many DUI- and CCI-firms. This firm structure may also contribute to low related variety in small regions. The DUI mode builds primarily on experience based knowledge. Such knowledge has important tacit elements (Gertler 2007), and is context dependent, for example, by being based on historically developed technological competence. This kind of knowledge does not travel well over geographical distances (Asheim and Gertler 2005), which consequently restricts the possibilities for knowledge flow and thus for

achieving related variety. The CCI mode combines experience and research based knowledge, and this mode also contains elements that are context dependent and sticky. The STI mode, on the other hand, builds on research based knowledge, which is often codified, making it easier to link pieces of knowledge. The concept of related variety can be extended to include the variety of knowledge bases and innovation modes. Jensen et al. (2007) maintain that firms that combine the STI and DUI modes of innovation are more product innovative than firms relying mostly on one of the modes. This is in line with Laursen and Salter (2006), who demonstrate that firms which pursue knowledge from diverse sources are the most innovative. Again, small regions are disadvantaged as long as regional knowledge sources are considered. In nearly all cases, however, the most important source of variety in the knowledge bases will be found outside the region (Asheim et al. 2011). Thus, the ability of firms to tap into extra-regional knowledge networks and use this productively is very important. The fourth building block relates exactly to developing the capability of firms to access and capitalise on globally distributed knowledge networks. Participation in such networks may constitute a central arena of learning for firms. Firms may benefit from expertise from many sources because relevant knowledge is increasingly diverse, complex and dispersed (Malecki 2010). However, based on empirical analyses of Italian provinces from 1995 to 2003, Boschma and Iammarino (2008) conclude that simply being well connected to the outside world or having a high variety of inflowing knowledge do not contribute to regional growth. Instead, they found evidence that related, extra-regional knowledge sparks off inter-sectoral learning across regions. Regions should, in particular, have some resourceful firms that participate in global 'learning' networks and act as nodes that import knowledge that may diffuse to other co-located firms (Giuliani and Bell 2005). Extra-regional networks can also be based on the existence of specific regional and national assets, for example, long tradition and experience in a

particular production activity in a region, or high R&D activity in a specific scientific field in a region's or nation's knowledge infrastructure. Such specific assets may lead to 'strategic coupling' of regional assets and the interest of lead firms in global production networks (Coe et al. 2004). A tendency exists then for some corporations to locate in agglomerations of excellence, in order to take advantage of local dynamic learning processes (Malecki 2010). The global knowledge networks may be different in typical DUI-, STI- and CCI-firms. The DUI-firms are often less resourceful than the other two types of firms measured, for example, in terms of the share of employees with higher education, R&D capacity and activity. Less internal resources in DUI-firms may lead to less developed external knowledge networks outside the regions. Compared with DUI-firms, STI- and CCI-firms rely more on codified knowledge, which travels more easily in the geographical space (Asheim and Gertler 2005). Thus, they have greater opportunities for external networks and investments than the generally less resourceful DUI firms. External investments provide a platform for international cooperation and information pursuit, and where (geographical mobile) knowledge can be canalised back to the regional industry.

CONCLUSION

Research indicates that R&D-intensive firms have, to a larger extent, globalised their innovation activity (Herstad 2008). For this reason, firms with higher absorptive capacities are more likely to interconnect cognitively with external sources of knowledge. Small regions with many less resourceful DUI-firms 8 may experience the most severe difficulties in obtaining extra-regional knowledge networks, which again points to problems in constructing regional advantage in small regions. The above theoretical discussion points to the fact that the CRA-framework is better adapted to the situation in large than small regions. Large regions tend to have many STI-firms, narrow regional innovation systems with specialised

knowledge organisations, related variety in the form of urbanisation economies and resourceful firms that can link up to external knowledge bases. From a conceptual point of view, small regions with weak RIS experience limitations with each of the four building blocks: comparatively few STI-firms, no or few specialised knowledge organisations, little related variety and relatively few resourceful firms in extra-regional knowledge network.

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Towards the Triple Helix Model in Albania: Relevance and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

In a knowledge-based society and economy, the role of higher education institutions as centres of education, training, research and knowledge-creation in driving innovation and development processes has been acknowledged and formalised in the triple helix model. This model views higher education institutions as more 'entrepreneurial', as centres to drive innovation systems and provide knowledge and research to business, industry and policy-making processes (Etzkowitz, & Leydesdorff, 2000). The model implies increased cooperation between the spheres of government, business/industry and higher education/research/academia. This has also become a significant dimension of public policy intervention and initiatives in the private sector and civil society settings. The Triple Helix model of university-industry-government relations was perceived as mostly irrelevant to the Western Balkan countries, because of well-known deficiencies of the three aspects of the model, such as low scientific capacities both in the private and the public sectors, low R&D investments, absence of high-end technologies and the lack of strategic innovation governance. The recent "*Triple Helix*

Systems of Innovation" concept introduces a new concept by bridging key features of the Triple Helix model with the innovation systems theory as discussed above and is thus relevant to a certain extent in Kosovo as well.

TRIPLE HELIX MODEL AND RELEVANCE TO THE WESTERN BALKAN

The triple helix model is considered as a policy mechanism for regional development in South East Europe, whereby due to the relative lack of knowledge-production enterprises and developed research institutes, higher education institutions are the most prominent knowledge actors (Etzkowitz, & Zhou, 2006). While it is generally accepted that higher education institutions through cooperation with the business and government sphere could contribute to economic growth and regional development in emerging economy contexts too (Huggins & Strakova, 2012), a particular area of research is interested in exploring the factors that enhance or hinder the role and the potentialities of higher education institutions as centres of training, education, research and knowledge-creation in the encouragement of a

knowledge based - regional development. The Triple Helix model (Leydesdorff 1997, 2000; Etzkowitz, 2008) was initially considered as mostly not relevant to the WB countries because of the limits of the three helices such as low scientific capacities both in the private and the public sectors, low R&D investments, absence of frontier technologies and the lack of strategic innovation governance (Švarc, 2014: 239). Recently a new perspective has been presented in the Triple Helix Systems of Innovation concept (Ranga and Etzkowitz, 2013), which integrates key elements of the Triple Helix model with the innovation systems paradigm (Carlsson, 2003). Thus a Triple Helix System is defined as a set of components (institutional and individual actors; R&D innovators; non-R&D), relationships (technology transfer, research and business collaborations) and functions (knowledge, innovation and consensus spaces) that generate and promote innovation. This updated model of the Triple Helix is relevant to the WB countries as it acknowledges the role of non-R&D innovators; a considerable part of the innovation process is not technology and R&D driven. This also correlates with the argument above that R&D in the WB countries should be seen in terms of applied research with socio-economic relevance (Radošević, 2014; Radošević & Lepori, 2009). In addition, the Triple Helix model can be applied in the Western Balkan Countries due to the following arguments: first, the competitiveness of the WBC cannot be sustained in the long run without the improvement of the absorption capabilities and the upgrading of technology; second, considering the weak business R&D in the WBC, the universities are the main generator and disseminator of knowledge and promoters of new technologies and thus their role as a helix is of particular relevance in WBC and can impact directly the economic structure; third, considering the weaknesses of each of the helices in the WB, it is necessary to enhance the communication and interaction between university-government and university/research – industry/business as preconditions for the successful implementation of the Triple Helix model (Švarc, 2014: 241). Therefore, instead of dismissing the model completely it is

required to explore a contextual fit to the WBC economies.

One of the biggest challenges in this case is to make research and innovation more attractive for the business sector and industry and encourage a spirit of entrepreneurship. In this sense, public and private actions shall focus more on standard business development issues such as innovation management, acquisition of new technology, investment in human capital, funding of research etc. than to the commercialization of scientific research (Švarc, 2014: 243). In addition to the development of business competences for R&D and innovation, the implementation of the Triple Helix model is related to the improvement of innovation policies at the national and regional level. An example of this is the World Bank's Western Balkans Regional R&D Strategy for Innovation (World Bank 2013) under the auspice of the Regional Cooperation Council.

METHODS

The paper seeks to discover in what ways, if at all, can the Triple Helix, i.e. partnership between government, business and research/ academia be developed in Albania. To this purpose the project used qualitative methods such as focus groups with governmental organisations, HEIs and research centres, business representatives and semi-structured interviews with local stakeholders as well as desk research and secondary resources. The main resources used were: policy documents, reports from international organizations, secondary data from governmental institutions, independent and non-governmental organization as well as project reports. The fieldwork includes focus groups with representatives from the government, business sector and research/HEIs. Three focus groups were organised in Albania (23 participants in total, one moderator and an assistant researcher to take notes and record) as per the three spheres: government, business and HEIs (research/academia). The participants were contacted from the list of institutions working on research and development per each country in cooperation with the EC funded

Tempus Project on linking science and society for sustainable development and innovation¹. The aim of the focus groups was to evaluate the dynamics and the level of development of the Triple Helix in Albania. The sample for the online semi-structured interviews is 41 convenient-based sampling given the list of institutions involved and they were conducted in September – October 2014. A total of 41 institutions were selected in Albania and were classified based on the type of institution and field of expertise or operation, for instance higher education institution offering programmes in architecture and urban planning such as Polis University.

MAKING A CASE FOR TRIPLE HELIX IN ALBANIA

The stakeholders involved in the focus groups and in the online questionnaire come primarily from three main areas of activity in Albania: (i) socio-economic; (ii) environment and urban planning; (iii) agriculture and food. These cover various specific issues such as local governance, human rights, good governance, infrastructure, urban planning, education and research, agriculture, creative industries, cultural and historical heritage, environment, technology, public health, architecture and structural design, energy, culture, public diplomacy and other. The stakeholders included in the survey represent the two helices of the Triple Helix model, i.e. the universities/research and the private sector, i.e. business and industry. Whereas in the focus groups representatives from the third helix, the government sphere, were also included. As expected from the survey of the literature and policy documents in the WBC and more concretely in Albania, knowledge-based economy, regional development and innovation have emerged as priority policy issues. As such, the vast majority of the stakeholders confirm that their organisation/institution is currently involved in activities related to sustainable

development and innovation, for instance 67% of the socio-economic stakeholders declare to be currently working on sustainable development; 84,6% of the environmental stakeholders work on issues of sustainable development and innovation in area such as urban planning, architecture and design, landscape and environment, technology and materials, energy, water and pollution; 78% of the agriculture stakeholders are involved in issues of sustainable development and innovation in areas such as plant protection, environment and ecology, aquaculture and fisheries, technologies and materials, food and biotechnology.

As far as the collaborations with research and higher education institutions on issues related to sustainable development and innovation, the type and frequency of collaborations differ across the different sectors. 33% of the stakeholders from the socio-economic sector confirm established collaboration with the research/higher education sphere. This is mainly done in the form of common activities such as conferences, roundtables, workshops, joint publication or awareness raising campaigns. For instance, the European University of Tirana has initiated various activities to promote the research-business cooperation in Albania such as: A series of roundtables on 'New ideas from academia for new entrepreneurship'; establishment of Labour Market Boards in each department to link study programmes to the market demands; establishment of a Centre for R&D and Consulting; prioritizing the university profile as a business university, i.e. working closely with businesses to develop curricula, conduct research, work placement and internships for students; common grants for R&D projects etc. Regional universities such as F. S. Noli University of Korça seek to work in the same direction, but by focusing on local businesses and development issues. However, indicators for concrete outputs and impact are yet to be fully established and measured. Whereas in the area of environment and agriculture as well as electronics and technology (Polytechnic University) are to some extent more identifiable. In this sense, more than 70% of the

¹ The project ConSus - 'Connecting Science-Society Collaborations for Sustainability Innovations' is funded by the European Commission and led by the University of Graz, for more on the project visit the webpage: <http://consus.allafine.com/project.php>.

environmental stakeholders have in place established collaborations with the research/ higher education field and 18,2% of which have been established for more than 10 years as shown in Figure 3 below. In addition, the findings from the focus groups reveal that the collaboration research-business in the field of environment and urban planning has been successful in influencing the government policy as well. For instance Co-PLAN, the Institute for Habitat Development, which works with the POLIS University. Co-PLAN is a non-profit organization established in 1995. The research and consultative work of Co-PLAN built upon four expertise areas: Spatial Planning and Land Development, Urban and Regional Governance, Urban Environmental Management, with Research constituting a cross-cutting, shared feature by all three teams.

Upon the successful experience of CO-PLAN, POLIS University was established in 2006 with programmes focusing entirely on Architecture, Urban Planning, Environment and Energy. The institutions now work closely in research and development in the area of architecture and environment as mentioned above. Currently, the Institute for Research and Development at POLIS University coordinates activities with the Faculties which carry out scientific research in service of the academic process through 2 specialized units: MAD Center & Gallery (Multimedia, Art, Design); and SUST_Lab (the Laboratory of Environmental, Structural, and Energetic Sustainability). This model can be seen as the first attempts of the functioning of the Triple Helix in Albania in the field of environment, urban and spatial planning and energy, where research, government and business have created spaces for interaction and collaborations for sustainable development and innovation.

What is more, the Agriculture University of Tirana (UBT) has now established a legacy of successful cooperation with the government and the business sector. For instance, some key stakeholders are: Department of Plant Protection (National Laboratory of Plant Protection); Department of Aquaculture and Fisheries (Laboratory of Aquaculture and

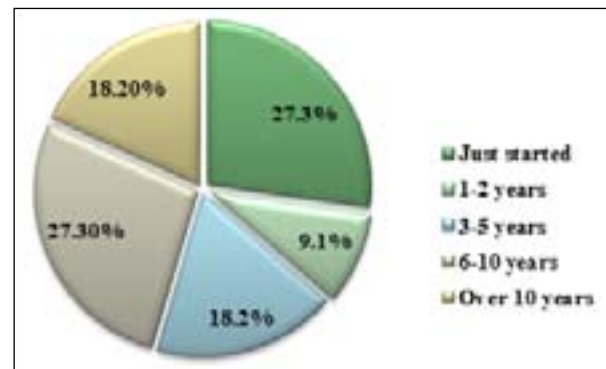


Figure 1: Collaboration research and business in the environment area

Fisheries); Department of Agro-Environment and Ecology (Laboratory of Environment); Faculty of Biotechnology and Food (Laboratory of Food Research. The rationale behind such identification was the existing and pending links of such entities with industry and society. The survey shows that the first three entities in the list have already established links with the industry whereas the Faculty of Biotechnology and Food, in view of legislative modification, foresees promising activity in that connection. UBT has been actively participating in EC funded projects such as Tempus, Erasmus Mundus and IPA. What is more, 25,5% of the projects funded by ARTI in 2010 were developed by UBT as per the ERA Watch observation. The survey shows that when it comes to the involvement of stakeholders in transfer of knowledge and R&D, the highest level of involvement comes from the environment stakeholders both from science and business sector with 92,3% as shown in Figure 4 and then followed by the agriculture sector with 89%.

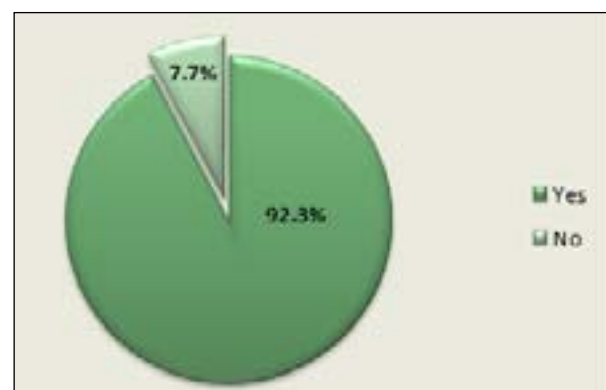


Figure 2: Involvement in knowledge transfer and R&D in the environment sector

The socio-economic stakeholders from both the science/research and business sector are less involved in the transfer of knowledge and conventional R&D compared to the environment and agriculture sectors. However, the interest is increasing as shown in Figure 3.

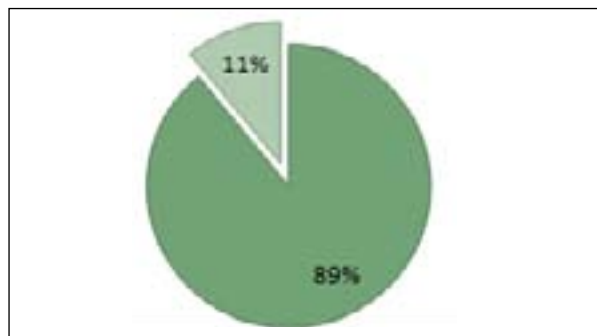


Figure 3: Agriculture sector involvement in transfer of knowledge and R&D

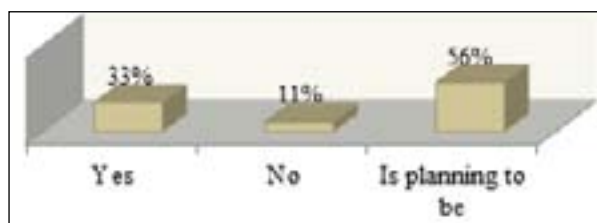


Figure 4: Socio-economic stakeholders involvement in knowledge transfer and R&D

The findings from the focus groups highlight that the most important actions to improve research and business collaboration are:

- Improvement of the dialogue between stakeholders; Establish dialog and communication between science and industry by using a variety of instruments such as thematic workshops, brokerage events, mobility schemes to foster science and industry cooperation;
- Strengthening research and business collaborations through funding mechanisms for companies to projects to higher education institutions (PhD projects) and research centres;
- Provide strategic Innovation consultancy to SMEs and establish an innovation coaching scheme to train entrepreneurs on innovation management;

- More funding for knowledge/technology transfer activities and expert consultations and more funding for collaborative research between universities and businesses

When considering the role of the stakeholders in the R&D system, the participants in the focus groups argued that the most important stakeholders are: SMEs; professional and industrial association (Business Albania, AITA); universities and research centers. Whilst state and local regulations as well as expert assistance, seem critical for innovative performance today, investment in human resources and in infrastructure emerges as crucial to enhance cooperation in the future. In addition, research and business strengthened communication is necessary to build a common agenda for applied research with social-economic relevance that fits to the Albanian context. Suggested instruments by the stakeholders in the survey are:

- Investment in knowledge and technology sharing, expert consultations and collaborative research;
- Decrease in regulation;
- Strengthening of human resources;
- Improvements in infrastructure (including ICT);
- Building awareness on innovation benefits;
- Fostering mobility;
- Enhancing communication between different stakeholders.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The stakeholders from the socio-economic, environment and agricultural sectors involved in the focus groups and survey for this research project confirmed their interest in sustainable development and innovation in principle through collaboration between government, research and business/industry sector. The majority of them have already initiated activities and collaborations in the field of sustainability

development and innovation with the highest level of activities and collaborations from the stakeholders working in environment issues. The forms of the output of such collaboration are common projects, institutionalized networks, publications, conferences and policy recommendations as well as awareness raising campaigns. However, the transfer of knowledge and R&D in the sustainable development and innovation is less applied among socio-economic stakeholders than environmental and agriculture stakeholders. The latter apply a more active approach when it comes to the transfer of knowledge in the sustainable development and innovation as well as R&D activities, compared to socio-economic stakeholders. This report though does not have data from other sectors such as electronic, information technology, construction etc., which would be interested to explore the frequency and type of collaboration in the Triple Helix and impact on social and economic disparities. Future research should elaborate an econometric model to measure concrete impact of the R&D and innovation on the possible reduction of social and economic disparities at regional level in Kosovo and Albania. In addition, further data shall be collected in order to statistically measure the impact of Triple Helix on economic and social disparities at a regional level.

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