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EU ACCESSION AND ENLARGEMENT
ALBANIAN JOURNEY AND SITUATION
(LEADERSHIP, SOME FROM PAST, PRESENT TOWARDS
THE FUTURE)

Dissertation Thesis

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**UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS IN BRATISLAVA
FACULTY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

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DECLARATION OF HONOUR

I honestly declare that I have elaborated thesis of a doctoral dissertation project separately and that the information's taken from other recourses are indicated accordingly.

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ABSTRACT

ILJAZI-MOTRO, Elida: EU ACCESSION AND ENLARGEMENT ALBANIAN JOURNEY AND SITUATION (LEADERSHIP, SOME FROM PAST, PRESENT TOWARDS THE FUTURE). – University of Economics in Bratislava. Faculty of International Relations; Department of International Economic Relations and Economic Diplomacy. - Supervisor Dr. habil. Ing. Eva Jančíková, PhD. – Bratislava: FIR, 2024, 151 pp.

The aim of our research is to highlight the traits of past and present leaders in Albania, a developing country aspiring to join the EU, and compare these traits with those of an interviewed sample of youth. The work is divided into five chapters. It contains 5 figures, 8 tables. The first chapter titled "Current state of the theme" provides a comprehensive overview of several aspects related to Albania's history, economy, and its path towards European Union (EU) membership. Further, the chapter addresses the significant workload and challenges faced by political elites in countries aspiring for EU membership. The chapter delves into leadership theories, discussing various aspects such as the contradiction between local leadership decisions and EU fundamentals, the authoritarian practices of Balkan elites, cognitive resources' impact on organizational performance, and traits related to political leadership. The second chapter defines the aims and partial objectives and formulates the research questions. The third chapter describes the methods used in the research. The results of the research shown in the chapter 4 with the characteristics and leadership traits of different generations and historical figures in Albania. It begins by analyzing the traits of 90 Generation Z students, offering insights into the attributes of this emerging generation. The analysis then transitions into detailed case studies of eight prominent Albanian leaders, covering over a century of the country's political history. The leaders studied include Ismail Qemali, Fan Noli, Ahmet Zogu, Enver Hoxha, Sali Berisha, Fatos Nano, Ilir Meta and Edi Rama. Fifth chapter deals with the discussion issues and the dissertation ends with the conclusion. Overall, the research sought to illuminate the dynamics of leadership in Albania, explore the potential of new leaders, and identify effective leadership qualities for the nation's future.

Keywords:

Albania, EU integration, Balkan elites, leadership theories, dominant traits, Z generation

ABSTRAKT

ILJAZI-MOTRO, Elida: VSTUP DO EÚ A ALBÁNSKA CESTA A SITUÁCIA (LEADERSHIP, POHĽAD DO MINULOSTI, SÚČASNOSŤ A BUDÚCNOSŤ). – Ekonomická univerzita v Bratislave. Fakulta medzinárodných vzťahov; Katedra medzinárodných ekonomických vzťahov a hospodárskej diplomacie. Vedúci práce Dr. habil. Ing. Eva Jančíková, PhD. – Bratislava: FMV, 2024, 151 strán.

Cieľom nášho výskumu je poukázať na črty minulých a súčasných lídrov v Albánsku, rozvojovej krajine aspirujúcej na vstup do EÚ, a porovnať tieto črty s črtami opýtanej vzorky mládeže. Práca je rozdelená do piatich kapitol. Obsahuje 5 obrázkov, 8 tabuliek. Prvá kapitola s názvom „Súčasný stav riešenia problematiky“ poskytuje komplexný prehľad niekoľkých aspektov súvisiacich s históriou Albánska, hospodárstvom a jeho cestou k členstvu v Európskej únii (EÚ). Ďalej sa kapitola venuje značnému pracovnému zaťaženiu a výzvam, ktorým čelia politické elity v krajinách aspirujúcich na členstvo v EÚ. Kapitola tiež rozoberá teórie vedenia, rozoberá rôzne aspekty, ako je rozpor medzi rozhodnutiami miestneho vedenia a základmi EÚ, autoritárske praktiky balkánskych elít, vplyv kognitívnych zdrojov na výkonnosť organizácie a črty súvisiace s politickým vedením. Druhá kapitola definuje ciele a čiastkové ciele a formuluje výskumné otázky. Tretia kapitola popisuje metódy použité pri výskume. Výsledky výskumu uvedené v kapitole 4 s charakteristikami a vodcovskými črtami rôznych generácií a historických osobností v Albánsku. Začína sa analýzou vlastností 90 študentov generácie Z a ponúka pohľad na vlastnosti tejto nastupujúcej generácie. Analýza potom prechádza do podrobných prípadových štúdií ôsmich prominentných albánskych lídrov, ktoré pokrývajú viac ako storočie politickej histórie krajiny. Medzi skúmaných lídrov patria Ismail Qemali, Fan Noli, Ahmet Zogu, Enver Hodža, Sali Berisha, Fatos Nano, Ilir Meta a Edi Rama. Piata kapitola sa venuje diskusii a dizertačná práca sa končí záverom. Celkovo sa výskum snažil osvetliť dynamiku vodcovstva v Albánsku, preskúmať potenciál nových vodcov a identifikovať efektívne vodcovské kvality pre budúcnosť národa.

Keywords:

Albánsko, EU integrácia, balkánske elity, teórie vodcovstva, dominantné vlastnosti, Z generácia

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Introduction

This dissertation delves into the exploration of leadership traits across different eras in Albania, comparing the characteristics of historical and contemporary leaders with those of the younger generation. Albania, a nation at a crucial stage of its development, is fervently working towards European Union membership. This transition period presents a unique opportunity to study the evolving nature of leadership within the context of significant socio-political transformation. The main aim of our research is to highlight the traits of past and present leaders in Albania, a developing country aspiring to join the EU, and compare these traits with those of an interviewed sample of youth. Building long-lasting peace and inclusive, sustainable, and environmentally safe societies, while developing the new generation of leaders, requires more than simply working with them as societal stakeholders.

Organized into five chapters, the first one begins by offering a comprehensive overview of Albania's historical and economic background, into its EU accession journey. It examines Albania's efforts and strategic developments towards integration into the EU, compared with similar endeavors in other Balkan nations, thereby highlighting the unique challenges and prerequisites encountered.

Moving beyond historical and economic contexts, the next part delves into the immense workload and complex challenges that political elites in aspiring EU member countries face. It critically assesses the new EU accession approach and its repercussions on these leaders, with particular attention to the leadership challenges that are emblematic of the Balkan region. Issues such as authoritarian tendencies among the elites and their impact on Albania's EU aspirations are scrutinized, providing insights into the dynamics of leadership in the face of rigorous EU accession criteria.

Furthermore, the dissertation explores leadership theories that shed light on the interplay between local decision-making processes and the rigorous fundamentals of the EU. This analysis includes an examination of the authoritarian practices prevalent among Balkan elites, the influence of cognitive resources on organizational performance, and the intrinsic traits that define political leadership. This theoretical framework aids in understanding the intricate challenges and complexities of leadership within the EU accession context.

The subsequent chapters expand on this foundation by presenting a particular analysis of the leadership traits of different generations and notable figures in Albania's political landscape.

The discussion spans over a century of political history, examining the lives and leadership styles of eight prominent leaders, from Ismail Qemali's foundational role in the state to the current prime minister, Edi Rama. This historical narrative is intertwined with a modern perspective, analyzing the traits of 90 Generation Z students to uncover trends and shifts in leadership attributes.

The final chapter outlines the dual-method research approach utilized, comprising both quantitative surveys and qualitative case studies. This methodology ensures a comprehensive examination of the traits and aspirations of Albania's youth in comparison to its seasoned leaders, aiming to forecast the potential future political engagement and leadership styles that might emerge among the new generation.

By integrating objective historical data with subjective analytical perspectives, this research not only provides a balanced view of the leadership capabilities observed but also aims to contribute significantly to the discourse on effective leadership qualities necessary for Albania's future on the European stage. The insights brought in from this study are intended to aid in identifying and nurturing the leadership potential within the next generation, ensuring Albania's successful integration into the European Union and its effective governance in the years to come.

1 Current state of the theme

The Republic of Albania is situated in the Balkan Peninsula, as part of Southeast Europe. It borders via land with Montenegro and Kosovo in the north, North Macedonia and Greece in the east and south, and Italy via the waters of the Adriatic and Ionian seas in the west.

Albania holds membership in NATO, UN, OSCE, the Council of Europe, the World Trade Organization, and the Organization for Islamic Cooperation, and is a founding member of the Union for the Mediterranean. The country is an official candidate for membership of the European Union since January 2003 and officially applied for membership on April 28, 2009.

Tirana is the capital and the center of the economic, political, and cultural life of the country with a population of 610,070 out of the country's total of 3,038,594 (2016).

1.1 Basic starting points for Albanian history and economy

The country gained its independence in 1912 right after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. For a period of more than two decades, Albania was a principality, republic, and kingdom. In 1939 it was invaded by Italian troops which created Greater Albania and then in 1943 after the occupation, was declared a Nazi protectorate.

After the end of the Second World War, the communists took power led by Enver Hoxha who ruled the country for almost five decades as a People's Republic, the only one that in 1967 abolished religion by law and ruled with an iron fist, almost total, self-imposed isolation from the world. The system collapsed in 1991 and the socialist republic became the Republic of Albania, as a parliamentary democracy. Since then, Albania has struggled with an economy in transition aiming to create a free market and open for the first time to foreign investments. The main developments remain in the energy and transport infrastructure.

The fall of communism towards the post-communist pluralism in the 1990s and on in the Central and Eastern Europe came as per complex interaction between external and internal factors (McDermott, 2013). Worth mentioning are the ones that totally rocked the Albanian society and its already weakened establishment in the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. The Gorbachev phenomenon, the revolutionary processes that started in Poland and continued in Hungary, the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria, started to create the hope that the Cold War was ending and communism was giving away.

As per the report of R. Craig “Communist authoritarianism in the Balkans was not seriously challenged from within. Economic growth and modernization, the intimidation of dissent, and relative international stability allowed the repressive regimes in power to achieve at least the passive allegiance of a critical mass of citizens. Nationalism was also used and manipulated by all of the ruling satraps as a means for cementing support. Tito reacted to popular disaffection in the late 1960s and early 1970s by granting greater autonomy to Yugoslavia’s constituent nations. Hoxha justified his radical isolationism as a means for preserving Albania’s unique national essence”. (Craig R. , 2003)

The only realistic option for the Albanian people that appeared in the political horizon was the coveted West. The states after the communist collapse in the Balkans, with the images that first came out to the world, were ‘as a land beyond the pale of civilization’ (McDermott, 2013). First with the collapse of Yugoslavia sprang to the world picture all the unsolved ethnic issues of the beginning of the 20th century that the Yugoslav Confederation had kept in. Local wars that started one by one in the area, made the international community be at loss of understanding the dynamics and make sense of the chaos there. The whole region had been left to rekindle the nationalist ideas as they were before the Cold War. Europe was ‘reluctant to engage the new democratic states of the region unambiguously’ (McDermott, 2013). It soon became obvious that different designs of putting order in the Balkans were needed to replace the traditional.

What started with mild efforts from within the collapse of the whole system, in 1990, the shift from a one-party system towards democracy continued persuasively and without turning back when Albania become a member of the Council of Europe and NATO. Albania was a member of the United Nations since 1955. It holds memberships in the United Nations Economic and Social Council, ECOSOC, the Council of Human Rights of the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the International Organization for Migration, the World Health Organization, the Union for the Mediterranean, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie.

On the road to EU accession, Albania partakes also in the IPA multi-country and regional programs benefiting from participation in five cross-border cooperation programs and other international cooperation programs. It is through this support that Albania is part of EU

programs Erasmus+, Creative Europe (Culture and Media strands), Employment and Social Innovation, Horizon 2020, Customs 2020, Fiscalis 2020, Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Programme (COSME), Justice, Europe for Citizens and EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) (observer).

From 1992-97 the state knew progress in establishing strategic partnerships and crucial alliances both with the United States of America and Europe leaving behind once and for all the isolation and barren diplomacy.

The Albanians politics considers the admission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in April 2009 as a great achievement for the foreign policy of the country. Its engagement with the organization has grown in the years aiming to be a strong factor of stability and peace in the Balkans.

The foreign policy of the new democracy comprises a lot of the modern state challenges, such as the establishing and development of relations with other states, when the priorities remain unstable with the strategic partnership with United States of America and the European Union. USA has been historically supporting the Albanian's independence and the growth of democracy. George W. Bush was the first US President that visited Albania in 2007. Both countries have signed many mutual agreements and treaties together. The accession to the EU has been in the core of its diplomacy as well as enlarging the international recognition of the Kosovo state, the unresolved issue and rights of the Cham Albanians and protecting the rights of the Albanians of Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia of the North, Greece, Serbia, Italy and the diaspora. The two countries of Albania and Kosovo have deep ties that go back to the history sharing same cultural, social and economic roots. During the 1998 genocide against Albanians by the Milosevic regime, after the fall of Yugoslavia, Albania played a crucial role both in the assisting of the displaced population of round half a million and the securing of peace after the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia.

As per McDermott "Yugoslavia permitted civilized cohabitation between its diverse peoples and allowed unresolved national questions to be managed according to something other than zero sum criteria. If the federation was a lost cause, and there are grounds for arguing that in view of the new dynamics created by the end of the Cold War it had at a minimum become dysfunctional, it was urgently necessary to define alternative patterns of regional order capable of addressing the dilemmas traditionally managed by voluntary association. Easily stated in retrospect, the complex circumstances surrounding Yugoslavia's decline made this

a difficult conclusion to grasp and act upon when it counted. Faced with dramatically altered circumstances and hosts of unknowns, Yugoslavia's citizenry and the international community should have striven to preserve the federation at all costs as the only instrument capable of providing a stable framework for transition toward new patterns of interaction. Whether through neglect, disorientation, or active support for new political forces bent upon sowing the wind of nationalism, they did not do so, and would reap the whirlwind of war". (McDermott, 2013).

The outbreak of the violence that characterized the whole Balkan between 1990-2000 were brought about mainly because of the rapid decline of the economies, the internal political weakening of the governments and the all the time more powerful nationalistic inner groups with fundamental views for the future of the countries. These crucial historic movements of transitioning to democracy and market economies were happening at a time of extensive change in the global political system, as well. (Paul C.)

State Disaster and Frail Governance (1991-2000).

The fall of the one-party system was long, continuous and painful for the population as it gave way to the raise and strengthening of the organized crime attached with the nationalist political agendas. There was a very thin layer between the political leaders and often the local mafia. The nationalist agendas brought to the public consumption the ancient hatred and fed it with zeal thus keeping the state in a very frail condition and at times quite close to the total state failure. The problems that accompanied this time were "weak governance, nationalist politics, and rampant corruption. These problems overlapped and fed a mutually reinforcing cycle in which state-sanctioned corruption alienated the region's populations, which, in turn, sought protection and welfare from nationalist leaders and sectarian political parties, further sharpening the cleavage between the opposing ethnic groups" as per (Paul C.).

The kind of capitalism that was being created was the most uncontrolled, ruleless and ruthless but it did provide unimaginative opportunities. The prospects of having and enjoying what had only been the benefits of the former communist nomenklatura, though it had only been in secret and on a much smaller scale, made so many youngsters start whole clandestine routes of smuggling and trafficking people, weapons and later drugs. As the laws of the supply and demand were established in the region, the smuggling and trafficking of human

beings started trafficking illegal migrants and prostitutes mainly from Moldova, Ukraine, Rumania and other former Eastern Bloc countries

The group that added to the devastation and the prolonging of the destabilization of the region, were the illicit war entrepreneurs found in all the parts of Balkan too. These groups made profits by the illegal economy, combining the criminal activities with the violent acts that were rampant in the region. They had the means to start and keep powerful the cross border, black markets. For example, by the end of the 1990s the Bosnian economy is believed to have had the black-market accounting for almost 50% of its economy, with the highest figures in the climax of the violent conflict. (Paul C.).

“Indeed, wartime interethnic cooperation in the form of clandestine trading demonstrated just how thin the line had become between patriotism and criminality. Profit superseded ethnic loyalty as the war took on a self-sustaining logic of its own. Contributing to the pervasiveness of the illicit economy was a shadowy web of partnerships among the very groups that were fighting each other” according to Christopher Paul in “Balkans in 1990-2020”.

In the brutality of the Balkan wars the exploiting influential people had their aim, undoubtedly in the prolonging of the war as they established connections both with their compatriots in need of basic necessities and the other ethnical group, often besieging their land. “Bosnia’s own Muslim warlords controlled the entire economy of the city, trading with the Serb besiegers and then squeezing every last penny out of their compatriots by ratcheting up the price of basic foodstuff, many of which were stolen from the United Nations and other humanitarian organizations,” according to Christopher Paul. The benefits of the underground, black trade was kept for personal profit and channeled towards the nationalist causes.

Quite often the ethnically organized groups called ‘the militia and paramilitary formations’ that led whole cleansing genocides were made of nothing more than “small groups of politically empowered thugs” who were largely “drawn from the ranks of soccer hooligans, criminal gangs, and released prisoners” (Paul C.)

Quite soon these criminal groups got connected to other syndicates, including the Italian mafia (Paul C.) and developed the once owned by the Tito’s time underground mafia to revive using the Balkan peninsula geographical position as a bridge between East and West

quite known as “The Balkan Route” that stretches from Afghanistan and Iran through Turkey-Bulgaria-Yugoslavia-Hungary, or from Albania to Within the Balkans. Albania is a commonly used strategic location, with cocaine, heroin, marijuana, and hashish moving through the country and on to Italy and Greece.

“Drug trafficking in the Balkans is estimated to earn criminal groups approximately \$7 billion per year as drugs make their way from South Asia (with the lion’s share of opium originating in Afghanistan) through the Balkans and on to Western Europe, transported by trucks, cars, speedboats, and large ships” says Christopher (Paul C.)

The trade and smuggling of weapons made the Balkans (Paul C.) a very significant location supplying the wars that swept the whole region during the 1990s, significant because for some of the those forced to fight for survival, the war embargo that was in place, did not see any other way out but comply to the stratospherically high prices, thus producing enormously lucrative profits for the warlords. The fighters of Kosovo Liberation Army during the government collapse in Albania, in early 1997, when the state arms depots were raided and looted, took an influx of weaponry that they used during their liberation from the ethnic cleansing by Milosevich Serbs.

The Balkan Route is reported to continue for smugglers of all kinds besides drugs, guns and people, such as cigarettes, driving stolen automobiles, etc. Lately, after the unrests in the Far East of the years 2015-2018 it has become the location says Christopher (Paul C.) “major human cargo transshipment point” for migrants and women smuggled into Europe, including many from Iran”.

During the armed conflicts in the Balkan, for the soldiers that came to the region as part of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), there have been claims that they “were known to engage in drug trafficking with the help of the Sarajevo mafia. Ukrainian soldiers were among the worst. Reporting suggests that Ukrainian UNPROFOR soldiers imported heroin into Bosnia in UN vehicles”. (Bacon); (Thachuk, 2007).

The transition to capitalism, contrary to the prior popular beliefs, has been long and difficult with challenges that still continue when Albania is in the third decade after the collapse of communism. During these first decades, after 1992 many prominent reforms took place affecting the government, politics, foreign relations, and economy in all its sectors. The social making of society changed as the free movement of people and goods became a reality.

Many new phenomena, totally unknown to Albanians, became familiar like emigration, immigration, drug production and etc.

The governments that came to power after the fall of the monocratic state in 1991 with the election of the Democratic Party, were characterized by poor governance, the existence of the frail regulatory systems cost the state significant amounts of revenues. For the majority in power the process of denationalization of the country's assets was considered an opportunity for personal gains. At the same time the deregulating procedures were seen as golden occasions to act as brokers to earn political power and other connections by unjustly privatizing and seizing profitable state assets. Quite soon in the process, connections to the policy makers or becoming one became a precondition to achieving success economically. The hidden rule of mafia heads brought about the nepotism, clientelism, and rent seeking contributing to the further weakening of the state's capacity. The corrupt officials or police were hard to prosecute of fire because a culture of 'untouchables', the strong with strong ties to politics were above the law. The spotty and erratic law enforcement was only adding to the already established way of doing business informally through smuggling. The tax evasion and the lack of the consistent collecting the border control duties and customs, added to the turning the fragile economy into informal and clandestine. The all-around corruption combined with the rotten bureaucracy that was used in pursuit of personal gain was another obstacle to the creation of effective public institutions

On April 14, 1997, the UN sanctioned the imperative shipping of a "Multinational Protection Force" (MPF) of 7,000 soldiers under the command of Italian troops who landed in Durrës and Vlorë with the task of bringing peace to a country on the verge of state collapse and civil war. Two were the main causes that brought the fragile democracy to face armed confrontational groups. Two-thirds of the population had taken part in several financial pyramid schemes, and with the loss of them, lost considerable sums of money. The validation that the ruling government had done for these schemes added to the general discontent about losing money.

The second reason was the highly disputed legislative elections won by the Democratic Party. The rising dissatisfaction was fueled by the total letting go and opening of the ammunition depots from the communist times. Armed citizens in gangs or "salvation committees" as they called themselves took hold of the towns of the south thus causing a lot

of looting and armed confrontations. More than 2000 people lost their lives during this upsetting time. The MPF left in August of the same year.

The escalation and the infamous collapse of the considerably large financial Ponzi schemes in 1996-1997 and the subsequent six-month social unrest brought the defeat of the government leading the country towards unplanned elections. They were held at the end of July 1997 and were won by the opposition, the Socialist Party.

Only around 2000 did Albania finally return to its 1990s level of income per capita, at which point this income reflected a smaller share of GDP per capita in developed countries than it had a decade earlier. Convergence with developed countries only began after 2000. From 2000 to 2015, Albania's GDP per capita roughly doubled. But as of 2015 it still represented only 9.3% of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) level.

It was during this decade, before 2008, that Albania acknowledged growth and diversification in finance, insurance, and professional services, with call centers presiding in the capital and main cities. The experienced growth both in the domestic demand and the emigration numbers of many young Albanians brought about escalations in wages and investments. Remittances supported the substantial demand for services and constructions, real per capita GDP growth averaging over 6 percent per annum. Moreover, this growth was largely pro-poor, as consumption tended to grow faster for the bottom 40% of households than the top 60% and the national poverty rate fell from 25.4% in 2002 to 12.5% in 2008. Remittances played a major role in the growth process with inflows averaging 15.2 percent of GDP between 2000 and 2008.

Continuing were the fashion sector of textiles and footwear which were Italian direct investment since early 1990s. This is the decade that Albania experienced a lowdown of economic growth, especially after 2008. The deep recession of Italy and Greece, which were the closest business allies in the trade and investment, would consequently reflect in this. Both the remittances of the Albanian emigrants and the direct investments towards Albania depended heavily on their economic situation. The fashion sector encountered the risk of factory relocations to cheaper countries because of the growing price competition. The leadership that the construction sector had taken in the growth of the past decade, quickly came to an end after 2008.

The two other sectors that were anticipated to evolve into bigger and substantial productivity, agriculture and tourism, did not result into the expected leap ahead.

Regardless the above hardships, growth rates were retained during the course of the Euro-crisis, unlike the other countries of the Western Balkan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia. Kosovo too, did not experience stagnation during this crisis. Albania had a milder move to lower annual growth after 2008, beginning to recover only gradually after 2013.

For the period 2013-2016 the experts are not of the consent that the Albanian economy has leapt ahead to a new high growth curve, but there are signs that there is a slow transition to a more sustainable growth model. Real GDP growth for 2016 is estimated at above 3% and Albania has seen moderate yet consistent growth across sectors and a gradually falling rate of unemployment since mid-2014. While the level of growth since 2013 was seen as an accomplishment during a period where Albania both undertook an IMF adjustment program and saw the price of oil exports collapse, remaining insufficient to support a rapid convergence with high-income countries.

The challenge remained the improvement of the policy effectiveness and governance. Albania, as part of the South East Europe (SEE) countries was directed to achieve “greater inter-ministerial coordination, established policies based on international and OECD best practices with higher monitoring and impact valuations in improving the desing of policies to raise the responsibility adhering to legal standards”. (CECD, 2018)

Investment in human capital and labor market reforms, including increasing early childhood education access, addressing skill gaps in sectors like tourism, and promoting formal employment, alongside enhancing support for job seekers and boosting innovation through digitalization and R&D, was essential for transitioning to a knowledge-based society.

Financial accessibility for businesses, particularly SMEs, was improved by developing alternative financing methods like venture capital and enhancing frameworks for insolvency restructuring. Addressing the broader economic environment involved implementing fair competition practices, improving FDI-SME linkages, and enhancing anti-corruption measures. Strengthening regional infrastructure, transport, and energy connectivity, along with ensuring environmental sustainability and aligning energy policies with climate goals,

were also key areas that needed attention. These initiatives supported the overall competitiveness and sustainable development of the SEE region. (CECD, 2018)

By 2019, Albania had made noteworthy progress in its investment climate, “outperforming the average OECD country in the OECD FDI Regulatory Restrictiveness Index and reducing trade barriers in key services sectors like air transport and telecommunications, becoming one of the least restrictive economies in the Western Balkans. Additionally, Albania enhanced its global tax compliance by participating in the BEPS framework and made educational strides in the OECD PISA assessments, though still below EU and OECD averages. The country also achieved the highest rate of women's employment in the region”. (OECD, 2021)

One challenge the country started to face was the vulnerability to natural disasters and the risks from unregulated building practices. The earthquakes of November 2019 made the need to modernize building codes and update seismic maps a necessity to deal with. Next challenges had to do with the underfunded public research sector to boost the quality of research outputs as ‘the public scientific research sector was notably underfunded, with public spending on research and development at only 0.06% of GDP in 2018, underscoring the need for increased investment to enhance the attractiveness and quality of scientific research’ (OECD, 2021). The requisite to better integrate digital skills into educational and training programs or lifelong learning programs to meet labor market demands addressing the evident digital skills gap. It's worth mentioning the challenge faced by the financial sector. Although its framework was in place, it needed diversification away from being predominantly bank-dominated. Expanding into factoring and leasing could encourage broader economic growth beyond traditional lending schemes.

Regardless of the destructive effects of the pandemic lock down of 2020 because of the Covid 2019, Albania's economy had shown remarkable growth, notably exceeding expectations in 2022 with a GDP growth rate of 4.8 percent, surpassing the projected 3.7 percent. Two sectors were the fuel behind this vigorous growth, the revitalization of tourism and increase of the electricity production. The positive trend continued into 2023, where the economy recorded a 3.2 percent year-over-year growth in the second quarter. There was a persisted progression due to the solid national consumption and continuous activity in the services and construction sectors adding to the significant increases in tourist arrivals and electricity production. (Uma Ramakrishnan, 2023).

The restored public debt ratios to pre-pandemic levels supported by the appreciation of the local currency have been included in the applied strategic fiscal policies. The managed inflation, lower than the Western Balkans, is “expected to have a continued decline”. (Prez, 2023)

The vision of joining the EU seems to motivate Albania to challenge its old essential issues. Deficiencies in the rule of law, continuous issues of corruption, significant emigration driven by the prospect of better earnings in EU countries, a higher poverty rate compared to its neighboring countries and low credit penetration, remain the hindering blocs to the economic development. Furthermore “the motivation for implementing reforms had been inconsistent, influenced by the fluctuating pace of the EU accession process. The uneven adoption of recommendations from the International Monetary Fund also highlighted the need for a more steadfast commitment to policy changes.” (Uma Ramakrishnan, 2023).

The Albanian government seems to be actively targeting to address the international and internal challenges in its commitment to meet the requirements of the EU accession. The primary concerns remain the geopolitical tensions, climate-related disruptions in the energy sector, and persistent inflation, which currently stands at around 4% but is expected to decrease to the central bank’s target of 3% by early 2025. (Prez, 2023)

The issues that need to be confronted are related to the “several productivity and living standard barriers, including widespread informality, governance weaknesses, labor force participation gender gaps, high youth inactivity, and infrastructural deficiencies. High worker emigration rates and an aging population also threaten sustainable growth” (Prez, 2023).

The reforms Albania is undertaking to line up with EU standards, intending to influence viable economic growth as per EU membership criteria, include fiscal adjustments to reduce public debt and improve tax collection and public investment management; enhanced monetary policy effectiveness, and reduced vulnerabilities in the financial sector which are crucial for building a stable and inclusive economy and ensuring steady progress towards EU integration.(Prez, 2023).

The following Figure 1 gives in short the components of Albania's real GDP in an assessment of the country's economic health and its potential growth opportunities. The focus on effective policy interventions and strategic investments related to the household

consumption, government spending, investment, net exports, and changes in inventories, can contribute towards the aimed sustainable growth and diversification.

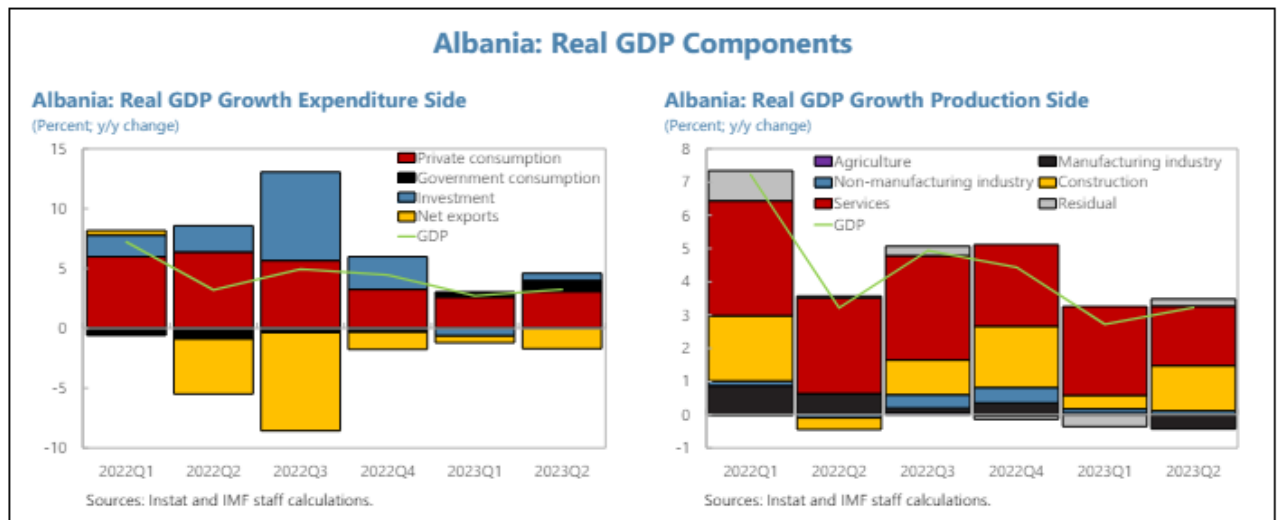


Figure 1: Albania: Real GDP Components

Source: Instat and IMF staff calculations

Despite challenges such as political instability and economic disparities, Albania continues to pursue integration with the European Union, undertaking extensive reforms to align with EU standards. The country's real GDP growth is supported by key sectors like construction, energy, tourism, and agriculture, reflecting a dynamic economy on the path to greater stability and prosperity, (see Figure 2).

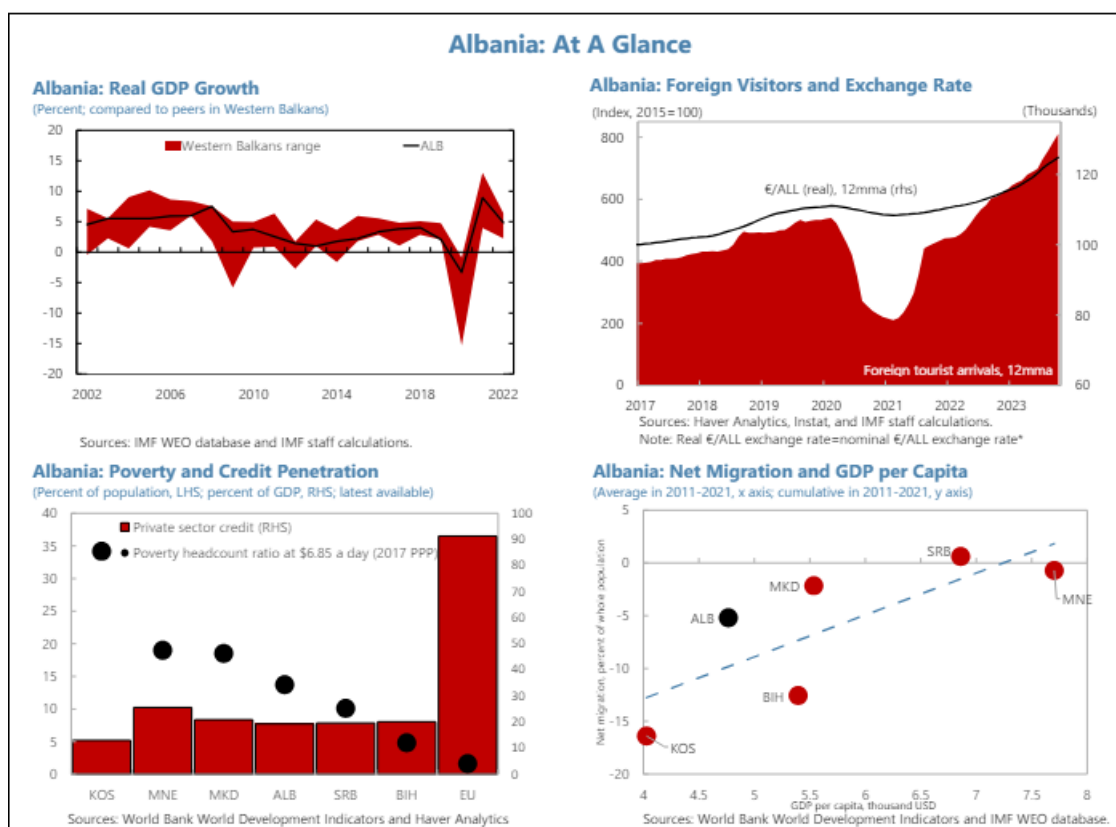


Figure 2: Albania: At A Glance

Sources: World Bank World Development Indicators and IMF WEO database.

Albania's inflation includes both headline and core rates, with headline inflation driven mainly by rising energy and food prices. Core inflation, excluding these volatile items, remains more stable. Key contributors to headline inflation are transportation, housing, and utilities costs. While wage growth in sectors like tourism, construction, and services has somewhat matched inflation, many workers face real wage erosion. The labor market shows improvement, with decreasing unemployment rates and increasing labor force participation. However, structural unemployment and the need for better workforce skills remain challenges. Continued efforts in education and training are essential for sustaining these labor market gains and enhancing living standards.

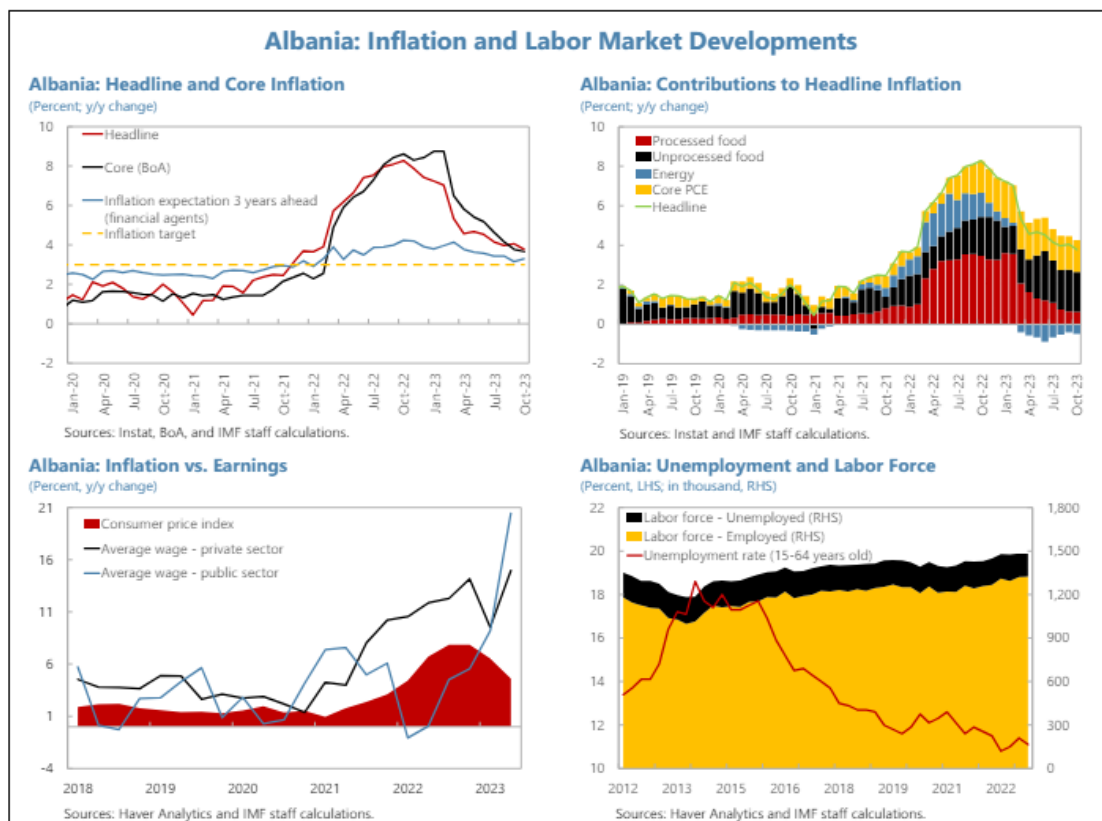


Figure 3: Albania: Inflation and Labor Market Developments
Sources: Haver Analytics and IMF staff calculations

Albania's economy is experiencing steady growth, fueled by the tourism, construction, and energy sectors. Employment rates are on the rise, although challenges such as youth unemployment and skill gaps persist. The government is focused on reducing deficits and managing public debt, while the central bank maintains prudent monetary policies to balance growth and inflation. Private sector credit is on the upswing, and the Albanian lek remains stable against major currencies. These indicators highlight Albania's ongoing progress and efforts to maintain economic stability and growth. **(Table 1)**

Table 1: Albania: Selected Economic Indicators

Albania: Selected Economic Indicators					
Population: 2.8 million (2022)	Per capita GDP (\$): 6743 (2022)				
Life expectancy (years): 76.5 (2022)	Literacy rate: 99% (2022)				
Nominal GDP (\$bn): 18.9 (2022)	Poverty rate: 25.2% (2022)				
Quota: SDR 139.3 million (0.03 percent of total)					
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
				<i>Proj.</i>	
Output					
Real GDP growth (%)	-3.3	8.9	4.8	3.6	3.3
Output gap (%)	-5.8	-0.4	1.0	0.8	0.5
Employment					
Unemployment rate (%)	11.7	11.4	11.1	11.0	11.0
Prices					
Inflation (% average)	1.6	2.0	6.7	4.8	4.0
Inflation (% end-period)	1.1	3.7	7.4	3.8	3.6
General government finances					
Revenues (% GDP)	25.9	27.5	26.8	28.0	27.4
Expenditures (% GDP)	32.6	32.1	30.4	30.2	29.9
Fiscal balance (% GDP)	-6.7	-4.6	-3.7	-2.2	-2.5
Public debt (% GDP) 1/ 2/	75.8	75.2	65.5	61.1	60.4
Primary balance (% GDP)	-4.6	-2.7	-1.8	0.0	0.2
Money and credit					
Broad money (% change)	10.5	8.6	5.2	6.4	6.4
Credit to the private sector (% change)	8.9	8.6	7.0	4.3	3.6
Policy rate (% end-period)	0.5	0.5	2.8
Balance of payments					
Current account (% GDP)	-8.7	-7.7	-6.0	-3.5	-4.4
FDI (% GDP)	-6.7	-6.5	-6.6	-7.1	-7.2
Reserves (months of imports)	9.6	8.8	6.9	6.5	6.1
External debt (% GDP)	64.2	64.3	54.3	51.5	48.7
Exchange rate					
REER (% change)	1.1	0.6	-0.5
Sources: Albanian authorities, World Bank, UNDP, and IMF staff estimates and projections.					
1/ Public debt refers to the general government and includes all public domestic and external guarantees as well as arrears from central and local government and VAT refund arrears.					
2/ The 2021 SDR allocation equivalent at present to \$170 million is recorded with the Bank of Albania and is used as a credit line.					

The strong private consumption and important sectors such as tourism and construction are foreseen to bring a GDP growth of be 3.3% in 2024 (3.6% in 2023), with inflation aligning to the targeted 3% by early 2025 (round 4% in 2023) by the central bank. In 2024 Albania started with the revenue-based fiscal consolidation to allow room for future countercyclical policies. Planning to steady the economy to meet the EU criteria the government aims to reduce the public debt and financing needs, enhance the productivity of the state-owned

enterprises and public-private partnerships, especially in the energy sector, secure the fiscal sustainability by regulations to monetary policy and exchange rate management, (Prez, 2023)

Momentous development has been made in the judicial and anti-corruption reforms with the main initiative to vet the judges and judicial officials, expected to finish by December 2024; to lower case backlogs through a joined ‘case management system’; to fill the judicial vacancies of the High Judicial Council and High Prosecutorial Council. Additionally, the Special Anti-Corruption Structure (SPAK) promoting transparency and meritocracy. Albania is no longer in the Financial Action Task Force’s grey list, having the framework in place to anti-money laundering and counter-financing of terrorism. The developing National Anti-Corruption Strategy for 2024–2030 will aim to strengthen Albania’s legal structures improving transparency, and constructing a corruption-resistant society in the vision to align with European standards. (Prez, 2023)

The importance and success of this reform, remains crucial to the EU accession process and the legitimation of the countries’ leadership. In collaboration with the Venice Commission developing and implementing legal and institutional reforms target the prevention and combat corruption aimed while strengthening transparency and accountability in government operations. The active engagement of the civil society via the continuous community access to information and decision-making processes will raise the public trust in institutions. The constant advocating and securing the independence of the anti-corruption institutions and the judiciary system will bring the investigation and prosecution of high-level corruption cases and their being held responsible. (Sara Mahilaj, August 2023)

1.2 In the path to the European Union

Albania has worked in the recent years in the reforms and processes that are required by the European Union institutions. With the major developments that culminated with the amendments of the Constitution in 21-22 July 2016, with the following Juridical Reform that followed Albania has made a huge progress and laid the foundations where the to-be member “European Albania” is being built. As stated by the Minister of Justice, Mrs Gjonaj, “these amendments make a total of 1922 new articles ratified and approved, thus affecting the entire justice system starting from ‘the Vetting’ and continuing with the status of judges and prosecutors, the organization and functioning of courts and prosecutors of all levels,

governing bodies of the justice system, criminal, administrative, procedural legislation, liberal professions of justice and many other aspects.”

1.2.1 European Union and Albanian Recent Developments

Albanian has had many reforms in the recent years, since the early 2003, where in Thessaloniki Albania as well as other region countries as potential members for membership in the European Union. In 2006 Albania ratified and approved MSA (Marreveshjen per Stabilizim dhe Asocim), Stabilization and Association Agreement. This agreement entered into force in April 2009 and replaced the previous agreement with the European Economic Community for trade and economic cooperation, signed in May 1992. (Union, 28.04 2009)

In 2009, Albania submitted its formal application for membership in the European Union In December 2010, the agreement on the abolition of the visa regime entered into force, allowing Albanian citizens to travel without visas to the Schengen Area.. The European Commission submitted an Opinion in 2010, at the request of the European Council regarding the application for membership, assessing that Albania still had to meet the 12 key priorities, in order to achieve the necessary degree of compliance with the criteria of membership. (Commission, 9.11.2010)

In October 2012, the Commission recommended that Albania be granted EU candidate status, subject to the completion of reforms, particularly in the areas of judicial and public administration reform. In June 2014, the European Council granted Albania candidate status. Obtaining the status of candidate country marks a very important step in the process of Albania's integration into the EU, as it reflects the progress of the reforms undertaken and paves the way for the full process of the country's accession to the EU. (OECD, 2021) The next step in this process is the opening of negotiations (negotiations) for EU membership, conditional on the full fulfillment of 5 key priorities such as:

- Establishment of a professional and depoliticized administration
- Strengthening the independence of justice institutions
- War against corruption
- Fight against organized crime
- Protection of human rights

Albania, in its pursuit of European Union membership, must be willing to undergo reforms across its economic, political, and judicial systems to align with the standards of founding

EU states and other developed countries. Albania must fulfill three criteria for EU membership: establish durable institutions ensuring democracy, rule of law, human rights, and respect for minorities; develop a functional market economy capable of competing in the European market; and accept and adapt to the obligations and laws arising from the *acquis communautaire*.

Albania's EU membership process has faced delays, particularly due to Bulgaria's veto against North Macedonia, which has also affected Albania's progress. Bulgaria demands North Macedonia address issues of hate speech and historical inaccuracies related to Bulgaria.

However, this may seem like a historical and technical hindrance that has raised many questions whether there is a good will on the EU member states for enlargement and even though Albania was unjustly penalized for two other nations' disputes, there was a green light just after this temporary unexpected 'corner' in the process. The new elected prime Minister of Bulgaria Mr. Petkov declared during his campaign to office that under his leadership, Bulgaria would lift the veto from North Macedonia in a very fast process, up to six months after the new government was formed and gained full executive power. (Council, 2014)

Later rounds or steps in the accession Albania's long and difficult process are Common Governmental Concluding Position, then Chap 23-24, which the Commission has decided to go through an action plan based on temporary standards or interim benchmarks, and later on concluded by standards of closure. The next big step in the process is the Membership Treaty, which contains all terms and details of membership, all temporary timings and regulations, and financial details of all the protective measures. This process per se is not complete and binding until it secures:

- Support from the European Council, European Commission and European Parliament.
- Subscription from the candidate country and representatives of all of the member countries of the European Union.
- Ratification of this from the member country and every member state of European Union, according to their constitution rules, i.e. Ratification by respective parliaments, etc. (Council, 2014)

Referring to Albania and the Western Balkans in general, this region can be said to have always been including the present time, an inseparable part of Europe. Inclusion of this area in the new European Enlargement has proved that it has had its own problems with negative consequences for the whole of Europe. In fact, these states remain less integrated and with higher instability compared to other states that are members of the European Union. In these last two or three decades many studies have been conducted reading and analyzing the impact that the EU has had in its member countries with a similar economic-political system.

Europeanization, or the process of integrating into the European Union, involves adopting the EU's political, social, and economic dynamics, influencing the internal identities and political structures of candidate countries. For Albania, this means undergoing significant public reforms to align its systems with EU standards. As Albania transitions toward full EU membership, the concept of 'becoming European' reflects the integration with and adaptation to EU norms. However, countries like Albania must address domestic challenges, such as strengthening the rule of law and ensuring functional market economies free from corruption, to fully benefit from EU membership. The EU serves as a benchmark for modernization, guiding Albania through a series of actions towards democratization, economic stability, and institutional integration.

Albania, in its pursuit of EU membership, had to navigate several key legal acts mandated by European Union institutions. These legal acts include regulations, directives, decisions, recommendations, and opinions. Regulations, issued by the EU Council of Ministers in cooperation with the European Parliament, are binding and directly applicable across all member states, ensuring uniformity in law. Directives, also issued by the EU Council and Parliament, require member states to adapt their domestic laws to achieve the directives' objectives. Unlike regulations, directives are binding only on the results to be achieved, allowing member states flexibility in their implementation methods. Decisions have a direct effect on specific member states or groups within the EU and are binding in all their elements. Recommendations and opinions, while influential, are not legally binding, serving more as advisory tools to guide member states.

For Albania, understanding and aligning with these EU legal acts is crucial in its accession process. Regulations demand uniform application across all EU member states, preventing selective implementation and ensuring legal consistency. Directives, although flexible in implementation, aim to harmonize national laws with EU standards, accommodating diverse

national traditions and legal systems. Decisions, depending on their scope, either directly affect certain states or follow the principles of directives. Recommendations and opinions, although not binding, provide guidance and reflect the EU's stance on various issues. Albania's compliance with these legal frameworks is essential for its successful integration into the European Union. (Council, 2014).

Albanian road to EU membership is still anything but settled and it's an ever-going process of improving and standardization of rule of law, laws, people, movement and social evolution. As stated in the Ministry of Exterior there has been many steps some of them very long in fulfilling and getting the recommendation from the EU commissioner for enlargement, some of them have taken months, trimesters of even years to accomplish. Nonetheless, it is now on a very solid foot to accomplishment as a governments or other executive bodies' duty to their citizens and their people. The process has started early as Albania, ever since the communist regime came to an end in the early 1990s, has been an eager player setting its direction unmistakably an unchangeably in the western countries' direction, more specifically European Union and other Western bodies such as NATO and others. Some important dates in Albanian 'Odyssey' have been:

- In 1991 Albania established diplomatic relations with the European Community;
- In 2000 Albania was officially recognized by the European Union as a potential candidate country;
- In 2003, the Thessaloniki Summit of EU Heads of State approved the Stabilization and Association Process, thus confirming the prospect of EU membership of the Western Balkan countries, including Albania.

In the same year, negotiations for a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) between the EU and Albania began;

- On June 12, 2006, the negotiation process for a Stabilization and Association Agreement with Albania was concluded, which was signed at the General Affairs Council (GAC) in Luxembourg;
- On April 1, 2009 the SAA entered into force. In the same month, Albania formally applied for EU membership;

- In November 2009, based on the questionnaire that the European Commission submitted to Albania regarding the country's preparation for membership, negotiations for obtaining candidate status began;
- On June 27, 2014, Albania received the status of candidate country.

The Council identified five key priorities (public administration, rule of law, fight against corruption, organized crime, fundamental rights) that Albania needed to meet before membership negotiations could begin;

- On 9 November 2016, based on the achievements in these key priorities, the Commission proposed for the first time to the Council the start of membership negotiations with Albania, subject to a concrete progress in the implementation of justice reform, in particular the “vetting” of judges. and prosecutors;
- On 17 April 2018, in its Annual Enlargement Package, the European Commission recommended that the Council decide that membership negotiations should be opened with Albania in the light of the progress made, the preservation and deepening of reforms by Albania;
- On 26 June 2018, the EU's General Affairs Council agreed to respond positively to the progress made by Albania and to pave the way for the opening of membership negotiations in June 2019;
- On May 29, 2019, the European Commission presented the Annual Enlargement Package, recommending again the immediate opening of membership negotiations for Albania;
- On 25 March 2020, the EU General Affairs Council decided to open accession negotiations with the Republic of Albania, taking into account the progress achieved in the reforms and the fulfillment of the conditions set unanimously by the June 2018 Council.
- On March 26, 2020, the European Council approved the decision of the EU General Affairs Council to open negotiations with Albania.

Albanian institutions and regulations have been working hard in order to meet the criteria and the recommendations presented by the Enlargement of the EU commission. There have been some very promising notes on Albanian part to this means, which are clearly stated in the SWD (Staff Working Document) 289 released in 19 October of 2021 by the European

Commission. This report on Albanian 2021 progress has been marked as final and is a stepstone where further developments are to be based on the agenda. (OECD, 2021)

The communication on the EU Enlargement Policy is stating the followings for Albania's progress with its key findings:

1. Political criteria, this is the first criteria that is being measured and is seen mostly related to the general elections that were held in 25 April of 2021. Regarding the elections recent tech-related developments have helped the Elections Central Committee or KQZ (acronym in Albanian that stands for Komiteti Qendror i Zgjedhjeve), for electronic identification of the voters. In 97 percent of polling stations this new system of electronic identification have been successful. While the next step of digitalization of these processes will be the e-counting and e-voting is just being started with 32 polling stations in the capital Tirana successfully implemented in the 25 April elections. (Commission, ec.europa.eu, 8.11.2023)

The reports by international bodies were found to be generally good and well organized, such as assessments from OSCE/ODIHR related to those elections. Trust has been associated with the new electoral administration committee.

On the other hand, mostly, the concerns came from opposition and smaller parties that were claiming a misuse of public resources and official functions, other non-legal practices like vote buying and leaking of personal sensitive information of the voters. This in line with the European protection of sensitive data law GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation). In this case some very personal information had been leaked into the public, so that the concerns related to these data and the ability to preserve and protect citizen databases from being exposed. Those claims are being still investigated.

2. Public Administration, in this criterion in Albania based on SWD 289, Communication on EU Enlargement Policy, has made steady progress towards the goals established. Progress related to this criterion was made in building capacities in line ministries for implementing regulatory impact assessments and most important development probably is the increase in the implementation rate of the National European Integration Plan. (Commission, ec.europa.eu, 8.11.2023)

Another field which closely relates to public administration where Albania, according to the report has made significant progress is the IT (Information Technology) services, with

developments such as significant increase in the online governmental e-services such as the platform e-Albania where citizens could access a wide selection of services that could be offered and administered online by AKSHI (Acronym for Agjensia Kombetare e Shoqerise se Informacionit), which is the e-Albania and other electronic platforms' creator and administrator. (<https://akshi.gov.al/>, 2015)

In line with the implementation of internet related services and the objectives of the government the portal e-Albania had three measurable strategic objectives:

- First, for the adding and promotion of electronic services for citizens, business and administration. The priority is to increase transparency and improve services in public administration according to the principles of the Open Government Partnership initiative.
- Second, for the use of ICT (Information and Communications Technology) in education to bridge the digital division and empower youth. Policies are oriented towards improving and expanding human capacities in order to increase the number of users and promote the development of e-service providers. In this way, the creation of jobs will be encouraged for young people who can be employed in the Albanian market, regional and beyond.
- Third, consolidation of digital infrastructure throughout the territory of the Republic of Albania, strictly respecting the European principles of free and fair competition. In relation and under the masterplan called: "Digital Agenda Of Albania 2015-2020" (Ministers, 2015)

In this area two very important reforms have been crucial and important for the government as well as the measurement of progress in this area by the European Union. One is Public Administration Reform (PAR) stretched in the years 2015 till 2022 according to the master plan. The second reform equally important is the one that manages and relates to the public finances, or Public Financial Reform which originally stretches from 2014 to 2022. Both these reforms have been continued and implemented in recent years.

Judicial System, the progress made by the judicial system overall in Albania looks promising also for 2021. One very important development was the making fully functional the Constitutional Court, that had been un-functional due to lack of member judges, following the vetting and/or disqualification of judges throughout of all the levels of the judicial system. Progress in this area has been marked with the quorum of Constitutional Court

reached and still going on. Same scenario happened with the High Judicial Court, which needed to reach the quorum to be fully operational. With the promotion of new member judges, the High Judicial Court is still operational and going on with nine sitting judges.

The vetting of all members of judicial system, such as prosecutors and judges, has been re-evaluated and constantly monitored and applied under strict surveillance from International Monitoring Operation, a structure anchored in European Union. (Sara Mahilaj, August 2023)

In the judicial reform and overall progress one very important key component of this system is the relatively new structure called SPAK (Struktura e Posacme kunder Korrupsionit dhe Krimet te Organizuar), which stands for Special Structure for Anti-Corruption and Organized Crime. This was one of the conditions to be fulfilled by Albanian Government and institutions in order for the European Union to appoint the first Inter-Governmental Conference, which is the next step on integration still not on the agenda but very much hoped for by all Albanian people and Albanian Government. This condition is still fulfilled and is already giving ‘fruits’ as the structure has undertaken important actions towards prominent political and business figures, and it has started to establish itself in the perception by the people as a trustworthy, competent structure in which the citizens and institutions can rely.

Some of the achievements of this special structure are the conditions set by EU for the government to fulfill as a condition to the first Inter-Governmental Conference between Albania and European Union are fights against corruption and fight against organized crime. Both are fostered and implemented by SPAK. There is an inter sectoral strategy implemented and the vetting of prosecutors and judges is helping this implementation. One of the concerns among EU representatives as well as the public at large remains non – prosecution of the high position officials and politicians. In the case of the fight against organized crime there is a very good footing and help coming from member states of the European Union as well as from Europol, which helps Albanian institutions fulfill what is a condition set for the first IGC. (OECD, 2021)

Other important issues which have been at the same time conditions to the first IGC and strategic objectives of the government agenda related to the European Union integration thoroughly discussed in the report are:

- *Fundamental Rights*, in which Albania has already made a very important progress and has approved and ratified in its legislative law system most of the international

laws regarding the issue. Albanian government is determined and has pursued those objectives in the recent years. In 2017 for example, the law on protection of minorities living in Albania was passed and is being implemented and still standing. Another law regarding minorities and marginal segments of the society was adopted in December 2020, in relation to the education of minorities.

- *Freedom of expression*, as is also known, the Achilles tendon or a litmus test to the democracies and their free press and people. In Albania, in the recent years have been some contradicting reports, with periods where very good progress was registered, and others where it looks stalling. In 2021 report general discontent is seen in this area, with very little to no progress. Related to this opinion are a number of issues such as verbal attacks, and acts of intimidation to the journalists. During Covid-19 the situation was not good and these ‘attacks’ on journalists, journals or general media institutions have not been punished or convicted. Being an election year the situation has been more intense with more verbal attacks and irregularities by the officials, so this criterion is not regarded very highly.

There has been ongoing concerns and criticism supported and strengthened by the Venice Commission recommendations on the amendments to the media law. Nevertheless, the ruling party has been issuing statements that ensure any new legislation related to the media law, would and will be always in line and supporting the Venice Commission recommendations on the issue.

- *Gender Equality*, this is yet again another very important issue that is being considered and forever monitored in all the countries, members or aspiring members of the European Union. In this area some very optimistic progress has been made and initiated by Albanian government. Factual important steps have been implemented by the national strategy and action plan of 2016-2021. In this strategy and action plan a lack of adequate funding from the central government made progress stall and not go as well as originally planned. Nonetheless, the new strategy expressed in national plan of 2021-2030 which was ratified in 2021, has made some improvements especially in the soft spots, such as the adequate funding, implementation in central and local levels and the budgeting of these strategies.
- *Economic Developments*, this is probably the most important and relevant sector in which all the parties do diverge. Albanian people and businesses are willing and struggling through the reforms needed to cope with the businesses and market forces

of the European Union, Albanian government on the other side is trying to reform the legislation, adopt trade laws and ready the markets for opening and trying to protect its businesses and people from the big market pressure that is to come in the Union. Significant progress has been made in this regard, but was hindered by the double shock that happened to Albania ultimately. First, is the 26 November 2019 Earthquake, where many buildings were ruined, and a large number of people lost their lives. The economical side hit badly some cities and this brought pressure to the state budget. The other shock came from the pandemic of Covid-19, which hit the whole world, and restrictions combining with the lockdown, made the economy suffer, especially the state budget.

The sectors that were hit the most were manufacturing and tourism, but the state intervention together with the right loose policies of the central bank have helped the economy cushion and bounce back in the second part of the year.

Nevertheless, Albanian market economy is still fragile, with important differences between Albanian businesses and their doing business abilities to their other similar forces within the European Union or in the region. The biggest problems and challenges that Albanian business face are characterized by missing know-how, both as entrepreneurship and tech-wise related. Another problem that seems to persist throughout the years since the fall of communist regime is informality in a very concerning and significant scale. This issue is one of the reasons that sometimes the figures are doubted and not fully trusted. Research and development is yet another big problem of the businesses that is defective or missing that makes the market economy in Albania brittle and not ready for the opening of the new developed markets such as the EU market.

The journey to European Union membership for Balkan countries has been fraught with challenges and extended negotiations, as illustrated by Croatia's experience. Croatia's path to EU membership began with its recognition as an independent state in 1992, following its separation from Yugoslavia. The European Council established economic and political rules for bilateral relations with Balkan countries, including Croatia, in 1997. The Stabilization and Association Process was launched in 1999 for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, and Yugoslavia, setting the stage for Croatia's EU integration. Croatia was granted candidate status in 2004, and over the next several years, intergovernmental meetings focused on various chapters of the *acquis*, such as laws on culture, budgeting, and

property rights. Croatia's EU membership was finalized on July 1, 2013, after a rigorous process and numerous reforms over 21 years.

Similarly, Romania's road to EU membership mirrored the experiences of other former Soviet Bloc countries. Despite differences in population and dynamics, Romania, like Albania, had to undergo significant reforms to align with EU standards. Romania applied for EU membership in 1995 and opened negotiations for candidate status in 2000, reflecting a common trajectory of overcoming economic and political challenges to meet the stringent criteria set by the European Union. Both countries had to adopt extensive legal and administrative changes to harmonize with EU regulations and prepare for full integration into the EU's political and economic framework. (Bieber F., 2016)

Albania, as for the 19-th of July 2022 is a candidate country for membership in the EU after a long process that involved inner country's conditionality issues and conditional linkages with North Macedonia. In the early 2020s the map of the Balkan region in relation to the EU accession process experienced a change towards achieving the aspirations. (Prez, 2023)

Since the beginning of 2020s Albania has continued to apply the Stabilization and Association Agreement and overall has been dedicated to keep to the set agenda with EU regarding the reforms. The economic and social issues that came because of the 2019 earthquake, the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian aggression against Ukraine seemed to not take away the emphasis on continuing with the reforms and the agreed meetings with respective EU bodies. The Intergovernmental Conference on accession negotiations took part in Albania on July 2022 where the Commission launched the start of the screening process for Albania. From there on, Albania has aligned with the EU's common foreign and security policies (CFSP) related to the actions taken condemning the Russian the aggression against Ukraine, in resolution signing or the suspension from Human Rights Council. While in the office of the co-penholder as a non-permanent member of UN Security Council, Albania showed resilience and reliability as a partner in the region.

In the inner policies, the government retained the focus on the reforms for the EU accession process and built the coordination structure for the EU integration. The further advancement of the reforms needs to be the full and committed involvement of the opposition and the other actors of the society. The opposition has returned in 2022 to the parliament exercising its duties. The already created governmental agencies round the Prime Minister's office, serve as an example that raising the standards of the public administration remains vital for

the success of the ongoing reforms. The implementation of the 2015-2022 public administration reform and the 2014-2022 public financial management reform strategies continued.

An inclusive decentralization strategy beyond 2022 that will continually evaluate and monitor the public administration with clear reporting lines is needed, where the input taking from population and especially from the civil society, is crucial. (Commission, ec.europa.eu, 8.11.2023)

The enabling environment for the civil society still remains a challenge though there have been increases in the funding possibilities. As per the report of the European Parliament on Albania in 2022, it is condemned “the political confrontation, disruptive actions, inflammatory rhetoric by high-level politicians and officials, as well as breaches of parliamentary rules of procedure”. Distress was expressed over the “reduction of space for parliamentary oversight role of opposition, including rejection of parliamentary inquiry committees, underlining joint political and social responsibility for reforms. The report urges political actors to step up their commitment to dialogue and to strengthen democratic institutions and procedures through constructive interparty and intraparty engagement, mutual respect, inclusive consultations with civil society and transparent decision-making. It stresses the importance of building a constructive parliamentary culture by fostering consensus among all political actors and upholding rights and responsibilities of opposition”.

The main issue of this dissertation wants to bring into the attention of the reader the crucial role the leadership of a country takes when their democracies are ‘still under construction’ and the other actors of a fully functioning society are being built.

1.2.2 The new accession approach and the country elites

It seems like the EU accession of the Western Balkans is facing this new reality in the EU enlargement process though, in a continuous way, the political will is expressed regarding the new enlargement as remaining the project of the future of Europe and that all attempts should be done aiming to strengthen the existing union, to build continually to the hope and dream of becoming the ‘European House’ that ‘protects, empowers and defends’ and seek to ‘make the most of the momentum’ in order to enlarge EU. This as clearly expressed in the agenda set forward from EU 27 in Bratislava Summit towards 2025.

In the Medium – Term Strategy of EU Enlargement Policy of 2015, it was decided that each new country will be assessed based on ‘merit and fair and rigorous conditionality’, as such being open to another way of assessment, where the countries have to meet the conditions set in order to be go forward with the accession process. The past approach of entering first EU and dealing with the issues after, is not the case anymore. Furthermore, the leaders of the countries in the pre-accession stand by, are asked to strategically, commit and orient their countries towards the EU enlargement project, thus putting a lot of importance, hence responsibilities on the elites of these countries, where the democracies and the economies are not notably strong and with fragile public opinion and civil societies. (OECD, 2021)

What brings again to our attention the role in the rising of the leaders of the countries in the pre-accession threshold, is the case of the long waiting Turkey as a reference of the faltering of the further democratization country strategic objective as an example to follow. On the other side, the economical and the migrant crises which coincided with the Brexit phenomenon put the Western Balkans accession lower in the priorities of the EU institutions in following closely the establishment of the reforms as asked, thus lowering the intensity expressed to have these countries in EU as articulated in Thessaloniki in 2003. The uncertainty towards the Western Balkans, the situation with the migrant crises and the Brexit only deepens the concern that the ruling elites of the Western Balkans only profit personal and political gain when the strategic agenda of the Copenhagen criteria in the pre accession process doesn’t change but the operational gearing towards its implementation remains unclear and unframed and time bound, to say the least.

And it took these crises management, to make it clear that the role of the European Commission had weakened which in turn made obvious the strengthened power of the European Council and member states, which explains as per Mišćević, why the process of the Western Balkans enlargement is politicized and as O’Brennan puts it ‘why there are bilateral conditions that in the former enlargements would have been considered inappropriate’.

1.3 The workload of the elites of countries aspiring to EU membership

The more “workload” is put on the governments’ leaders of the countries that were and still are kept waiting with the “fundamentals first” (conditionals prior to the accession) approach, while the democracies remain fragile, the more should these administrations be structurally

monitored and parallel attempts should be made to strengthen the other actors in order to have all-inclusive governance as opposed to dangerous strengthening of elites.

The latest reports rank Albania's ruling power with severe problems in the democratic level. The strong polarization in the political sphere and the boycott of the opposition parties have affected parliamentary activities. The bipartisan electoral reform did not have the results aimed as it was negatively affected by the lack of participation of the opposition parties. The continuous battle between the prime minister's office and the president over the constitution regarding major issues creates continuous friction that results in the lack of governance credibility for the people. (Commission, ec.europa.eu, 8.11.2023)

The public administration lacks the capacity to commence merit-based civil service procedures, and to ensure efficient, depoliticized, and professional services.

In the last three years, the Judicial system has been in overall good progress in the process of the implementation of a full reform with the new institutions for the self-governing of the judiciary, the High Judicial Council, the High Prosecutorial Council, and the Justice Appointment Council have been established, building the key bases for the independence and responsibility of the judiciary system. 40 files have been part of a temporary re-evaluation of all judges and prosecutors with 88 dismissals (mainly based on unjustified assets) and 53 confirmations. Still, more to be done to consolidate the professional, independent, impartial, and accountable judiciary. (Prez, 2023)

In the fight against corruption and organized crime investigating, prosecuting, and trying high-level cases have produced concrete results of tangible dismissals from the office of a high-ranking magistrate from the Constitutional Court and High Court. The finishing of the vetting process, the launch of the Special Anti-Corruption and Organized Crime Structure-SPAK and the National Bureau of Investigation will make the whole system operational and fight against the corruption that is a real problem in Albanian society. (Sara Mahilaj, August 2023)

The Albanian government stood for a long time with a missing opposition in the parliamentary assembly, with a judicial system that is crippled by the draining effect of the continuous reforms, with the continuous public disbelief and especially in the aftermath of the continuous declarations by the EU Council perceived by the population as flat rejections to the opening of the EU accession negotiations, it is seen to attempt to make the

governments take over a lot of power as the European checking power has lost its direct power.

Worth mentioning is the political move of the prime ministers of the Western Balkans with the Mini-Schengen initiative where right after the “rejection” for the EU accession of the Western Balkans, on November 9, 2019, the leaders of Albania, Serbia, North Macedonia, Bosnia Herzegovina, and Montenegro got together for the second time within a month in Ohrid, North Macedonia. The initiative they are discussing is how to remove barriers to the free movement of goods in the region with an agreement to contribute to the growth of the countries signed with the possible traveling arrangement with only an ID. (Zulah Karakoc Dora, 2022)

While these arrangements aim at improving the neighboring situation in the Western Balkans, with Kosovo not agreeing to partake because some of these countries have not known its existence as a state, and the public support by the USA, it seems as if these leaders of the Western Balkans use the failure of the European Council to reach consensus on opening negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania as a factor to gather regional power and defuse the political damage they took within their countries.

1.4 Leadership Challenges in the aspiring countries for EU accession

Why the need to study leadership and its traits?

Balkan countries have in their long history been known for their tremulous dynamics, some argued to be because of inner developments but less arguably due to international action or missing of such. At the time of the state formation and the region's new figuration (1990-2008) a lot of changes happened in the composition of their leadership elites.

As per (Brandovic I., 2017) after the fall of communism and the dissolution of the Yugoslav Federation, the Western Balkans were promised their future was ‘within the European Union’. It started in 2003 at the Thessaloniki Summit where this was declared. In the first two decades after the summit, Europe, though in word and declarations persisted in the same aspirations for the countries of the region, in deeds showed to ‘had lost its power of attraction in the region’ (Brandovic I., 2017). The countries were faced with the harsh reality that they could not on their own change into affluent states ruled by the law. With regard to their aspiration to become part of the EU, the accession road became a way with no clear destination with an overwhelming belief of being treated unfairly by Europe.

On the other side, the EU members became exceedingly more and more skeptic that the enlargement project would produce real results for them. They believed the accession process itself was not stringent enough and their leaders were quite often under the pressure of the far-right in their countries. This period coincided with more demanding matters both inside the Union and outside of it, which left the Western Balkans out of the political discussions towards further enlargement. It seemed that, for as long as the region continued to be peaceful, the interest was weakened.

The strategic importance of the region came again to focus during the refugee crisis of 2015-2016. It did not though, continue at the long-term strategic level but helped to bring to life an unhealthy relationship between the political leaders of Europe and the Balkan strongmen (Brandovic I., 2017). The growing Eurosceptic public opinion for the enlargement being on the rise, contributed to welcoming to have and keep the status quo situation in the Western Balkans. This did contribute to the strengthening of authoritarianism, the advance of corruption and impunity towards the rule of law for the countries' elites, thus worsening the region's situation compared to the standards to enter EU.

As per Igor Brandovic, (Brandovic I., 2017) "The ruling Balkan elites pay lip-service to reforms and tighten their grip on feeble institutions, while feeding their popular base a rhetoric of victimhood and stoking anti-EU sentiment". (Economist, 2016)

1.4.1 Authoritarianism of the Balkan elites

The European Commission faced significant challenges in maintaining momentum for EU accession in the Balkans, achieving some progress with Montenegro and Serbia, but overall progress was slow. Rising authoritarianism weakened fragile Balkan democracies, leading to fragmented rule of law, poorly debated and unimplemented laws, and discriminatory justice, diminishing press freedom, and increasing corruption. Indifference and discouragement among the Western Balkan populations grew due to rampant unemployment, widening inequality, and entrenched cronyism in the political system (Brandovic I., 2017)

Between 1999 and 2003, the fragility of Balkan democracies became evident with ethnic conflicts in the former Yugoslav Republic, despite formal EU accession progress in countries like Serbia. Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina's democracies were ranked alongside Guatemala, Ecuador, and Lebanon by the Democracy Index (Economist, 2016). Regional

political leaders often focused on consolidating power and undermining opposition, weakening the nascent systems of checks and balances and democratic processes (Brandovic I., 2017). This authoritarian approach contributed significantly to the fragility of Western Balkan democracies on their path to EU membership, as legislative alignment with EU standards did not automatically ensure democratic governance.

The strengthening of the elected elites-the strongmen of Balkan brought forth and kept alive the political intrusion into all the state institutions manipulating and controlling mainly the judiciary to secure their patronage in all the recruitments for their own impunity. The democratic institutions that safeguard the rule of law, by not being independent, strong or accountable failed to fight the rampant corruption prevailing in the region. Three were the main internal threats that corroded the democratic governance of these new democracies.

In Serbia, two-thirds of the population viewed corruption, crime, and politicians' venal behavior as major threats to democratic governance (Brandovic I., 2017). The European Commission's 2016 Strategy Report emphasized that strengthening the rule of law was crucial, noting widespread corruption and impunity, especially for high-level cases. Additionally, Bieber and Kmezic highlighted concerns about freedom of expression and media interference in the region, including editorial manipulation, threats against journalists, and censorship (Bieber F., 2016). These practices undermine democratic principles and informed citizenship.

In North Macedonia, Nikola Gruevski, leader of the VMRO-DPMNE party, resisted relinquishing power to avoid political accountability. His tenure, marked by a wiretapping scandal, led to 2016 protests and his eventual ousting. Gruevski often exploited ethnic tensions among Albanians, Turks, Roma, Serbs, and Vlachs to distract and maintain power. Balkan leaders, while presenting themselves as stability guarantors, often erode institutional resilience and exploit ethnic tensions to divert attention from authoritarian practices.

The trend among the leaders in the whole Western Balkan remains to put the nationalist, ethnic, unresolved issues into their political agendas. As per Freedom House, “there is an alarming picture of the region where ‘nationalists are in a race’” (House F. , 2017)

Three main internal threats corroded the democratic governance of these new democracies. In Serbia, two-thirds of the population viewed corruption, crime, and politicians' venal behavior as the primary threats to democratic governance (Brandovic I., 2017). The

European Commission's 2016 Strategy Report emphasized that strengthening the rule of law remained a key challenge, with widespread corruption and impunity, especially for high-level corruption. Leaders often diverted attention and avoided accountability by exploiting ethnic tensions, using a brand of 'Balkan populism' that combined ethnic identity, statehood issues, and narratives of victimhood (Bieber F., 2016).

Disillusionment among Balkan populations towards their governing bodies has grown, driven by an empowered civil society striving to hold elected elites accountable and reduce impunity. In North Macedonia, President Ivanov's attempts to place senior government members above the law sparked significant public backlash. The Constitutional Court's decision to invalidate limitations on the President's power led to mass protests, which ultimately forced a reversal of the decision (Policy, February 2017). This resilience highlights the ongoing struggle for accountability and rule of law in the region.

In April 2016, in Serbia, the Ombudsman, the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection, and thousands of citizens protested the police and political complicity in the illegal bulldozing of a historic street in Savamala. The Prosecutors' Association of Serbia highlighted that the incident revealed systemic flaws and potential political influence (Vukojcic, April 2017). The European Commission's silence on the matter in its 2016 Serbia Report undermined the EU's credibility (Policy, February 2017).

For new democracies in the Western Balkans, such as Serbia, the EU must clearly support the rule of law, democratic governance, and media freedom. Hesitation to condemn politically influenced institutions dilutes the EU's messages and perpetuates the negative concept of "stabilocracy." Meanwhile, U.S. engagement in the region has shifted, allowing local leaders to maintain patronage networks while paying lip service to reform to secure Western aid. This strategic complacency prioritizes perceived stability over genuine governance improvements (Conley and Ruy, May 2021).

The perceived increase in Russian influence in the Balkans has emphasized stability over democratic transformation, fostering "stabilocracy" and allowing leaders like Serbia's Aleksandar Vucic and Montenegro's Milo Djukanovic to capture the state. This environment has led to economic stagnation and opposition boycotts in countries like Albania and Serbia. Entrenched patronage networks, established in the early 21st century, have reversed much

of the progress made in the late 1990s and early 2000s. These elites have politicized public administrations and state institutions, weakening democracy, rule of law, and economic prosperity, thereby adding to regional instability. Major treaties have failed to provide effective tools to prevent this instability (Conley and Ruy, May 2021).

The strict ‘conditionality policy’ that has been the backbone of the EU accession process works hand in hand with these messages, achieving in this way the increase of the confidence in the institutions and the rule of law as the core pillars of the democracy, rather than the leaders themselves, regardless of their charisma and well-spoken democratic rhetoric. The concentration of the communication exclusively only with the state actors and the government, without including organically the civil society, without boosting the free media and their respective credible organizations, is a sure way to raise the power of the leading elites and disengaging the Western Balkan population from the EU membership aspiration.

Keeping the focus on the democratic transformation while in the process of the EU accession, the fundamentals remain the media freedom, the rule of law and the democratic governance where the bringing of the general public around the issues of justice and the lack of impunity, serves the democracies both in the external goal of pursuing the EU accession, and their inner accountability of the governments and the leading elites, too. The only way ahead, the unnegotiable (IRI, June 2016) interest of the Western Balkans in their aspiration to join the EU, is the embrace of the democracy and the rule of law while enhancing the resilience of the populations. The deep-rooted problems in the region, such as democracy decline, erosion of the rule of law, increased corruption and nepotism or weakened economic prosperity, seem all to be the most prevailing factors of the Western Balkans. Even the major treaties did not manage to provide tools that are needed for forestalling instability in the region.

1.5 Leadership theories

We focus now on the leadership traits and drives that can be taught and trained to the younger generations of leaders that are to come. The situation of the Western Balkan countries and generally of the democracies in the rise, compels us to seriously think about the traits and drivers that build character in the leadership. Not dealing now with this means not to be able to upskill and reskill the new generation of the leaders of the country that is joining the leading positions in the ten coming years. Our understanding of past leadership

models and of the aspirations the new generation has, remains a challenging topic that this research tends to contribute to.

As per Ivan Pepić (Pepić, 2017) “Countries in the region have passed through a ‘triple transition’ that includes liberalization, democratization, and post-war transition. Some have succeeded, while others are still dealing with democracy-building and frozen conflicts. Considering these largely accepted concepts that describe the situation in the region, it seems that a culture of domination and the exclusion of ‘others’ prevails over accommodation. How can we talk about democratic political representation and inclusion of all stakeholders when frozen conflicts persist? The persistence of frozen conflicts opens the door to authoritarianism and unconstructive populism. One possible solution to these challenges might be found in power-sharing”.

He continues that due to the unfinished transition to democracy, to the foreign of Russia and Turkey, to the ongoing development of the democracy and state-building, the political representation of many actors that make the fabric of the democracy, aside from the governing party, the “Balkans are characterized by polarization, the existence of ‘losers’ and ‘winners’, as well as the philosophy of ‘our’ domination and the exclusion of ‘others’” (Pepić, 2017)

As explained above, the factors that impacted the rise authoritarianism in the Western Balkan region elites were mainly the rise of the populism in Europe in the start of the new century, the existence of the unresolved ethnic issues of the post 1990s war Western Balkans, the unclear political path and agreeing of all the members of the EU on the enlargement map. Interest has risen on examining and understanding both the factors deriving from within the countries, within the individuals themselves or from abroad, the international or continental ecosystems. (Esch, A European Future for the Western Balkans, 2017)

Obviously, the challenges that the six countries face, regardless to which degree each country encounters, remain the lack of the rule of law and the good governance. The interest has been actualized in considerable attempts to build enduring stability where the democratic principles and checks and balances prevail, thus building economic prospective for the work force in the countries, especially for the young people. The future of the Western Balkans has been seen as building on a strategy of helping to build the trust especially between the decision makers and the civil-society representatives as a way of putting away of the agendas of the former to turn to find responses for this bad governance in populism, nationalism and

authoritarianism (Esch, The way out of authoritarianism, populism, ethnic challenges, 2017). The cases of the engagements of talks between Skopje and Athens, or Serbia and Kosovo, tend to show the future aims of the somewhat joint attempts of the Western Balkans, some EU countries and U.S.

The bad governance of almost three decades after the fall of communism, has had the tall too on the labor markets, the work force and especially the youth in Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Kosovo, the North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. Low economic activity and employment rates and especially high youth elevating and tenacious long-term unemployment, characterize the regions 'economies (Vidovic, 2017). Most of these countries suffer, in different degrees, from the informal economic activities, the labor migration and they have a long history of remittances as an important income to the country's economy.

The conclusion is that though a lot of attempts have been made to improve the labor market and accelerate the job creation especially for the youth, the issue of the long-term unemployment remains a challenge and still high by European standards. Kosovo and Bosnie and Hercegovina remain the least developed regarding activity and employment rates, Albania has the largest informal sector, and while in Serbia and Albania have the highest rate of the unemployed for the highly schooled persons.

As per (Vidovic, 2017)“the policies and priorities that should be set by these countries to address the challenges in their labor markets should include: constant economic growth as a crucial factor to employment; improved quality of the education system and its response to the needs of the labor market; strengthened transition from school to work; a new dual vocational system bringing together social partners, companies committed to training people, trainers, parents); labor market programs for the disadvantaged, such as women, minorities, low educated, etc.; programs for migration prevention; continuous fight against informal employment; and good and proven practices shared among the countries”

1.5.1 The Leaders and Decisions Counteractive to EU Fundamentals

Ivan Pepić argues that priorities that need attention and that will sustain the development of the democracies and ensure the leadership of these countries remains in the right track is the pressure from the international community over the domestic elites in order to promote legitimacy, inclusion over exclusion and the loss of dominion. The biggest concerns related

to the characteristics of the countries' elites during the past 30 years after the communism fall pertained to the lack of the representation of all the sides in the frozen conflicts from the past, especially in the multiethnic countries. Building the trust, the democratic ruling of the law and good governance by the countries elites will help deal with the consistent resolving of these conflicts. The factors that should be taken into consideration when assisting the un-represented people in the political arena and the respective governing processes, as per Ivan Pepić are the “incomplete democratic transition, foreign impacts, and unfinished international democracy and state-building. All of these should be given more attention in future policy proposals that suggest how to overcome illegitimate representation and the exclusion of minorities that have the right to be part of the decision-making processes” (Pepić, 2017).

Furthermore, we believe that the political representation not only of the minorities, but of the youth as the most dynamic part of the work force in the countries of the Western Balkans should be considered as a fundamental key both to strengthen the present democratic infrastructure and ensure the future consolidation of the future of the countries with the EU aspirations. Studying on the actual elites, their representative country leaders and their traits only helps to gain lessons how to best assist with the nurturing of the present youth that will eventually become the future leaders of the region.

The history of three decades after the fall of the mono-party system serves us with cases how the actual leaders, mostly with a mentality as a ‘product’ of the past system, took decisions and acted upon them, quite often bringing their countries and the whole region in the verge of the war. The decision makers in the whole Western Balkans use the power of dominion over their people (quite un-represented and un-included in any democratic process) and the situations have precipitated into chaos thus putting serious halts to the democratization processes of the country in the EU accession path and lower economic activities, which eradicates the possibilities for success in their prior duty as governing bodies towards their constituencies.

The former Prime Minister of North Macedonia, Nikola Gruevski in order to continue in power, pushed the already existing tensions between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians. The Albanian minority there declared that the country was on the verge of a situation like in Ukraine and a group of armed Albanians clashed with the police while a scandal of the state take-over by the ruling VMRO-DPMNE party came to the known. The

mediation done by EU produced an agreement as a means to escalate the democratization of the country, while, as Marta Szpala argues “it was perceived as a tactical manoeuvre which allowed the ruling camp to ease tensions. Moreover, the increase in importance of the Balkan migration route meant that Macedonia’s stability began to play an important role in reducing migratory pressures on the EU’s boundaries, and the Macedonian government has become an important partner for the EU in resolving the crisis. Consequently, the EU’s emphasis on democratizing the system seemed definitely lessened”. (Szpala, 2016)

In the same lines one could see the situation with the leaders of the region. So in Montenegro the opposition declares that the country was torn between the pro-western and the pro-Russian parts of the society, when the perception of being pro-Serbian is perceived as being pro-Russian. Milorad Dodik (2010 – 2018), the President of the Serb Republic, used to lower and hinder the existence of Bosnia and Herzegovina and even declared that it was a strong possibility that that country would sure fall.

“The Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama (2013-2024) and the Kosovo’s President Hashim Thaçi, (2016 – 2020) both declared their possible intent to unify Albania and Kosovo, a move which would without doubt lead to war (Pepić, 2017). Again the role that the Albanian Prime Minister, Rama played in the formation of the Macedonian government was highly debated as it reminded of patterns in the nineties when Serbs from the regions parts of the newly created states after the disintegration of the Former Yugoslavia, were coming to Belgrade to ‘get their opinion’, with catastrophic consequences for the whole region (Pepić, 2017). The same can be regarded as the leadership making wrong moves dictated by their political agenda, without thinking of the consequences on their people, country and the whole region, the case of Kosovo’s first official meeting of the new government decided to dismiss members of the Commission on the demarcation of the border with Montenegro, thereby asking for a new border deal, which Montenegro most unlikely would not accept” (Pepić, 2017).

These situations, created by the leaders with the agendas that do not add value to their countries, and especially these authoritarian approaches bring the temporarily frozen conflicts from the past to new dangerous levels. The halt they put in the establishment of the democracies heavily influences the economic development and the work force progression.

The two influences aiding these disturbing developments were one deriving from within the countries and the other as an influence from abroad.

Ivan Pepić argues that “the main obstacle to the adoption of policies that encourage economic growth (in our case strengthening of institutions and rule of law) is not the ignorance of the politicians but the incentives and constraints they face. The argument is that “the unresolved nation-state building (statehood) issue provides an opportunity for political actors to instrumentalize this issue for their own personal gains”. They can be used to undermine the functioning and the objectivity of the major institutions of the state, for example the rule of law. Proclaiming themselves ‘protectors of national interests’, they turn their attention to ‘threats to national security’ leading consequently to excuses for trampling upon democratic procedures, thus keeping the violation of key institutional operations as part of their ruling power. Strengthening the state and its administration ranks low in their agenda as long as the issues related to past territorial claims are kept live and still debatable. “Moreover, amid the harsh economic situation across the Balkans, politicians are using ‘us against them’ identity politics to mobilize their supporters and divert attention away from pressing economic problems affecting the entire region” (Pepić, 2017).

(Dembinska M., 2017) starting from a political sociology perspective argues that “the constructive role of the local elites in state and nation-building during civil wars and after violence declines”, as long as the rhetorics of the “frozen conflicts” are kept alive. The reviewing of this role while the democratic rule of law is established, will help to consider the public (lack of) alertness to such leading practices equally the same as related to the public (lack of) responsiveness to law violations and consequent impunity.

These leadership styles that come as a combination of the traits inherited from the past indoctrination of almost 50 years of autocratic ruling powers, the unresolved issues inherited by a very pregnant ethnical terrain, the combination of the short-term interests of the EU countries for the Balkans’ stabiliocracy over the long-term sustainable need for the consolidation of the democracies and their economic growth.

These seemed not to be only pertaining to the south western part of Europe. The right-wing populism spread in some of the western countries and the U.S. in the political figures of Donald Trump becoming the American president on an anti-immigrant election program, and in the old continent in the names of Marine Le Pen winning a third of votes in France’s presidential run-off which campaigned strongly against the EU; of Norbert Hofer in Austria, candidate for President, almost winning the 2016 presidential elections; the AfD (Germany) has secured 92 seats in the Bundestag making it the third largest fraction; . the Italian

Northern League, an anti-immigration and anti-EU party that has five members in the European Parliament, is a founding member of the Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENL) political group; Geert Wilders in the Netherlands, the Party for Freedom with four seats in the European Parliament came second in the 2017 elections; Jaroslaw Kaczynski in Poland's Law and Justice Party, "stated in 2015 that Poland should refuse war refugees from the Middle East because "they bring diseases and parasites"" (Ilazi, 2017) ; Slovakia declared their country would only accept Christian Syrian refugees under the EU's relocation scheme, because Muslim refugees "would not feel at home"; Scandinavian countries with growing support for far-right parties; the Sweden Democrats with the anti-immigration party is the third biggest political party in the country. In general, this upsurge of the far rights with the political polarization, populism and the intolerant democracies in the Central European countries does not help with the situation of the Western Balkans. Furthermore, this moves from the mainstream liberal politics against globalism comes in the Central Europe by a" skeptical population frustrated with the traditional elites for their inability to deliver real solutions to problems of increased inequality, immigration, terrorism. In Central Europe, societies are less resilient and more vulnerable to extreme populism as a consequence of weaker institutions and shorter democratic experience" (Ilazi, 2017).

We think these far-right political actors in the world arena brought about two rescinding proxies in the Western Balkans way to the EU accession. The first thing that all these European political actors have in common is the antagonistic-EU feeling especially to the issue of the enlargement policy. For the Western Balkans this very aspiration of the majority of the population to become part of the EU was and still is the force behind the reforms to become like the Western countries that themselves had enjoyed long decades of peace and prosperity

The xenophobia in all these campaigns publicly and forcefully declared in their political agendas for the eyes of the whole world to see, only encouraged the political decision makers of the Balkans (and other world regions probably too), to question and reject the central values and moralities on which the liberal democracies operate, for instance tolerance, pluralism and the protection of minorities, values on which the EU dream and reality was based upon.

Another factor assisting these countries 'elites in their way of accomplishing their own agenda at the expense of the process of fulfilling the set agendas in the 'EU conditionality

process’, remains with the EU vagueness related to the accession processes themselves. The above-mentioned Russian and Turkey’s interference in the region only added to the fact that when the EU did not have a clear path to what would happen to the aspiring countries while they fulfill their EU conditional reforms, Russia and Turkey stepped in and filled any void created by the long waiting years for direction by the EU most bureaucratic forums. Their role was dominant in supporting the nationalistic movements in Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and the Republica Srpska. Even the Russian Orthodox Church took part in the discussions in the political level strongly criticizing EU and NATO (Pepić, 2017). The need to agree on a strong, transparent and realistic path by the EU countries remains one of the main factors to put in place, so that the leaderships in the Western Balkans are kept accountable to serve their countries to realize the reforms that take their countries closer to the EU by consolidating the rule of law and the good governance. These and only these will create the workflow of consolidating the democracies in the Western Balkans and put in place the right models for the upcoming generation of the leaders.

The continuing ‘fatigue’ of the EU in the enlargement process has brought about the decrease of the EU attraction to the aspiring countries of the Western Balkans. Ramadan Ilazi argues that” this trendline is worrying. Only 39% of people in the Western Balkans think EU membership is a good thing, while 36% have a neutral opinion. Negative perceptions prevail in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, while Albania and Kosovo are the only exceptions, in which people are still optimistic about the future in the EU. For people in the Western Balkans, the EU means more freedom to travel (31%), freedom to work and study (32%), and economic prosperity (30%). In a vicious cycle, this allows leaders in the Western Balkans to cite ‘reform fatigue’ and stall the much-needed transformation efforts”

In this long discussion with the leading forums of the EU enlargement agenda, the Western Balkan leaders and the EU Member States as well, should understand that nationalism, populism, authoritarianism are the enemy to the European integration. And while the former should “start by admitting to their faults and working progressively rather than opting for the ease of blame and using the EU as a political scapegoat. This type of self-criticism could help the region come to realize some of the hard truths about their political situation and start to reverse the negative perceptions they currently face.” (Ilazi, 2017).

EU Member States as well should become more purposeful in its communication in the negotiations process, adopting a different language with the people of the countries of the

Western Balkans and a precise linguistic with the governments, pertaining more and more to the result-oriented agreements on the specified reforms, with objectives clearly stated and followed through. The domestic elites view the EU membership as their strategic key aim, and regardless of this, they use this process as a means for personal gains locally and more international acceptability with the purpose of receiving less pressure for real democratic transformation. The EU has not been critical enough when it comes to addressing democratic backsliding in the Western Balkans. Some argue that the EU has preferred stability over democracy in the region, or ‘stabilocracy’, relying on strong leaders that claim to provide pro-Western stability. (Ilazi, 2017).

Instead, the uncompromising promotion of the rule of law, good governance, the development of the democratic institutions, the involvement of all the other actors of the society to carry out the reforms from bottom up, will strengthen the economic opportunities for the countries’ work force. The youth that aspires for better living standards need to see their decision makers create sustainable opportunities for them to build their lives in their motherlands rather than leaving and finding other options and living standards only in the western part of Europe or the U.S. and elsewhere in the world. We think that if the hope of having a good governance and the rule of law active at home, the vital work force and especially the youth will part take in working to achieve this aspiration.

What we have tried so far is to see the historical prospective of the leadership in the Western Balkans in the scope of the European Union and its fundamental enlargement requirements, especially those that pertain to the decision makers. We think that this academic research does not cover the whole spectrium of the qualities and practices that define a good decision maker, as based on the desk review, it is a fact that the only agreement most researchers have in common is not to agree what makes a good leader. It is often, in reality a lot easier to recognize a good leader when you see one, than to agree of the common traits that make up his/her leadership fabric. Evaluations of leaders mainly have been based on their accomplishments as their inheritance and the appraisal of their constituency.

Zaidi (2019) in the “Leadership development for international crises management: the whole person approach” argues that developing the leaders is key ‘in the peacebuilding and crises management where leadership decisions have far-reaching consequences. The organisations and or bodies that deal with these ‘frozen conflicts’ in the Western Balkan, call for the need to develop leaders that are alert to handle ‘information extremes, precarious

decisions taking, while delivering the change the EU requires regarding the reforms and the establishment of the rule of law. Zaidi (2019) emphasizes that “the contemporary leadership development approaches are conceptually not geared to deliver such leaders. From a development perspective, the problem lies in the preponderance of reductionist ideas, an overwhelming focus on managerial skills and competencies, and a short-term outlook on development that diminish the value of leadership courses”. The researcher puts the value on the development approaches at individual and organisational levels, aiming a whole person development approach, building individuals and organisations to be flexible, alert and with an extensive timeframe.

It maybe worth believing this approach to be affective in the Western Balkans situation where quite often, the impulsiveness, vagueness, complexity and uncertainty impact directly the planned and aspired change in the democratic path towards the EU.

When a course of action is needed to influence or impact the creation of the new generation of leaders, the questions that have been in the focus of the academics and the practitioners relate to “are the leaders born or natured into and is there a cluster of traits, behavior and situations that make certain people become leaders”. These are contemplated issues that may shed some light on the traits and behaviors that make leaders in the Western Balkans.

1.5.2 Main leadership theories and their application

The leadership theories started with instructions and shared opinions of the concept of the “leader as a hero”.

The Great Man Theory which emphasizes that the history is a collection of the biographies of powerful men, was created by the Scottish Thomas Carlyle (Tanner, 1984) in the 19th century. He argued that there were only six prototypes where leaders of his time fell into and the main statement made was that “great leaders are born with certain innate qualities that make them exceptional leaders”. As per this theory, the leaders are born, not made. The word “Great Man” suggested that leadership belonged to the leaders of the military field, where men were leading, at that period. As per Spector (2015) this theory does not fall into the academic scholarly category, rather than a statement of faith. He claims that there is an unrecognized aspect to this theory, that of the Freudian psychology where the Great Man was “an analytic description of the elemental forces that lead people to seek heroes”. The relevance that this consideration brings to the present day response to country saviors as

stability keepers, makes the study of what this theory stands for, interesting for the insights on the descriptions of impulses that draw people to authority figures.

The mostly mentioned figures like Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Joan of Arc, Catherine the Great, Napoleon, Mahatma Gandhi, etc., as per this theory, were believed to have been born with an individual set of talents that made them natural great leaders. The traits that contributed to their success of shaping the history were charisma, intelligence and wisdom. As such it was widely used to teach the history of the mankind as a sequence of the biographies of the leaders rather than the social histories.

This theory was a forerunner of the Early Trait Theory leadership research. The need was brought about to seriously study the new reality of the industrial revolution, the hints of managing and the lack thereafter of the heroes and rulers in the past meaning of the word especially from the beginning of the 20th century till 1940s. The question that was more than often addressed was if and which personality traits could foretell victory in the leadership.

What followed was the continuation of the Great Man Theory aiming to specify what personality traits made great leaders and not ordinary followers. Galton, an English scientist and researcher, in his book 'Hereditary Genius' in 1869 studied "eminent men" and concluded that the percentage of the lineage was higher to become a leader than the general population. His research on "nature vs. nurture" did emphasize that the "qualities were inherited instead of taught" in the leaders (Wright, 2009), though he himself recognized limitations at his findings.

The way the leadership was studied from the beginning of the past century, was through the study of traits, seeing it as "complex of traits fashioned together as a unity" (Cowley, 1928). As understood from the start the evaluation of any leadership depends on the treatment as a whole of a list of traits that mark the leaders.

The work of Ralph Stogdill in 1948 (Handbook of Leadership) and revised in 1974 by Bernard Bass (Bass, 1983), (Personal factors associated leadership) highlighted the connection between traits and social situations making the case for leaders that were as such in one situation and were not leading in another situation. (Bass, 1983).

Secretary-General António Guterres of the United Nations emphasized that 21st-century challenges have outpaced 20th-century institutions and mindsets, highlighting the need for reform in global governance to address contemporary issues effectively (Guterres, 2008).

Still, the trait approach, during the last decades of 20th century towards the 21st, continued to be studied, even more so because of the interest that media and the general public took with the emerging kinds of leaders like Steve Jobs and Bill Gates. The media did emphasize their traits of innovativity, resilience, decision taking, philanthropy, etc., thus making these traits digestible to the broad unrestricted view.

The academics attempted to recognize leaders and leadership in order to know for the organizations' interests which were the shared features among the leaders. The practical aim had to do with the soliciting the persons from the market place with these characteristics for the crucial positions in the organizations. This prompted the interest of the scholars to pursue the theory of the trait approach to leadership. The focus was put on the leaders more and more. The theory that 'Mahatma Gandhi cited as a naturally great leader' was challenged not being content with the born qualities

Between 1990 and 2004 the interest in leadership and its application has grown occupy twelve percent of all the research published covering "personality" and "leadership", as their keyword. Due to the new information obtained, the arguments of Stogdill against traits where he suggested 'that individual differences can still predict the leaders's effectiveness', have been reviewed and edited by a lot of researchers and academics. Cowley did write that the traits taken as a whole, can guide to raising the effectiveness of the leader (Cowley, 1928). Based on his work, Steven J. Zaccaro and his colleagues (Zaccaro, Kemp, Bader, 2004) created the trait leadership model which dealt with the traits and their impact on the effectiveness of the leaders. They stand for the following premises '(a) leadership emerges from the combined influence of multiple traits (integrated, rather than individual, traits) and (b) leader traits differ in their proximal influence on leadership'.

The model they created came with a list of comprises of traits that as reminded by the authors, was not thorough but the model contained within 'extraversion, agreeableness, openness, neuroticism, creativity, and others' and as Zaccaro's model (Figure 4).

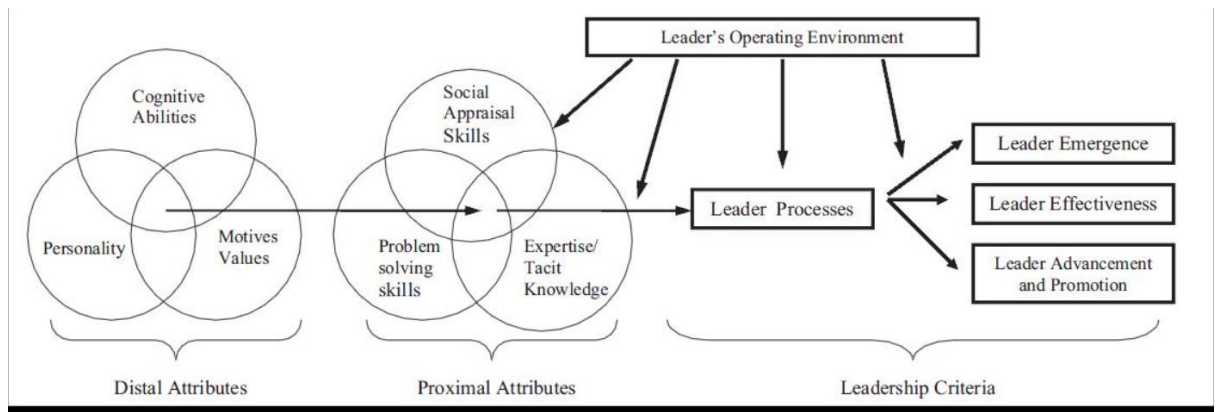


Figure 4: Leader's Operating Environment

Source: Zaccaro's model

The last decades have seen a rise in the study and development of the theories, regarding their strengths and weaknesses related to effectivity of the leaders possessing the traits. Since the end of the 20th the trait approach knew attempts to identify “physiological (appearance, height, and weight), demographic (age, education, and socioeconomic background), personality (dominance, self-confidence, and aggressiveness), intellective (intelligence, decisiveness, judgment, and knowledge), task-related (achievement drive, initiative, and persistence), and social characteristics (sociability and cooperativeness) with leader emergence and leader effectiveness” (Bass, 1983)

Bernard M. Bass (Bass, 1983) reviewed the definition of the effective leader by Ralph Stogdill (Stogdill, 1949) as someone that “has a strong drive for responsibility and task completion, vigor and persistence in pursuit of goals, venturesomeness and originality in problem solving, drive to exercise initiative in social situations, self-confidence and sense of personal identity, willingness to accept consequences of decision and action, readiness to absorb interpersonal stress, willingness to tolerate frustration and delay, ability to influence other person's behavior, and capacity to structure social interaction systems to the purpose at hand”

The study of the traits merged with the concept of any organization as an ‘input-processing-output system’ where the classical and behavioral researches associate. The human performances, expectations, and interactions were considered as input variables alongside with material and financial ones serving to the framework of the new organizations’ structure, operations and interpersonnel to generate the right ‘soil’ to bring up leaders.

Thus, the exploration of the traits and the connection between the leader emergence and leader effectiveness took place during the last decades of the 20th century. Edwin Locke (Abhishek Srivastava, 2006) surveyed the direct correlation of the empowering leadership with the efficacy of their teams in the influencing positively the organization's performance. Furthermore, he and his associate scholars from the Maryland University, in their trait study, detected a set of key individualities possessed by successful leaders, differently from other people. They obviously admitted that, though these specific individualities could not exclusively decide the successfulness of the leader, they still preconditioned the persons with leadership potential. The following crucial traits bestow the strength to potential leaders: "Drive - as an effort in a high level, containing a strong desire for achievement as well as high levels of ambition, energy, tenacity, and initiative; Leadership motivation—an intense desire to lead others; Honesty and integrity—a commitment to the truth (nondeceit), where word and deed correspond; Self-confidence—an assurance in one's self, one's ideas, and one's ability; Cognitive ability—conceptually skilled, capable of exercising good judgment, having strong analytical abilities, possessing the capacity to think strategically and multidimensionally; Knowledge of the business—a high degree of understanding of the company, industry, and technical matters; and other traits—charisma, creativity/originality, and flexibility/adaptiveness"

Timothy A. Judge, (Judge, Personality and Leadership: A qualitative and Quantitative Review, 2002) claims that regardless of the highly respected tradition in the studies on which personality traits are core to the successful leadership, the outcomes were 'inconsistent and often disappointing'. The falling out of the trait approach amidst the leadership researchers was based on their skepticism towards the "trait explanations of leader emergence" such as Stogdill (Bass, 1983). Though Bass found some continuous associations, in his reviewing of Stogdill's work, he mentions that "situation-specific analyses took over, in fact, dominating the field". Cagner and Kanungo (Jay A. Cagner, 1988) described the trait approach as "too simplistic and the construct and its underlying processes as limited". They tried to address shortcomings by giving an analytical handling of different approaches to empowerment coming from management and psychological studies as shown in a short form in the Figure 5

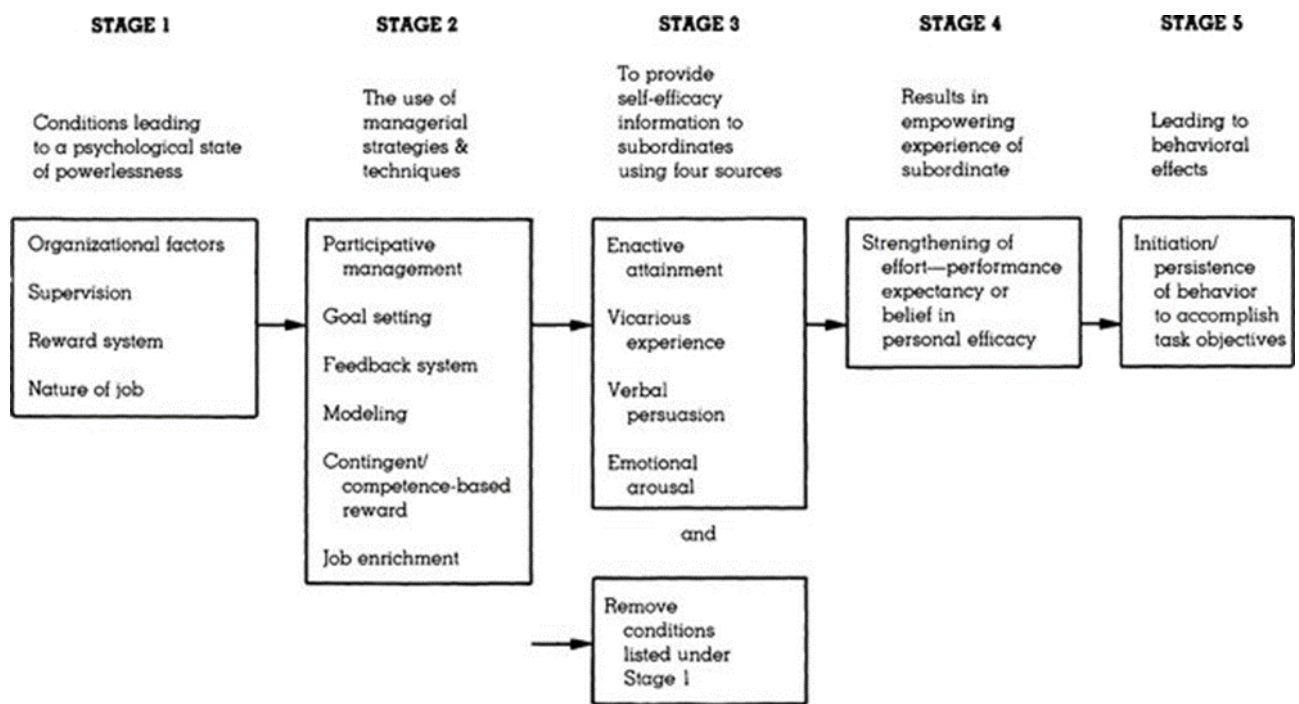


Figure 5: Five stages in the process of empowerment

Source: The linear empowerment process model by Conger and Kanungo (1988)

Angela Gordon and Gary Yukl in “the Future of the leadership research, the challenges and opportunities” in 2004 (Gordon & Yukl, 2004) argue that although the studies on the aspects of leadership have been going on for more than five decades, related to which aspects of leadership impact the performance of the organizations, “the answer is still elusive and the progress slow”. They offered as reasons for the stall, “the lack of the cooperation between scholars and practitioners and that of putting adequate emphasis on strategic issues, explanatory processes, and the moderating effects of the situation’.

Another significant trend started to study the identities of the leader and the followers in their societal relations putting the emphasis on the organizations and the ‘coconstructing of the leadership identities’. The process of claiming-granting an identity as a leader or follower, allows the individuals to internalize their choice through “reciprocal role adaptation and collective endorsement in the organizational context”. (DeRue & Ashford, 2010).

Still, the scholars and the practitioners all equally agree on the importance of studying the personality traits and finding a more adequate answer to ‘born or made leaders’. As mentioned above, the occurrence of the keyword’s ‘personality’ and ‘traits’ connected to ‘leadership’ in the studies of the first two decades of the 21st century emphasizes the need

presented to organizations to have clearer answers to what effects the quality of the leaders and hence the performance of the organizations.

Widely known remains the study of Shelley Kirkpatrick and Edvin Locke called "Leadership: Do Traits Matter?" in May 1991, where they state that the effective leaders do possess specific traits but the possession itself does not guarantee success in the leadership. (Shelley & Locke, May 1991). They emphasize though, that there is evidence that effective leaders are different from others in some of their traits, such as drive, leadership motivation, honesty and integrity, self-confidence, cognitive ability, and knowledge of the business, which on their own facilitate the process for the leader to obtain the necessary skills to articulate and communicate the organizational vision, and become able to execute it efficiently.

The study explains that the above core traits for a leader to succeed are detailed as per the authors: "drive (a broad term which includes achievement, motivation, ambition, energy, tenacity, and initiative); leadership motivation (the desire to lead but not to seek power as an end in itself); honesty and integrity; self-confidence (which is associated with emotional stability); cognitive ability; and knowledge of the business. There is less clear evidence for traits such as charisma, creativity and flexibility. We believe that the key leader traits help the leader acquire necessary skills; formulate an organizational vision and an effective plan for pursuing it; and take the necessary steps to implement the vision in reality".

The authors Timothy A. Judge, Ronald F. Piccolo, and Tomek Kosalka in their work "The bright and dark sides of leader traits" (Judge, Piccolo, & Kosalka, The bright and the dark sides of leader traits, 2009) while overviewing the leader trait model, dwell on 'the source of the leader traits, mediators and moderators' and their impact on the leader emergence and leadership effectiveness. They reconnoiter the bright and dark side of the personality traits of the leaders themselves and the positive and negative effects on their success. The progress made on personality studies, broad trait settings and evolutionary thinking made them reexamine the role of the individual differences in leadership, propose the Leader Trait Emergence Effectiveness heuristic model which mixes hereditary and evolutionary sources of trait development with the leadership intention and 'emergence process'. It does define the interchange between the traits and the context, emphasizing the socially desirable and undesirable traits and their positive and negative impact. The model helps to understand and connect the personality traits with the leadership, aiming to explore how the traits can either

boost or damage the leader emergence and leadership efficiency, and how related to the context of the reality, these traits can have both positive and negative effects on the organizational performance. The advanced studies on the personality and organizational behavior added to the valuability and use of this model.

Worth mentioning is a study of four specific areas of the organizational behavior such as power, leadership, management succession and decision making, titled "Organizational Behavior: Some New Directions for I/O Psychology". (House & Singh, 1987). The variables of the connection between the individual and the organization in the above four areas, stress the need to observe processes of importance such as selection, imitation, learning and institutionalization in order to better understand the development of the behavior in the organizations.

In 1996, Robert J. House, in his article (House & Singh, 1987) "Path-goal theory of leadership: Lessons, legacy, and a reformulated theory" aims to give a reflective review of the history and development of the path-goal theory of leader effectiveness. This theory emphasizes the enhancement of the motivation and performance of their teams by the leader highlighting their engagement to accolade the skills of their teams, recompensing for any lack of capabilities. The leaders are considered very influential to the teams' satisfaction and performance results. The theory brings together the forecasts of the recent leadership theories and the findings of empirical tests and results of earlier studies. It contains eight classes of leader behavior that can be successful or unsuccessful based on, among others on the connection and relations with the variables such as individual differences of subordinates (House & Singh, 1987). The eight classes where, as per this theory, the leaders fall, are: Directive behavior: Where the leader gives distinct directives, direction and expectations to subordinates. They set goals and tend to assign tasks together with instructions and procedures. Supportive behavior: Refers to leaders that have and show interest in the well being of their subordinates, mainly by providing support and creating a positive work environment); Participative behavior: The leaders in this class tend to seek and encourage the collaboration of their teams thus valuing their opinions and ideas in the decision making processes) Achievement-Oriented Behavior: Leaders who exhibit joint efforts towards excellence focus on setting inspiring goals, enhancing high levels of performance, using feedback and acknowledgement of success. Autocratic Behavior: Autocratic behavior refers to that class of leaders who keep a high grasp of control and power over their subordinates, taking decisions without seeking the opinions and ideas of them Consultative Behavior:

Those leaders who while involving their teams in the consulting before decision making, still hold on to their power towards the final decisions. Participative Decision-Making Behavior: The leaders that exhibit this behavior, actively seek for and take into account the opinions and ideas of their team members. They like the open communicating, close cooperations and the joint decision-making process with their work teams. Laissez-Faire Behavior: This behavior belongs to leaders who aspire to and implement giving their team the leading of the organization through instilling to them a high level of autonomy and freedom in the decision making and the execution of the plans. They tend to give the minimal guidance and instruction to their teams. (House & Singh, 1987)

The theory of the effectiveness of a leader as a “match between a leader’s style and the favourability of the situation” for the leader comes with the name “The contingency by Fred Fiedler” (Fiedler, 1964). As a theory that highlights the conditioning of the effectivity of the leader to success connected to the impact the life experiences have in the leadership style, and the actual difficulty to change. The author focused of the need to understand someone’s leadership style and match it to the situation in the organization, either then trying the adaptation of a certain leadership style. As part of his research, Fiedler made the Least-Preferred Coworker Scale (LPC) as a very important instrument for his Contingency model to assist individuals identify their specific leadership style by thinking of individuals who had been very difficult to work with and rating them using a series of bipolar adjectives (such as sociable /antisocial, proficient / inefficient, etc.). Fiedler used the LPC Scale to measure an individual's leadership style by asking respondents and based on their score, either with a high LPC or low LPC, he suggested the leaders’ direction towards being either task-oriented or relationship-oriented. That would help, as per this theory, in the placement of the right match between the leader’s orientation and the organizational situation.

The model did receive criticism related to its inflexibility and limits of the LPC scale to assess the leadership styles (Mitchell, Biglan, Oncken, & Fiedler, 1970). According to Fiedler's contingency theory, the leaders that possess intelligence and experience as their high cognitive traits, are more prone to succeed in stress-free positions. Still, in situations with high-stress level, experience itself contributes to performance. The suggestion that the theory brings to the work market is the changing of the situation to fit the leader, as a means to improve the effectivity of the leadership. A lot can be done here through mechanism of the job engineering or restructuring. But the theory does not take into consideration the in-between percentage of high LPC leaders and low LPC leaders.

While the Contingency Resource Theory brings to the attention of the leadership school of the significance of the connection of the leadership style with the demands of the situations in the organizations, the Cognitive Resource Theory (CRT) puts the focus on the actual usage of the intellectual resources, skills and knowledge by leaders and group members. It does adjust to the Fiedler's contingency model through the integration of the traits of the leader.

Edwin A. Locke in his "The Essence of Leadership: The Four Keys to Leading Successfully" brings the importance of the leadership in the "making or breaking" of an organization by applying the lessons learned during the study of real-world successful leaders. He observed and scanned the leadership styles of business huge successes and all he collected, the common traits and capabilities were put in a prototype for successful leadership. Four were the elements he incorporated in the prototype: "motives and personal traits, knowledge, skills and ability, vision, and the capacity to realize that vision" (Locke, 1991) he could apply the prototype on real leaders, as in the case with the research work of David A. Garvin on Japanese and American sixteen business leaders, trying to validate the way the effective leadership affects the success of a company. David A. Garvin with his associates shaped the major elements needed to have a successful company 'via creating an organizational culture that fosters learning and adaptation. (Garvin, 1993).

1.5.3 Cognitive Resources and Organizational Performance

The Big Five Personality Traits Theory, specifically referring to openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism was firstly proposed as the Five-Factor Model (FFM) early on the 1960s by Tupes and Christal in their work "Recurrent Personality Factors Based on Trait Ratings helped shape the development of the model in personality psychology. The model covered different elements of the personality of the leader such as "emotional adjustment, sociability, imagination, trustworthiness, and dependability" (Tupes & Christal, 1961). This was the basis to be used later as the foundation for the further advance of the Big Five personality traits theory, as a well-known structure in personality psychology, by the same author and associates (Norman, Tupes, & Christal, 1967) and by many other contributors from the field of psychology. The application of this theory is found across the context of leadership and job performance and success.

The predictive insight it brings into the positioning of the leaders has made it valuable to study further appreciating its novelty and studying more on the limitations it presented. The

criticism was targeted to the wide range the Big Five traits cover quite often undervaluing the specific personality-leadership interactions.

In 2002 a qualitative assessment of the trait perspective in the leadership studies was conducted by Timothy A. Judge, Joyce E. Bono, Megan W. Gerhardt, and Remus Ilies. The five-factor model was used as an organizing framework where the meta-analysis of 222 correlations from 73 samples displayed the positive correlation of neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness leadership, thus being a strong supporter of the leader trait perspective. 'Extraversion was found to be the most consistent correlate of leadership across different study settings and criteria' (Judge, Bono, Gerhardt, & Ilies, 2002).

1.5.4 Traits and political leadership

"Personality and Politics: Values, Traits, and Political Choice" did make use of the use of the Five Factor Model and the Schwartz's theory of basic personal values (Schwartz, 2010) exploring the impact the personality traits and personal values have on political choices. The analyses of 3044 voters in the Italian elections of 2001 found different traits and values to constituents voting to different political coalition's voters. The importance of the values they hold, is of significant implication in the explaining of their voting behavior. The conclusion that comes by the authors, highlights that the constituency of the center-left and center-right coalitions contrasted in both the personality traits and personal values. The voters belonging to the center-left showed higher levels of "friendliness, openness, universalism, benevolence, and self-direction, while center-right voters showed lower levels of energy, conscientiousness, security, power, achievement, conformity, and tradition". (Caprara, Schwartz, Capanna, Vecchione, & Barbaranelli, 2006). Personal values played a more important role in explaining voting behavior compared to personality traits, thus stressing the significance of the values in understanding the preferences of the constituency.

Schwartz's theory of basic personal values (Schwartz, 2014) focuses on his theory on ten basic human values which he organizes in a circular structure. The values he uses are self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformity, tradition, benevolence, and universalism. The impact this theory has relates to the wide usage in examining cultural differences regarding their values. It serves as a structure that recognizes and classifies fundamental individual values, valuable and applicable, as per the author, across different cultures. Each value may be ranked in a different way by each individual and they can influence diverse parts of behavior, not excluding the political choices. The

thorough understanding of the inner motivations and leading values in a person, helps explain “the shaping of the attitudes and actions” (Shwartz, 2014)

Another interesting survey of Shwartz and his associates (Shwartz, 2014) made across 15 countries (twelve of which were former communist countries) tried to discover the interaction between “basic personal values and political values”. Further more the study aimed to see the correlation between the Law and Personal Values based on his assumption that “personal values underlie and give coherence to political values”. The basic personal values backed the rationality of the political values. At the same time, the study put forward diverse hypotheses related to the non communist and post communist countries involved in the study range. The analyses of the corrolations and regressions, reinforced most of the hypotheses that the basic values accounted for a greater variance in political values, much more than the influence of age, gender, education, and income. It does support the idea that individual ‘differences in basic personal values play a crucial role in shaping the political thought and understanding an individual's personal values can provide insights into their political beliefs and behaviors. The recognition of the inner personal values makes it possible to understand “the coherence and motivations behind political values” (Shwartz, 2014)

In conclusion, Trait Theory provides a robust and objective framework for comparing the leadership traits of historical Albanian leaders and Generation Z students. Its focus on individual characteristics, historical relevance, objective measurement, and consistency across generations makes it the most suitable approach for achieving the dissertation’s aims and objectives. This choice supports valuable insights into effective leadership development in Albania, aiding the country’s transition and integration into the European Union. The table below (Table 2) gives an informed justification:

Table 2: Why the use of the Trait Theory

Aims to achieve	Explanation
Focus on Individual Characteristics	Trait Theory emphasizes the inherent qualities of leaders, making it suitable for comparing the leadership traits of Generation Z students and historical Albanian leaders. This approach allows us to identify consistent patterns and qualities that define effective leadership across different eras and contexts.
Historical Relevance	Trait Theory is ideal for analyzing the leadership qualities of past Albanian leaders using historical documents and biographies. This aligns with the study's goal of understanding and preserving the legacy of Albanian political leaders.
Objective Measurement	Trait Theory enables objective measurement of traits like decisiveness, charisma, adaptability, and risk tolerance. This mitigates the subjectivity involved in evaluating leaders' behaviors and contexts, ensuring a rigorous analysis.
Consistency Across Generations	Trait Theory provides a stable framework for comparing traits across generations, crucial for meaningful comparisons between senior political leaders and Generation Z students. This highlights how certain leadership traits persist or evolve over time.
Relevance to Leadership Development	Understanding key leadership traits can inform training and development programs for future leaders in Albania. This practical application supports the dissertation's goal of fostering effective leadership for Albania's future.
Alignment with Research Questions	The research questions about decision-making, attitudes towards people and information, adaptability to change, and risk-taking align well with Trait Theory. This ensures the theoretical framework supports the research objectives.
Cultural and Contextual Considerations	Trait Theory allows examination of how cultural and contextual factors influence leadership traits in Albania. This helps understand the unique leadership landscape in Albania and inform future leadership development.

Own editing based on Literature

2 Aims of the thesis

The aim of our research is to highlight the traits of past and present leaders in Albania, a developing country aspiring to join the EU, and compare these traits with those of an interviewed sample of youth. Building long-lasting peace and inclusive, sustainable, and environmentally safe societies, while developing the new generation of leaders, requires more than simply working with them as societal stakeholders.

Generations Z and the millennials in the Western Balkans, born and raised in areas of conflict and continuous instability, are significant contributors to their countries. They are often under-studied and misunderstood in terms of their challenges and aspirations. To ensure their meaningful contribution to future leadership, it is crucial to understand their positions and perspectives regarding key traits: decision-making, handling information and people, pace and rhythm, and risk management.

In the first chapter, we will provide basic information on Albania, including its historical, economic, and political development in the region. We will present the current regional situation, the state of reforms and processes required by European Union institutions, and the theoretical basis for the researched problems. Primarily, we will analyze the issues of leadership and its application at the national level.

To fulfill the main aims, we outline the following partial objectives:

1. Define and explain the position and history of Albania in the region of the Western Balkans.
2. Present the situation in the region concerning the EU accession process.
3. Explain leadership theories, focusing on how political leaders often come from economic environments and use managerial expertise in their political life, thereby shaping the workforce based on ability and inherent characteristics, as well as self-evaluation.
4. Explain the cognitive resources and organizational performance.
5. Analyze traits and political leadership through the lens of decision-making, attitudes towards people and information, attitudes towards change and pace, and risk management.

6. Outline the workload placed on elites by the EU accession process and present the leadership challenges in the region.

We assume that the current senior staff leading the economy today have the same or similar self-evaluated characteristics as the students joining the workforce in business and marketing fields. These students may become the new generation of leaders.

To fulfill the aims and objectives, we formulated these research questions:

1. Do senior political leaders and students have the same characteristics in decision-making?
2. Do senior political leaders and students have the same characteristics regarding attitudes towards people and information?
3. Do senior political leaders and students have the same characteristics regarding attitudes towards change and pace?
4. Do senior political leaders and students have the same characteristics regarding risk-taking?

Studying the traits of past and present Albanian political leaders may add value by preserving their legacy in the history of Albania. Understanding what works and what doesn't in Albanian politics based on these findings may help the younger generation recognize that past experiences can inform future trends.

We will examine the influences of traits in decision-making, information processing, pace, and risk-taking on leadership, using the case of the former dictator of Albania. This involves tests on a sample of past and present decision-makers, including students entering the workforce in the Republic of Albania, along with analysis and interpretation of the chosen issue.

3 Methods and methodology

On November 15, 2022, the population in the world passed the number of 8 billion¹, thus the 21st century has a youth generation rounding 2 billion, the largest in the history so far, and the most active in the work force.

Why the tests on youth and their aspiration to join national and international politics?

Then we studied what the media used to describe eight of the main Albanian leaders of the 20th and 21st stand against the same four traits. The comparison of them, we, hope, will answer the question that the new generation of leaders in Albania as an aspiring country to join the EU, has different (better) qualities to lead the country in the upcoming decades.

For our research we decided to realize following methods: a survey with 100 students of Tirana Business University and case study with 8 selected political leaders, the most prominent in the Albanian history from 1912-2024.

The survey based on the questionnaire was designed, distributed and filled in 2018 by 92 students of Tirana Business University. The questionnaire is made of two parts:

- The first part aims to collect quantitative data that measure the students' attitudes, opinions, and/or perceptions on the following questions: age; work/study status; supervising others or not; self-perception on being a leader/manager/neither; social status; education years; gender; political aspiration on wanting to partake in politics /wanting to lead in politics/have no interest in politics;
- The second part, the Likert-type scale questionnaire is on self-evaluation on how the students described themselves on four traits of Decision taking; Regarding new people and information; related to Managing Change and Pace; related to Facing risk.

The questionnaire was designed by author based on “leadingfromyourstrengths” (www.leadingfromyourstrengths.com) and the wording can be found in annexes.

The case study was realized on eight most predominant leaders of Albania in the last century. Four of them dead and four still active politicians. In-depth analysis of eight individuals, the most prominent leaders of Albania during the 20th and 21st centuries (mentioned and developed in the literature review, part one of the dissertation). The work here involves:

¹https://www.ined.fr/en/everything_about_population/demographic-facts-sheets/focus-on/world-population-prospects-2022/#r244

- documents analysis: Examination of published, public, credible documents, archives or other written materials on the eight leaders in the historical context leading to the EU accession
- the finding, collection of the documents
- coding/connecting/observing the specific attributes used about them as the adjectives of the same Likert scale questionnaire, used with the 100 students (on four traits of Decision taking; Regarding new people and information; related to Managing Change and Pace; related to Facing risk)
- analyses of the detailed insights
- a bonus is the Likert scale questionnaire done about Enver Hoxha, that is one of the eight leaders in the case study.

The Likert-type scale questionnaire is on self-evaluation on how the students described themselves on four traits of Decision taking; Regarding new people and information; related to Managing Change and Pace; related to Facing risk.

In the case study we used an evaluation table (Table 3) for four areas of leadership traits specifically:

- Decision taking,
- Regarding new people and information,
- Managing change and pace,
- Facing risk.

Each of the fields consists of 20 characteristics divided into two poles (from left to right) where the extreme points from left to right are calculated to be +3 to -3. This is a detailed assessment form which was filled out directly by the individual to determine afterwards what the leadership style is for everyone. The final data will be summarized in a final summary table where the possibility of comparison from one figure to another will be given.

What we have done in this study is to analyze different personalities (figures in the past and present), leaders of the Albanian state based on facts and historical data published in newspapers, magazines, studies or books written by journalist, publicist, writer and different researcher over the years.

Table 3: The traits used for the self evaluation of the students and the evaluation of the of eight historic leaders (2012-2022)

Decision Taking			Regarding New People and Information		
1	Conservative	11 Venturesome	21	Reflective	31 Optimistic
2	Calculating	12 Decisive	22	Factual	32 Poised
3	Cooperative	13 Competitive	23	Calculating	33 Polished
4	Hesitant	14 Aggressive	24	Skeptical	34 Convincing
5	Low- keyed	15 Determined	25	Logical	35 Warm
6	Unsure	16 Forceful	26	Undemonstrative	36 Persuasive
7	Undemanding	17 Strong –willed	27	Suspicious	37 Demonstrative
8	Cautious	18 Pioneering	28	Matter -of-Fact	38 Enthusiastic
9	Mild	19 Ambitious	29	Incisive	39 Political
10	Agreeable	20 Driving	30	Pessimistic	40 Magnetic
Managing change and pace			Facing Risk		
41	Mobile	51 Stabile	61	Firm	71 Balanced judgement
42	Active	52 Steady	62	Independent	72 Open minded
43	Restless	53 Deliberate	63	Self-willed	73 Tactful
44	Alert	54 Consistent	64	Stubborn	74 Accurate
45	Variety-Oriented	55 Predictable	65	Obstinate	75 Diplomatic
46	Demonstrative	56 Possessive	66	Opinionated	76 Systematic
47	Impatient	57 Patient	67	Unsystematic	77 Neat
48	Eager	58 Passive	68	Self-righteous	78 Exacting
49	Flexible	59 Non demonstrative	69	Uninhabited	79 Conventional
50	Impulsive	60 Resistant to change	70	Arbitrary	80 Cautious

Own Editing Based on Literature

For each feature, a convention has been established which will help us to create an evaluation based on an objective as well as a subjective judgment. So it is worth noting that the final results will be based on the analytical judgment of everything found and referred to as analysis for each character in this document.

4 Results

4.1 The traits of the 92 students of Generations Z

The mean score reached by all 90 respondents were computed in the cases of all four analyzed trait groups. In the next step, the trait group with the mean score farthest from zero was chosen by each participant and the overall frequency of top trait groups were counted. According to the results, the trait group “facing risk” was the farthest from zero in the cases of 32 respondents, whilst the group “decision taking” appeared as the top trait group by 30 participants.

In the next step of the filtering process, from the above-mentioned top two trait groups, the traits reaching the farthest values from zero (-3 or +3) were chosen in the cases of all participants. If more than one trait received these scores, all traits reaching these values were chosen. Following the computation in the first step, by each trait, the number of respondents choosing them as “most extreme” were computed. The traits reaching the highest value were chosen for further analysis. In the case of “facing risk”, this trait was unsystematic/neat, measured on a 7-point semantic differential, whereas -3 referred to neat, while 3 to unsystematic, appearing in the cases of 20 respondents with the farthest score from zero. In the trait group “decision taking”, the semantic differential measuring low-keyed/determined appeared by 12 respondents with the farthest value from zero and thereby was chosen as dominant trait.

4.1.1 Political aspiration

The variable “political aspiration” was measured on an ordinal scale, where coded with 1 appeared the answer “I have no interest at all in politics”, 2 symbolized the option “I want to partake in politics” and with 3 appeared the answer “I want to lead in politics”.

Out of the 90 participants in the analyzed sample, 77 respondents disclosed that they have no interest in politics, while 7 of them want to partake in it and 5 of them want to lead in politics, whereas 1 participant did not answer this question.

Since the aim of this paper is to describe, whether there are possible significant differences in the dominant traits of respondents in terms of their political aspirations, the respondents were weighted by using the following formula:

weight= % stratum in population% stratum in sample

With the example of respondents not having interest in politics, the weight was calculated as following:

$$\text{weight no interest} = 33.337789 * 100 = 33.3386.51 = 0.3853$$

In the cases of respondents having no interest in politics, their weight was computed as 0.3853, as discussed above, while participants who want to partake in politics received a weight of 4.2377 and respondents who would like to lead in politics appeared with the weight of 5.9327 in further analysis.

Determining significant trait differences in terms of political aspiration

Kruskal-Wallis H tests were used to determine possible significant differences in the chosen top traits in terms of the respondents' political aspirations. The following sections represent the results of these tests conducted with the dominant trait of "facing risk", namely unsystematic/neat, as well as with the dominant personality trait of "decision taking", low-keyed/determined.

4.1.2 Facing risk – unsystematic/neat

The following visualization represents the semantic differential of the trait unsystematic/neat, along with the number of respondents choosing each value on the scale. Median rankings on the political aspiration variable by each personality trait category are highlighted with red, if the respondent-median in the particular category was "have no interest in politics", yellow if the political aspiration median was "want to partake in politics" and green if the respondents' political aspiration median was "want to lead in politics".

Median political aspiration codes were statistically different between the groups of the analyzed dominant traits, $\chi^2(3) = 29.389$, $p < 0.001$. Post-hoc pairwise comparisons were conducted according to Dunn (1964). The comparisons were performed with a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons, thereby adjusted p-values are presented.

Significant differences in political aspirations between respondents answering with -2 and 3 to the dominant trait statement. Respondents answering with -2, considering themselves rather neat, to the hereby analyzed personality trait, reached a median of 3 (want to lead in politics) to the political aspiration statement, whereas those respondents, who answered with 3 and considered themselves unsystematic, answered with a median of 2 (want to partake in politics) to the political aspiration statement, which difference was significant ($p = 0.002$).

Further significant difference was detected between respondents considering themselves neat (-3) and rather neat (-2). Those participants answering with -3 reached a median of 2 (want to partake in politics) regarding political aspiration, whereas those answered with -2 to this particular personality trait, achieved 3 (want to lead in politics) in terms of their political aspiration, which difference was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).

4.1.3 Decision taking – low-keyed/determined

Kruskal-Wallis H tests were used to determine possible significant differences in the chosen top traits in terms of the respondents' political aspirations. The following visualization shows the semantic differential with the number of respondents in each of its category in the case of the dominant trait (low-keyed/determined) of the trait group "decision taking". Median rankings on the political aspiration variable by each personality trait category are highlighted with red, if the respondent-median in the particular category was "have no interest in politics", yellow if the political aspiration median was "want to partake in politics" and green if the respondents' political aspiration median was "want to lead in politics".

Significant differences were detected between 4 category pairings in terms of the respondents' political aspiration. Respondents who considered themselves slightly determined (-1) reached a median of 1.6929 (rather aspiring for partaking in politics than not), while those who considered themselves as slightly low-keyed (1) showed a political aspiration median of 3 (want to lead in politics). This difference was significant ($p = 0.009$).

Significant differences in terms of respondents' political aspiration was discovered between the above-mentioned respondents who were slightly low-keyed (1) and those who were indecisive (0). The latter respondent-group showed a political aspiration median of 2 (want to partake in politics). This difference was significant ($p = 0.009$).

Slightly low-keyed respondents (1) also showed significant differences in their political aspiration with those who considered themselves as very low-keyed (3). The latter respondent-group showed a median of 2 regarding their political aspiration (want to partake in politics), opposed to slightly low-keyed people who want to lead in politics according to their median. This difference was significant ($p = 0.009$).

Very determined respondents (-3) were also significantly different from the above discussed slightly low-keyed participants. While very determined respondents reached a median of 2 in political aspiration, thereby wanting to partake in politics, slightly low-keyed people

reached the above-mentioned median of 3 on the political aspiration variable, wanting to lead in politics. This difference was significant ($p = 0.006$).

4.1.4 Conclusion of the analysis of the traits of the students

The conclusion drawn from the analysis of the traits of the 90 students from Generation Z and their political aspirations reveals several significant findings.

Trait Dominance and Political Aspirations: The analysis shows that the trait group "facing risk" was dominant among respondents, followed closely by "decision taking." This suggests that traits related to risk assessment and decision-making are prevalent among the surveyed students. Furthermore, there are significant differences in the dominant traits based on the participants' political aspirations.

Impact on Political Aspirations: The study indicates that respondents with different dominant traits exhibit varying political aspirations. For instance, those who consider themselves unsystematic tend to aspire to leadership roles in politics, while those who perceive themselves as neat show more interest in participating in politics rather than leading.

Significance of Traits in Political Aspirations: Traits related to decision-taking and determination also play a crucial role in shaping political aspirations. Respondents who perceive themselves as determined show a higher inclination towards leadership roles in politics, whereas those who consider themselves low-keyed are more likely to aspire to participate in politics rather than lead.

Implications for Leadership and Politics: These findings suggest that certain personality traits may predispose individuals towards specific roles in politics. Understanding the relationship between dominant traits and political aspirations can inform efforts to nurture and develop future leaders, aligning their traits with the demands of leadership roles in politics.

In conclusion, the analysis underscores the importance of personality traits in shaping individuals' political aspirations and highlights the potential implications for leadership development and political engagement among Generation Z students in Albania.

4.2 Results of the case studies of eight leaders

We will start the analyses of the leaders looking at how they are described in the press or books picking the adjectives that stand in our table with a specific number. The exact mentioned characteristics in the form of adjectives correspond to their exact numbers in the table, so the number will be alongside the adjective belonging to the trait. The summary of each of them, will give us an idea of the characteristic trait most dominant to the leader.

4.2.1 *Ismail Qemali, Founder of the Albanian state, 2012*

Dr. Bello in “The history behind a slap to Ismail Qemali” attempting to draw light on Ismail Qemali states that he was an important political figure in Albania. “He had a strong attitude (17) against the occupying Young Turks. He was determined (15), in protecting the interests of Albanians and against concession policies that harmed the Albanian nation”. However, the document shows that Ismail Qemali was ready to engage in physical conflict (77; 17) to protect his honor and his dignity (Bello, 2015).

Dr Anastasi in the article "What you don't know about the founder of the Albanian state, Ismail Qemali" (Anastasi, 2022) describes the character of Ismail Qemali as a humane (35) and enlightened leader, an advanced, knowledgeable and reasonable leader (16). He is exalted as a visionary (20) leader, with strong character and integrity (17). He was a determined (15) and humble leader who led with meekness and determination (15).

Prof. Dr. Ahmeti (Ahmeti, 2021) in his article in the Sun periodical mentions that Ismail Qemali was a supporter of liberal principles. The most distinctive feature described for Ismail Qemali in this document is his commitment to serving the Albanian nation and its progress. He was not frightened facing of many challenges and dangers (15) and was dedicated to the future of the Albanian people. Ismail Qemali also had progressive ideas (72; 18) and was dedicated to the education and development of the Albanian population as researcher open to new things (18).

Very important remains the study of the leadership style of Ismail Qemali by Evaris (Beqiri). The author highlights some elements that mark the leadership of Ismail Qemali: Building human relationships filled with positive energy (40) is a decisive factor in him as a successful leader. His communication strategy remains recognized to this day, as Ismail Qemali possessed the art of communication and the ability to pull people of different strata to himself (40). He followed the policy of open doors (45; 72), and was easily accessible to ordinary

people (40). There were never any signs of arrogance (9), soft natured, and a value that also came from his noble upbringing. Flexible and elastic (49) at the same time, he did not give up easily without realizing his objectives to the end (17). In this book, Ismail Qemali's leadership model is emphasized to strengthen democracy, for politicians who lead from high ideals with strong character and a big heart (10). Be remaining above all a defender of fundamental human rights and freedoms, he used both prudence and wisdom to achieve "the sublime act of establishing the Albanian state" (71; 75), - says Evarist Beqiri.

In his book "Independence, the unforgettable journey of Ismail Qemali", the author Ilir Ikonomi puts his emphasis on the specific traits of this leader, to realize the unbelievable sublime act of proclaiming the independence of Albania, after 500 years of occupation, "without soldiers and without bloodshed" (Ikonomi, 2012). Ikonomi has drawn the characteristics of Ismail Qemali reviewing more than two hundred historic books covering this period of time. His data has been taken out from a myriad of foreign authors like, Austrian, English, Romanian, German, Italian, Serbian, French, American and Albanian newspapers too. "The beginnings of the Albanian state have been talked about and will be talked about a lot, but Ismail Qemali's journey from Istanbul to Vlora to declare independence(12) will remain the seed of that new history", says Ikonomi.

The author explained that the help of Austria-Hungary for the creation of the Albanian state was exceptional based on the diplomatic relationships (75) that Qemali built but it should not be absolutized, as some authors do. The creation of the national government by Ismail Qemali, said Ikonomi, also had an irreplaceable role, because it showed Europe that Albanians were capable of creating a state (34; 39), which ultimately led to the recognition of this state at the London Conference, although the original country was reduced to the present day borders. To get recognition you have to have a government, the author said. "Ismail Qemali made the government a *fait accompli* and saved as much as he could save (39)". This leader was a seeker (18; 78) along his journey to create an alliance outside Albania (75) to bring independence. Qemali was known as persuasive and his persuasive role was accurately active (42) when he passed through the most prominent European cities to make the case of the Albanian declaration of independence possible. Even before he stepped up to this historic role, he had a great impact on the Ottoman Empire to reform and liberalize it (36), he had close contacts with the Sultan and was influential (34).

Ikonomi also talks about "elasticity and flexibility (49) especially in his connections with the Greeks. He sought to keep good and diplomatic relations with Greece, since the interests

of both nations coincided at the time of the independence. But in 1913, Qemali did not succumb to the Greek claims towards the Albanian set borders (44).

In conclusion, Qemali as a prominent historical figure had these dominant traits:

1. decision taking

9 Gentle (+3), 10 Charismatic (+3) 12 decisive (-3), 15 Determined (-3), 16 Strong (-3), 17 strong-willed (-3), 18 seeking open new things (-3), 20 what directs (-3) = -12

2. In connection with people regarding new people and information

34 Persuasive (-3), 35 Warm (-3), 36 that pushes you to do something (-3), 39 Political (-3), 40 Like a magnet, that attracts (-3) = -15

3. managing change and pace change

42 Active (+3), 44 Alert (+3), 45 Variety Oriented (+3), 49 Elastic (+3) = +12

4. Dealing with risk Facing Risk

71 Balanced judgment (-3), 72 Open-mindedness (-3), 75 Diplomatic (-3), 77 Good(-3), 78 Inquisitive(-3) = -15

The dominant traits as per the above evaluation for Ismail Qemali:

1. Decision taking = -12
2. Regarding new people and information = -15
3. Managing change and pace = +12
4. Facing risk = -15

4.2.2 Fan Noli, Primeminister 1924

Quiet a lot has been written, recorded or otherwise elaborated on the political figure of Fan Noli but what dominates is his characterization is being complex with various features from our four traits at study. Petro Luarasi, on the occasion of analyzing the documentary "Enigma, the untrodden path of Noli", produced by Digitalb Media in 2015, gives a detailed description of features of Fan Noli. (Luarasi). Described as an emancipating insurgent (18), civilizing democrat (39), enricher of the Albanian cultural-literary heritage, popular ruler, original thinker, sarcastic polemicist, the man, the politician (39), the artist, the publicist and the cleric, who in the history of Albania remained carved as the protagonist.

In the article “The truth about Noli, why should he be defined as a revivalist and state-maker” in Shqiptarja.com, the author Komnino makes the case that “Noli served as the Prime Minister (20) of Albania that in 1924 made great efforts to modernize (18; 72) and reshape the country. He built new state institutions (12), promoted education and culture (45), and fought corruption and social injustice. (Komnino, 2018)

Fejzi Lila in his doctoral studies on the Albanian leadership of 1912-1989 gives these attributes to Fan Noli: he was the pantheon of modern Albanian diplomacy (75) and reaffirmed the independence of the Albanian state and continued to strengthen its representation in the international arena. (Lila, 2012). Furthermore he explains “that Fan Noli's personality came from intellectual, cultural, encyclopedic formation. The basic dilemma of his profile was related to the duality within him(4), where advanced western liberal ideas would coexist with radical, revolutionary eastern actions, practices and behavior (41;45). Noli was raised as a profile on oriental, conservative, authoritarian, revolutionary and somewhat liberal realities. Noli was guided by an ambitious project (19), but which completely ignored the social classes on which he should have relied. In particular, Noli's political behavior and practical actions reflect the legacy of Albanian leadership traits (20).” (Lila, 2012)

The academician Skender Gjinushi has made quite a lot of portrayals and praises of the figure of Fan Noli. He states that Noli remains “one of the brightest minds that Albanian history has produced and a person with an unrepeatable encyclopedic education (17) with a strong will (19)”. He emphasizes that Noli with his creative and scientific activity brought a valuable contribution to the Westernization and liberalization of the Albanian mentality (72) coming out of a Turkish presence of five centuries. Noli, as per this academic “had a charismatic personality (10) who attracted followers and supporters (40) with his ability to inspire and mobilize people (34: 40). (Gjinushi, 2022)

Ilir Ikonomi using the widespread deposit of historical records found in the archives of Albania, the United States of America, the Austrian Foreign Ministry, and other trustworthy sources writes the book "The apostle" on Fan Noli, as the first of three in succession. Beside the vast historical details Ikonomi uses to explain the making of this political figure, of interest are the characteristics he brings into light regarding the leadership traits of Fan Noli, with documented data. (Ikonomi, 2012)

Ikonomi writes that Fan Noli was brought up with a passionate Albanian nationalist spirit; and left for America from Egypt in 1906 in search (78) of ways to help his compatriots (42)

to organize. Noli became a successful exponent of liberating ideas when in Boston, at the age of 24, he started campaigns with the Albanians there to help with the fights for the Albanian independence (39). He used the help of the Russian Synod (75) against the Greek standpoint that practicing the Orthodox belief meant being Greek, thus the Gospel was read in Albanian in his church. This went far beyond the church's walls. Noli "claimed that his new church was partly oriented to save Southern Albania (44) - a region with a predominantly Orthodox population, which Athens claimed was part of Greece" (Ikonomi, 2012). He used the Albanian church to spread this idea (49). He soon brought together under 'Vatra', a federation of societies the Albanian immigrants living in the colonies in the North-East of America. Their integration (34; 36) in the continuous lobbying for the motherland (75), and his personal bravery (77) at the time when the Albania's existence was in literal discussion among the international powers makes Noli's role very important. Ikonomi describes his personality as one of many talents: "polyglot, skilled orator and innovative translator of Shakespeare's tragedies. Quite often he was seen as a hasty and stubborn character (64), but also as a learned man, with a sound and classical education".

So referring to the numbered attributes used in the above, selected sources about Fan Noli, the summary is as follows (the number representing the attribute and the brackets the corresponding evaluation in the test):

In conclusion, Noli as a prominent historical figure had these dominant traits:

1. decision taking

4 Indecisive (+3), 10 charismatic (+3), 12 decisive (-3), 17 strong-willed (-3), 18 seeker who opens up new things (-3), 19 Ambitious (-3), 20 who leads (-3) = -9

2. In connection with people regarding new people and information

34 Persuasive (-3), 36 That pushes you to do something, inspiring (-3), 39 Political (-3), 40 Like a magnet, that attracts (-3), =-12

3. Managing change and pace change,

41 Moveable (+3) 42 Active (+3), 44 Alert (+3), 45 Variety Oriented (+3), 49 Elastic (+3) = +15

4. *Dealing with risk Facing Risk*

64 Stubborn (+3), 72 Open-minded (-3), 75 Diplomatic (-3), 77 Capable (-3), 78

Inquisitive (-3) = -9

The dominant traits as per the above evaluation for Fan Noli:

1. Decision taking = -9

2. Regarding new people and information = -12

3. Managing change and pace = +15

4. Facing risk = -9

4.2.3 *Zogu, Prime-minister, King 1928-1939*

As per the article “The history of the Albanian Kingdom from 1928-1939 and Ahmet Zogu” (<https://dosja.al/historia-e-mbreterise-shqiptare-nga-viti-1928-1939-dhe-ahmet-zogu>, n.d.) (<https://www.shtepiaelibrit.com/store/sq/historia-shqiptare/214-mbreti-zog-dhe-perpjekja-per-stabilitet-ne-shqiperi-b-fischer.html>, n.d.), Ahmet Zogu initiated major reforms in the Albania (12; 39), regarding the legal system with the Civil Code and the Commercial Code. He encouraged trade, infrastructure, agriculture, tourism, culture, sports and education in Albania (20). Eightteen state scholarships were created (18) to help excellent young people to pursue education abroad (72). As a decisive (12) leader (20) in Albania during the 20s and 30s of the 20th century, in “his ascending positions from Minister of Internal Affairs, Prime Minister, First President of the Republic and King of the Albanians, Ahmet Zogu was brave and determined “(15). (Haxhiu, 2020)

Iris Halili in her book “You are not born a leader, you become one” states that Ahmet Zogu was the first one to establish the European, Western laws (71; 75) but his act of leaving the country and declaring capitulation when Albania was attacked by the Italian Fascists (6), left this attempt to progressiveness as a tentative (6). She says, Zogu “extinguished the Albanian hope of having a servant leader, that is, who is at the top to serve his followers first and only, even self-sacrificing” (Halili, 2022).

In the book "Ahmet Zogu, the president who became king", the journalist Blendi Fevziu (Fevziu, 2014), points out that Zogu remains a much debated figure in the history of Albania and regardless of the 21 books written about him as a President and Monark, more comes to light related to his personal attributes, strengths or weaknesses. The author brings valuable quotes from historic figures that knew Zogu with attributes from his personality and

leadership style. The portraits done by Faik Konica, Pietro Kuarone, Sejfi Vllamasi, Eqrem bej Vlora hold a lot of truth and are worth observing:

Faik Konica (Konica, 1926) writes: "...whether we like it or not, he remains an interesting and enigmatic character (27), an indiscriminate mixture of various contradictions, half hero and half buffoon (4), which will interest both the collector of strange historical facts and the researcher of psychology."

Fevziu mentions Pietro Cuarone's description of the two sides of Zogu's personality regarding his communication, by highlighting Zogu's ability "to display a very subtle charm and use a wonderful smile. His tone of voice was warm (35), his speech, simple, and clear, managing to give the impression of a great sincerity, which in a sense was not deceptive. In short, a very complex personality. Sometimes, but rarely, a gesture, an attitude, revealed his other face. In on rare occasions, his "No" came out like a shot. The man then transformed: he became yellow wax, his features strained, his lips became thinner, his gaze fixed, cold, full of an evil light. "

Fevziu, referring to another contemporary figure of Zogu, Sejfi Vllamasi and his description of Zogu, writes that he saw Zogu as a realist type, "for whom both the feeling and the moral side of the matter had no meaning. Society, friendship and intimacy had a certain value for him when these served his interest" (23). Referring to the portrayal given by Eqrem bey Vlora, another contemporary public figure of Zogu, Fevziu brings the quote: "The natural intelligence of this man was amazing. Even when he was tasked with judging and solving problems very difficult and foreign to him, he was seldom wrong. Even in the company of much more cultured people he never made a bad figure. But apart from intelligence, what gave him an indisputable superiority over all others was the absence of any feeling. Ahmet Zogu never loved or hated. His action and behavior were always controlled by a cold and practical mind (25), were always and only guided by his interests..." The author states furthermore the claims that Ahmet Zogu was one of the leaders that helped to consolidate the Albanian state (18), striking as a Charismatic character (10), with the highest attempts to being assassinated in the world at that time, justifying him being paranoid (44), with unconsolidated thoughts (4), mostly referring to Zogu's lack of building up the resistance against the fascism occupation, but choosing instead to flee. Zogu was quoted as a corrupt figure that chose b-players to govern for him, quite often settling only when he was personally rewarded and paid. (Fevziu, 2014)

Bernd J. Fischer, (Fis (<https://dosja.al/historia-e-mbreterise-shqiptare-nga-viti-1928-1939-dhe-ahmet-zogu>, n.d.)her, 1984) an American researcher, while praising Zogu as “the figure that laid the foundations of the centralized state” continues to characterize him as feeding the spirit of national pride in Albania. As per Fisher, Zogu came from a tribal background from the North of Albania, with no sufficient education (xx), inheriting the “features of a capricious Balkan chieftain who spent his time in wars and intrigues between the tribes”. Still, he asserts that Zogu was gifted with intelligence and talent “suitable to face successfully rivals (xx) of his own category”. The historian emphasizes that the young Zogu used his charismatic nature to win people and reach the highest offices in power. Then he realized that those attributes were not applicable to achieve the consolidating of the Albanian state and turning it towards the Western, progressive course he chose.

Paraphrasing one diplomat of Zogu’s time, the historian mentions that while Zogu was more talented to do the job as minister of interior than that of the Prime Minister (xx), and less that of a monarch. Fisher concludes that “Zogu continued to be able to "take decisive action (12) and be persistent, due to limited constructive skills, inability to understand economic relations and inability to understand the true depth of the problem of the peasantry in Albania, Zogu found it impossible to make progress material reality of his country" (67). (Fisher, 1984) (<https://dosja.al/historia-e-mbreterise-shqiptare-nga-viti-1928-1939-dhe-ahmet-zogu>, n.d.)

Another feature that has arisen discussions about his leadership was the (lack of) capability to choose proficient coworkers (xx) and left the people suffer under “incorrigible Ottoman bureaucrats” (Fisher, 1984). Faik Konica seemed to have a different opinion emphasizing that “Zogu, was afraid of capable people (56), of honest patriots and cultured personalities and not because he was unable to choose capable people” (Konica, 1926)

Fisher attributes to Zogu the creation of conditions for the “existence of Albania as an independent state (20), while being a ‘dualist’ politician (4) that created a somewhat effective non absolutist dictatorship with political ideas, western in the form and eastern in content.” (Fisher, 1984).

In conclusion, Ahmet Zogu as a prominent historical figure had these dominant traits:

1. Decision taking

2 Calculating (+3), 4 Hesitating (+3), 6 Uncertain (+3), 10 Charismatic (+3), 12 Decisive (-3), 15 Determined (-3), 17 Strong-willed (-3), 18 Seeking/discovering new things (-3), 20 Leading (-3) = -3 points

2. In connection with people regarding new people and information

23 calculating (+3), 25 Logical (+3), 27 suspicious (+3), 35 Warm (-3), 39 Political (-3), =33.

3. Managing change and pace change

44 Vigilant (+3), 51 Stable (-3), 56 Owner / who wants you for himself -3, 60 Resistant (-3) = -6

4. Dealing with risk Facing Risk

67 No system (+3), 75 diplomatic (-3) = 0

The dominant traits as per the above evaluation for Ahmet Zogu:

1. Decision taking = -3
2. Regarding new people and information = 3
3. Managing change and pace = -6
4. Facing risk = 0

4.2.4 Enver Hoxha the head of the Albanian state 1944-1985

As per the Iris Halili the characteristics that she associates Hoxha with are “all the qualities of a bad and demonic leader: he was callous, isolationist, rigid (64) and, above all, a dictator (66)”. She continues “that Hoxha had the darkest sides of the narcissistic personality, such as total lack of empathy and extreme paranoia. Only a leader with these traits can inflict so much psychological damage, terrorize or persecute his followers until destruction (14) eliminating without any conscience his friends and associates according to the basic principle of dark narcissism, where anyone who opposes or threatens one’s power turns into an enemy overnight ” (Halili, 2022) (Halliday, 1986)

It was during the 1970s that as per editor Jon Halliday, Enver Hoxha started to write his memoirs from the beginning of his political career from the beginning of World War II till the 70s sharing a lot of information “filled with doubts, insults and boasts like none other

from the communist block”. Hoxha gave his version of the risen and fallen coalitions he forged with Yugoslavia, Russia, and China. What remain of interest for our theme are the characteristics Halliday gives of the dictator regarding him as a person.

He writes: "Hoxha, boasts that he is always right (66) yet, he also has a certain ability to take a critical attitude (25) towards himself. Sometimes, he recalls instances of events that do not honor him (eg, he loses his temper, behaves rudely with women). Hoxha is a very keen observer (29) and quite intelligent. Likewise, he looks at things with suspicion (27) ...His general view was that the great powers saw Albania as a prey". (Halliday, 1986)

The reign of Hoxha lasted almost 50 years, with no comparison but heads of traditional monarchies. Holliday writes that “Enver Hoxha's path, towards taking power, as well as during the possession of power, was filled with the corpses of his old enemies and his new friends. No communist regime has experienced such continuous purges and murders as the Albanian regime. He was a man who knew how to hold a communist regime under his claws and say "no" (65) to the rest of the world, living within his own madness”. (Halliday, 1986)

The journalist Fevziu in his book on Enver Hoxha, characterizes him as capable of “shamelessly transforming the events, erasing or making disappear real characters, falsifying the history (5) with the elimination of witnesses and people close to him and raising himself” (Fevziu, 2014)

The description of Enver Hoxha by Fevziu continues emphasizing even from the beginning “as imposing himself on the communist movement, taking advantage of the problems and quarrels in its bosom (44), moving with outstanding talent (41) among the noisy leaders of the time, instilling confidence in them, imposing himself on them, thus coming to the top (19) and then eliminating them one by one”. Blendi Fevziu describes Hoxha “as a paranoid psychopath (6), with very little or no remorse, who together with his wife organized the quick death of anyone who got in their way. In his last years, Hoxha suddenly lived a lonely life⁶⁹, because by that time he had killed many of his comrades in war, so that now he hardly had anyone to talk to. Hoxha's leadership was characterized by a high level of control (14) and fear, as evidenced by the large number of ministers, generals and party leaders who were executed. He was characterized by a lack of remorse (65) or regret for his actions At home, he left no room for anyone, but only for himself (56), which explains why Albania turned into a chaotic country after his departure. He did not allow alternative voices to exist (60), no one could set foot where he had trodden. There was no civil society that could take over

its responsibilities (70). It was just a loophole and a big deal with the lack of law". (Fevziu, 2011)

In the article "50 specific facts about Enver Hoxha's life" (Ekonomia, 2020) it is specified that "he took decisions (12) as Commander of the Supreme Staff and head of the the 39th independent Albanian government (62) with a leadership style described as authoritarian, brutal (14) and paranoid (6). He was described as a psychopathic and paranoid dictator (27) who orchestrated the swift death of anyone who crossed his path. He ruled with an iron fist (17), eliminating his political opponents (5) and dissidents through executions, imprisonments and exiles, with a lack of remorse (65) or regret for his actions". (Ekonomia, 2020)

In conclusion, Enver Hoxha as a prominent historical figure had these dominant traits:

1. decision taking

5 Behind the scenes (+3), 6 Insecure, paranoid (+3), 12 Decisive (-3), 14 Aggressive (-3), 17 Strong-willed (-3), 19 Ambitious (-3), 20 Who leads (-3), = -9 (Total)

2. In connection with people regarding new people and information

25 Logical (+3), 27 Suspicious (+3), 29 Sharp (+3), 39 Political (-3) = +6

3. Managing change and pace change,

41 Mobile (+3), 44 Vigilant (+3), 56 Owner (-3), 60 Resistant to Change (-3) = 0

4. Dealing with risk Facing Risk

62 Independent (+3), 64 Stubborn (+3), 65 Strong-headed (+3) 66 With strong own judgments (+3) , 69 Not sociable (+3) , 70 Arbitrary (+3) = + 24

The dominant traits as per the above evaluation for Enver Hoxha:

1. Decision taking = -9

2. Regarding new people and information = +6

3. Managing change and pace = 0

4. Facing risk = +24

Leaders that are still living, do not have the same detailed analyses as the four leaders that proceeded. Though there are reserves in the quantity of the documents, we will continue to have the same comparing basis, the four leadership traits explained.

4.2.5 Sali Berisha President 1992-1996, Prime Minister 2005-2013,

Iris Halili considers “Sali Berisha a narcissistic leader, with all the features of good narcissism, who likes power (19), the admiration of the masses and has confidence in himself, as well as with the strength to inspire people, given by his high charisma (10). He appeared with an almost unrepeatability authenticity in the Albanian leadership” (Halili, 2022).

The article entitled “The miracle of freedom!” describes Berisha’s personality traits while stating his high and low political move on the occasion of being declared a non-grata- person for the United States of America in May 2021. His two political successes are connected with achieving to have Albania become a member of NATO and the liberalization of the visas for Albanians in 2009. The three major mishaps connected to his long reign as president, Prime Minister and chairman of the opposition started with the 1997 popular armed unrest caused by the monetary loss through the Ponzi schemes where 2000 people lost their lives; continues with the “Gërdeci scandal” in March 2008, ending with 26 victims from the explosion of weapons dismantling depot where adults and children worked, and ended with the murdering of four peaceful protesters in a demonstration in front of the prime ministry in January 2011. The accusation for corruption in 2024 has Berisha house-confined while he is being tried. The former socialist Prime Minister Fatos Nano refers to him as “dominant (17) and the cause why his mother saw early death”. The former Prime Minister of Kosova, Hasim Thaçi accused Berisha “of breaking the embargo Europe put on Millosheviç, the Serbian primeminister that led the genocide against the Albanians in Kosova, by furnishing him with Kalashnikovs”. The Prime Minister of 2013-2024, Edi Rama describes Berisha “as a leader with an evil character”. (Doşja.al, 2021)

In the article "The figure of Sali Berisha under the eyes of analysts" on zeriamerikes.com (The Voice of America), the journalists Fevziu, Kajsiu, and Bushati, describe Berisha “having strong characteristics (16) as a leader, with traits of strength and determination (15) in his actions. Berisha holds strong power (16) and has the ability to extract political benefits, as well as minimize the consequences of defeats, he is insistent to carry out his projects (19), regardless of the costs (61) and facing strong opponents. There exists a general perception that Berisha keeps his promises aiming to deliver what he promises. These actions indicate a strong leadership and determination (15; 61) in his efforts to govern and realize political objectives (39)”. (Fevziu B., 2010)

In another analysis, Lorenc Vangjeli in the article "Metamorphosis of Sali Berisha, hostage-taker taken hostage" qualifies Sali Berisha as a skilled politician who is capable of creating

fluid alliances, even within the ruling party. He is portrayed “as a master at identifying and exploiting the weaknesses (5; 44) of his opponents, using them as a means to strengthen himself. This explains above all the political longevity (39) of Berisha and the formidable power (14) that he has exercised over all parties, but now the situations have changed”. (Vangjeli, 2023)

In the reflections of the journalist Mero Baze in the article "PROFILE/ A different approach: Who is Sali Berisha" in the newspaper Tema, are given several descriptive paragraphs of the character traits of the leader of the largest right-wing force in the country, Sali Berisha. Phrases and epithets are singled out according to the judgment of the journalist that worked alongside him for a decade.

He makes the case that Berisha’s characteristics as a leader should be categorized in three aspects, as a statesman, his morality, and his ethics.

As a statesman, as per Mero Baze, “he has shown an innate inability to lead a state, to leave a standard in state-making and state management, from which the country benefits in time and history, the memories of generations, mark it with gold in the nation's museum. In the two times that he was entrusted with the state, he failed to undertake any deep reform with visible effects. There are definitely achievements, but they have been quite fragmentary and insufficient to qualify him as a worthy citizen. The economy, property, justice, education, health, order, agriculture, administration, etc., did not undergo any reformative transformation (51) as long as he led the country. On the contrary to his political opponent, Fatos Nanon, who like Berisha came from the former communist background and were heads of state in a democracy, but was an essential contributor to the Albanian difficult transition from one party system to democracy”.

Baze continues: “On the moral level, Berisha was and remains a man of two or more standards (27), in interpersonal political relations, with his party members or opponents, as well as in relation to various issues. If you raise the question of what is the moral package of Berisha as a leader, from which society has benefited and the generations to come will benefit, it is difficult to find even one. With his indomitable character (52), energy, potency (16), Berisha converts all, in a moment into anti-morality (5), as long as he conveys the message that for power it is worth being like that (23).” (Baze, 2018)

On the ethical level, Maze finds Berisha’s language destructive (14). “(Self) served as a well-read, even intellectual, his discourse is a lexical disaster, which nowhere reflects his head on

books. But to this, a language full of accusations, for anyone and everyone who does not think like him, in the narrow political plan, dishonoring the opponent and by entering into private life, makes him the worst example in the ethical plan; not to be an example. With an inexplicable metamorphosis (67), from communist to anti-communist in a matter of days or hours, not accompanied by any apology with notes of sympathy, but stealthily avoiding it, it was followed by compromising facts about his past under communism, with close family links to the high communist nomenclature, even as a family friend of Enver Hoxha. (Baze, 2018)

So in writings about Sali Berisha, a narcissistic leader with high charisma, he is featured with strength and determination in leadership, also as a character who hold to power strongly. The persistence (61) to realize his projects reflects the strength of his political ambition.

In conclusion, Sali Berisha as a prominent historical figure had these dominant traits:

1. Decision taking

5 Behind the scenes (+3), 10 Pleasant (+3), 14 Aggressive (-3), 15 Determined (-3), 16 Strong (-3) 19 Ambitious (-3), = -6 (Total)

2. In connection with people regarding new people and information

23 Calculates (+3), 27 Suspicious (+3), 39 Political (-3) = +3

3. Managing change and pace change,

44 Vigilant (+3) , 51 Stable (-3) , 52 Still (-3) = -3

4. Dealing with risk Facing Risk

61 Set (+3), 67 No system (+3) = +6

The dominant traits as per the above evaluation for Sali Berisha:

1. Decision taking = -6
2. Regarding new people and information = +3
3. Managing change and pace = -3
4. Facing risk = +6

4.2.6 Fatos Nano Prime Minister 1991, 1997-1998, 2003-2005

The journalist Mustafa Nano, in his article “Fatos Nano enjoyed power like a toy” describes him as “a special and unsuitable politician for the Albanian context. Nano is seen as a person who saw power as a toy (11) and who enjoyed it like a child. He did not have strong ambitions and did not know how to calculate politically. Nano had the ability to delegate (20) power and resolve disputes and rivalries within the party with ease. He is unique and atypical compared to other Albanian politicians. He did not hesitate to surround himself with strong personalities and ambitious individuals, even if they might challenge him in the future. He did not excel at strategic planning (7) or calculating the consequences of his actions. Generally, Fatos Nano's leadership style was characterized by a lack of strong convictions (67), and might as well be considered an adventurer (11) in politics”. (Nano, 2019)

The other Albanian journalist, lecturer and researcher Ilir Yzeri in the article “Fatos Nano, the mirror where we can see our sins and Berisha's crimes”, draws some conclusions about the nature of Fatos Nano as a leader. He portrays Nano “as a libera (17) and distinguished representative of the intellectual elite of the communist bourgeoisie. Nano used irony and sarcasm as tools in his political actions. He was a politician (39) who supported political action through openness (18) and dialogue. Though an incorrigible liberal (72) in politics and governance, Nano was a determined character in Albanian politics”. (Yzeiri, 2021)

Iris Halili in her research work of characteristics on leadership writes about Nano: “He is characterized beyond the charisma of the liberal, non-authoritarian intellectual. Nano’s self-conscious narcissism translates rather than desire for admiration from his followers, more as a lack of ambition for power, and as such, he does not achieve to be a very inspiring figure. Though identified randomly as an adventurer (11) and not very aggressive for power, without strong ambitions, Nano was a leader who leads people (20), opens new horizons for them (18) and able to make decisions (12). He is also distinguished for being cooperative (3) as he did not hesitate to surround himself with real personalities with high ambitions”. (Halili, 2022)

Dritan Hila, writing in Tema Gazette, in his blog titled “Some words for Fatos Nano” characterizes him as “the man who never took his political power seriously (11), apparently, as he did with his health, obviously, despite the advice of doctors. Fatos Nano has lit and shadowed parts in his political career where the light undoubtedly prevails. His great indisputable merit is the modernization of the party (18) from the former communist party

to the new socialist one. One of the merits that few mention is the economy. Nano was a typical representative of Keynes approach in the run-down Albanian economy. He succeeded in disciplining the shattered Albanian fiscal system and distributing investments in non-preferential routes (49). Many of the successful businesses have their origins in Nano's time. He was an enemy of monopolistic systems (13) that suffocate the economy. Nano's weakness was his indulgence and impunity towards the individuals who brought down his government with their wrongdoing, a phenomenon that entered the population's psychosis. Nano introduced the culture of peaceful change (9) of power, a revolution when you consider that he was changing the psychology of the former communist party that read the quote "Power originates from the muzzle of the rifle and is defended with the muzzle of the cannon" under its skin. At the end of the cycle, history remembers only one characteristic of power that can be summed up in one sentence, and for Nano it is most likely: Citizen, with the vices and virtues that this word carries. (Hila, 2023)

Andi Bushati in his analyses "Fatos nano, the sharlatan we have deserved" writes "since leaving active politics in September 2005, Nano has been used as a squeezed lemon by successive rulers. Berisha and Meta unscrupulously lied to him, mocking the mirage of the candidate for president, while the power of renaissance is tying him in exchange for any business advantage he gives to his family members. For 15 years Nano has not changed (54). He has turned the former halo of the political prisoner and the shining cloak of the modernizer of the former communist party into a foreign currency. And at this point he is himself. Here he has not disappointed anyone, because he has not left the opportunity to judge him with moral parameters even to the naive or the biggest dreamers. A cynic, a merchant of ideas (5), disdainful of any value and political conviction, he cannot be accused of pretending to be different from what he is (37)".(Bushati, 2021)

In conclusion, Fatos Nano as a prominent historical figure had these dominant traits:

1. decision taking

3 Collaborative (+3), 5 Behind the Scenes (+3), 7 Non-seeking (+3), 9 Gentle (+3), 11 Adventurous (-3), 12 Decision Maker (-3), 13 Competitive (- 3), 18 researchers who do new things (-3), 20 who lead (-3), = -3 (Total)

2. In connection with people regarding new people and information

37 It looks like it is (-3), 39 Political (-3) = -6

3. *Managing change and pace change,*

54 consistent (-3) = -3

4. *Dealing with risk Facing Risk*

67 No system (+3), 72 Open mind (-3) = 0

The dominant traits as per the above evaluation for Fatos Nano:

1. Decision taking = -3
2. Regarding new people and information = -6
3. Managing change and pace = -3
4. Facing risk = 0

4.2.7 Ilir Meta Prime Minister 1999-2002, President 2017-2022

The analyses of Ilir Meta in the article in Voice of America in 2010 highlights the following attributes of his political life: “various dramatic shifts in his alliances (39) in attempts to position himself strategically powerful, he is very active (42) in creating space for himself, often with chaotic and reactionary actions (67). Ilir Meta has an intense political activity, starting from 1990, as an active participant in the student movement (41) that overthrew the communist regime. Ilir Meta is one of the founders of the Eurosocialist Youth Forum (FRESH), giving his contribution to the membership of the Forum in the Socialist Youth International. Meta has been a member of the Albanian Parliament for many years, and one of the main Albanian political figures (77). (VOA, 2010)

Luljeta Progni brings declarations from four coworkers of Ilir Meta, before he climbed to the President’s office. From the information in this article, Ilir Meta is characterized as a decision maker (12) in Albanian politics. Qualified as a politician (39) with exceptional political intuition, capable of analyzing all relevant factors before taking political action. His ability to combine pragmatism with idealism made him one of the most successful politicians in post-communist Albania. Moreover, he quickly assumed leadership roles within the party and contributed significantly to the reshaping and modernization of the Socialist Party of Albania (18). His rapid rise in politics led to admiration and jealousy among his peers. Ilir Meta is determined to achieve his goals (19). He has moved energetically to create spaces for himself (56) and has undertaken various actions in the political scene. (Progni, 2017)

Elvi Fundo, a journalist writing “Here are 15 facts about the true Ilir Meta”, describes Meta “as a man who for many years has been one of the biggest beneficiaries (56) as an Albanian

tax official, his exploits and tragedies are endless. Rumored for the theft of the national wealth of many, many years all in gold and that his only successes were Albania's ranking in the highest countries in relation to the trafficking of weapons, drugs and human beings (27). He is noted as the man who crippled the Socialist Party, although that party had given him everything and brought him to the Opposition coalition in 2005. So he is considered a 'traitor' to the party from which he came. Ilir Meta is the man who introduced vote buying to the political scene (5). Buying party structures and buying votes of the electorate was introduced by him. He did betray (27) the socialist party and joined forces with the opposition led by Berisha. Sali Berisha has accused Meta openly 'as a murderer and gold thief'. Edi Rama has accused Meta openly for being a corrupt man. By the way Meta played politics to his strategic advantage, he was necessary in two voting ballots for both, Berisha and Rama. Ilir Meta, within 30 years of transition, has been President, Prime Minister, and Speaker of the Assembly, Deputy, Minister (20), paid by the taxes of the Albanians". (Fundo, 2022)

Blendi Fevziu, in one analyses of 2017 in the Gazetta Shqiptare writes about Ilir Meta describes him as "the main factor for political stability in the country. The empowerment of Meta was in the opposite direction to what they had predicted for him in 2008. Not only did it not wrinkle, it did not fade, but it was strengthened (16) more. The system not only did not become two-party, but turned into a system that places the power on one party (36) and mainly it is Meta's party. Both political forces were seen flirting to win Meta's sympathy (40) and attention". (Fevziu, 2017)

Same author writes for Ilir Meta in an interview for Panorama Newspaper: "Meta is among the characters that are a bit more difficult to 'read' (59) because in his political life he has shown strange moments, not the ups and downs that are characteristic of politicians, but also a strange style of approach to phenomena".

In conclusion, Ilir Meta as a prominent historical figure had these dominant traits:

1. Decision taking

5 behind the scenes (+3) , 12 Decision Maker (-3) , 16 Strong (-3), 18 Inquisitive (-3) , 19 Ambitious (-3), 20 Leading (-3) = -12

2. *In connection with people regarding new people and information*

27 Suspicious (+3), 36 to push you to do something (-3), 39 Political (-3), 40 Like a magnet that attracts (-3) = -6

3. *Managing change and pace change,*

41 Mobile (+3), 42 Active (+3), 56 Owner (-3), 59 Not Shown (-3) = 0

4. *Dealing with risk Facing Risk*

67 No System (+3), 77 Good(-3) = 0

The dominant traits as per the above evaluation for Ilir Meta:

1. Decision taking = -12
2. Regarding new people and information = -6
3. Managing change and pace = 0
4. Facing risk = 0

4.2.8 *Edi Rama, Prime Minister 2013-ongoing (2024)*

VOA in one of the analyses of the actual, living leaders of Albania though the opinions of four nationally acclaimed voices (Blendi Fevziu, Andi Bushati and Bledi Kajsiu) state the following for Edi Rama: “he is a charismatic and energetic leader (10), while others criticize him for his way of communication and political tactics. Edi is well known for his ability to communicate with the masses, ability to mobilize people (40) and create an enthusiastic atmosphere (38) around him. Edi Rama prefers to be a strong (16) and determined (15) leader. He has shown great abilities to control situations and make important decisions (12). Rama is a visionary leader (72) and has shown a desire to change and modernize the country (18). Some consider him to be an authoritarian (14) (aggressive) leader and contemptuous of political opponents. He is accused to have a tendency not to accept criticism (64) and not to tolerate opposing opinions (66). Another criticism is that he has used populist tactics to gain political support. Edi Rama remains as a determined (15; 61) and dedicated leader”. (Fevziu B., 2010)

Iris Halili in her article making a case on on what is common and what is different in the actual leaders of Albania, states: “Edi Rama is described as more narcissistic than charismatic, although he has both of these traits. From narcissism, he has the extreme desire for absolute power (56), carrying the ‘Messiah complex’, accepting conflicts and feels good about them, as it also provides a lot of food for the narcissistic sense of self”. (Halili, 2022)

In the article “The analyses of a Marton Dunai, a journalist of the Financial Times for Edi Rama” it is highlighted that: “the Prime Minister of Albania, Edi Rama, is one of the most pro-Western leaders in the Balkans. Rama started his career as a basketball player, then spent a decade painting in Paris before returning to Albania and entering politics (42). His office still contains basketball memorabilia and his colorful doodles on the walls. As mayor of Tirana in the early 2000s, he helped transform the capital by repainting communist-era apartment blocks in vibrant colors”. (Dunai, 2023)

Irsa Ruci, in her “Unauthorized profile of Edi Rama”, (Ruci, 2021) writes: Edi Rama, this shrewd man, who quickly entered the media attention and stirred up the stagnant waters of policy making, but doubly shocked the opponents, who are unfamiliar with this "cut" of cloud of a rebel (65), which was not the standard of Albanian way of leading. The old school of leaders whose duty was only to approve, but not to think, got ready to to attack him, which was not difficult. They could find Rama’s weak points easily as the artist in him accepted them openly and without shame. People loved him since he was a well-articulated boy who inspired with his pure spoken Albanian (34), then as an attentive publicist with a fine pen, who put his hand in the wounds and screamed blunt truths, to create the profile of the minister who did not have to be a political careerist to do the job a politician to succeed, as long as it was done with passion and positive will (31). Edi Rama dedicated himself to work and with a lot of courage to break stereotypes, able to think differently so that change would bring development (49). The maximum of Edi Rama's arrogance is the word he displays publicly, which, however, does not carry evil, but is part of his rebellious character that has remained unchanged. Being true and fair, keeping his word and refusing to deceive, even though he is aware that these behaviors may cost him politically with heaps of resentment. These are characteristics that distinguish him from any other politician (39) and hold the stake of citizens' expectations much higher than the habitat where political fate sleeps and wakes up slurlly”. (Ruci, 2021)

She continues “I have heard him personally (and maybe I am making the mistake of quoting his words without being authorized), but I was left with a positive impression as in the confidential meetings he does not make plans to throw at the Albanians, but leaves orders to ‘solve people's problems’ . But, has Edi Rama made a mistake during these eight years of government, or is he completely washed and cleansed of all sins? Of course yes, someone can find one, or ten, a hundred or a thousand mistakes, all according to the expectations we had towards him at the beginning when he took power. The higher the evaluation of the

figure of the leader, the stronger will be the criticism for not fulfilling any given promise. The completion deadline for many projects have been extended by a few months. As an artist who entered politics (39) with a rebellious voice and kept that spirit alive to this day, he understands very well that no harm can come from his way of leading, neither to him, nor to the party, nor Albania. But in the great gap between politics as a spirit and politicians as an alternative, few were those who were carved into the pillars of the policy making of this country. I believe that only three of them managed to build strong political foundations that survived(77), in the exhausting three-decade effort, to implement their current of direction, with clear political and state-forming messages: Edi Rama, Sali Berisha and Fatos Nano.” (Ruci, 2021)

The article “A good diplomat but an ineffective Prime Minister” published in ResPublica, the characteristics on his leadership traits comparing his results in the foreign policy and his leading Albania’s economy for round one decade are:” he has a close friendship with the president of Turkey, Erdogan. This is not a small thing. He managed to bring Chancellor Merkel to Tirana in a way that seemed to be his merit. Mr. Rama posed with Matteo Renzi in Tirana and ‘flirted’ freely with him. In the same way, the Prime Minister of Albania is also friendly with the Serbian President Vucic, who is definitely an example that deserves attention. But none of these friendships have brought any tangible benefit to Albania. Which is clear that it cannot meet the standards required by the EU one by one, so it also needs a hand of friends. So he remains a pleasant leader in terms of charisma, but not at extreme levels of narcissistic nature. He is a leader who has made important decisions as well as a visionary leader and has shown a desire to change and modernize the country. An authoritarian (aggressive) leader and contemptuous of political opponents, a strong and determined leader. He has shown great abilities to control situations, a strong leader (16)”. (ResPublica, 2019)

Edi Rama is known to have made important decisions at turbulent times, like the deadly earthquakes of 2019, Covid-19 lockdown and the wars affecting directly the Albanian economy.

In conclusion, Edi Rama as a prominent historical figure had these dominant traits:

1. Decision taking

10 (+3), 12 Decisive (-3), 14 Aggressive (-3), 15 Determined (-3), 16 Strong (-3), 18 Inquisitive (-3), 19 Ambitious (-3) = -15

2. *In connection with people regarding new people and information*

31 Optimist (-3), 34 Persuasive (-3), 38 Enthusiastic (-3), 39 Political (-3), 40 Like a Magnet that attracts (-3) = -15

3. *Managing change and pace change,*

42 Active (+3), 49 Elastic (+3), 56 Owner (-3) = +3

4. *Dealing with risk Facing Risk*

61 Determined (+3) , 64 Cocky (+3), 66 With own judgments (+3), 72 Open Minded (-3) , 75 Diplomas (-3), 77 Smart(-3) = 0

The dominant traits as per the above evaluation for Ilir Meta:

1. Decision taking = -15
2. Regarding new people and information = -15
3. Managing change and pace = +3
4. Facing risk = 0

4.2.9 Eight seasoned Albanian leaders with their dominant trait

The following table is a summary of the points according to the evaluations for each figure in the analysis from where the comparison can be made, keeping reserves for the base of the materials for which they are not equal or analyzed by the same people, historian or analyst and journalist. So everything evaluated below is based on what was said and wrote about each one and this makes the evaluation in some figures incomplete due to the lack of more in-depth and detailed analyzes by the historian as in the case of living, still in office figures of history.

The following table (Table 2) is a summary of the points according to the evaluations for each figure in the analysis from where the comparison can be made, keeping reserves for the base of the materials for which they are not equal or analyzed by the same people, historian or analyst and journalist. So everything evaluated below is based on what was said and wrote about each one and this makes the evaluation in some figures incomplete due to the lack of more in-depth and detailed analyzes by the historian as in the case of living, still in office figures of history (Table 4).

Table 4: Summary of eight leaders with their dominant trait

Leader	Decision Taking	Interpersonal Relationships and Information Handling	Managing Change and Pace	Facing Risk
Ismail Qemali	-12	-15	+12	-15
Fan Noli	-9	-12	+15	-9
Ahmet Zogu	-3	3	-6	0
Enver Hoxha	-9	+6	0	+24
Sali Berisha	-6	+3	-3	+6
Fatos Nano	-3	-6	-3	0
Illir Meta	-12	-6	0	0
Edi Rama	-15	-15	+3	0

Own Research Results

This table provides a concise comparison of the dominant traits observed among the eight prominent historical figures, categorized into decision making, Interpersonal Relationships and Information Handling, managing change and pace, and facing risk.

Here is a brief description of each leader based on their scores in different traits:

Ismail Qemali:

Decision Taking (-12)

Ismail Qemali's leadership was characterized by a tendency towards indecision and a lack of assertiveness in decision-making, suggesting a style marked by caution and deliberation. As the founder of independent Albania and its first Prime Minister, Qemali often had to navigate a complex political landscape during a tumultuous period. His careful weighing of options and cautious approach were evident in his efforts to gather international recognition for Albania's independence at the 1913 London Conference. While his deliberative style ensured thorough consideration of issues, it sometimes hindered his ability to take swift, decisive actions, especially in the face of immediate threats to the nascent state.

Interpersonal Relationships (-15)

Qemali's challenges in persuasion, warmth, and political acumen indicate difficulties in building effective relationships and navigating political dynamics. Despite his significant

role in Albania's independence, Qemali struggled to maintain cohesive support among diverse political factions. His inability to effectively persuade and rally others behind his cause was a notable shortfall. This was evident during his tenure when internal divisions and lack of widespread support weakened his government's stability. His leadership lacked the persuasive charm needed to unite disparate groups, making it challenging to sustain momentum for his political initiatives.

Managing Change and Pace (+12)

Qemali's strengths in being active, alert, and adaptable to change depict a leader who was proactive and agile in managing transitions. His role in leading Albania through its initial steps towards independence showcased his ability to thrive in dynamic environments. Qemali's quick response to evolving circumstances was crucial during the volatile period of Albania's declaration of independence in 1912. His proactive measures in establishing a provisional government and seeking international recognition reflected his agility and adaptability in a rapidly changing political landscape.

Facing Risk (-15)

Qemali's deficiency in balanced judgment, open-mindedness, and diplomacy suggests a risk-averse approach. While his cautious nature helped him avoid potentially risky situations, it also limited his ability to seize opportunities or navigate complex challenges effectively. For instance, his reluctance to confront internal and external threats directly sometimes resulted in missed opportunities to strengthen Albania's position. Qemali's conservative approach to risk management meant he often opted for safer, less confrontational strategies, which, while maintaining stability, sometimes impeded more dynamic progress.

Summary

Ismail Qemali's leadership is defined by a blend of caution, deliberation, adaptability, and a conservative approach to risk. His historical and political actions reveal a leader who was meticulous in decision-making and proactive in managing change but struggled with persuasion and assertiveness. Qemali's tenure as Albania's first Prime Minister highlighted his ability to navigate complex transitions and adapt to new circumstances, yet his difficulties in building strong political alliances and taking decisive actions limited his overall effectiveness. His risk-averse nature, while preventing significant missteps, also constrained his capacity to capitalize on opportunities and address complex challenges decisively.

Fan Noli:

Decision Taking (-9)

Fan Noli's leadership was characterized by a mix of indecision, charisma, and ambition, suggesting a leader who grappled with assertiveness but possessed strong convictions and a compelling presence. As the leader of the June Revolution in 1924 and briefly serving as Prime Minister, Noli demonstrated his ability to inspire and mobilize support for democratic reforms. However, his struggle with decisiveness became apparent during his short tenure, where his government faced difficulties in maintaining control and implementing policies amidst political instability. Noli's leadership was marked by his passionate vision for Albania, but his inability to assertively manage the rapidly changing political landscape ultimately hindered his effectiveness.

Interpersonal Relationships (-12)

Noli's challenges in persuasion, warmth, and political acumen often hindered his ability to forge meaningful connections and gain support from others. Despite his charismatic appeal and intellectual ability, Noli found it difficult to navigate the complexities of interpersonal dynamics within the political sphere. His tenure as Prime Minister was marked by a lack of strong alliances and support from key political figures, which contributed to his government's inability to sustain power. Noli's difficulty in building a broad-based coalition and effectively managing political relationships highlighted his struggles in interpersonal persuasion and political maneuvering.

Managing Change and Pace (+15)

Noli's adaptability, proactiveness, and alertness positioned him as a leader who thrived in dynamic environments and excelled at driving change. His leadership during the June Revolution showcased his ability to embrace innovation and push for significant political reforms. Noli's vision for a democratic and modern Albania was revolutionary for its time, and he actively sought to implement progressive changes despite facing considerable opposition. His ability to keep pace with evolving circumstances and his proactive approach to governance were key strengths, making him a dynamic force in Albanian politics, even if his being in office was brief.

Facing Risk (-9)

While Noli's stubbornness and lack of diplomacy posed challenges in dealing with risky situations, his openness to change and alertness to emerging threats helped him navigate such scenarios effectively. Noli's leadership during a tumultuous period in Albania's history required him to take significant risks, such as leading the June Revolution and attempting to establish a democratic government. His boldness and willingness to confront entrenched powers demonstrated his high tolerance for risk. However, his lack of diplomatic finesse and rigid approach sometimes exacerbated conflicts and hindered his ability to build sustainable political solutions.

Summary

Fan Noli's leadership is defined by a blend of charisma, ambition, adaptability, and a compelling vision for Albania's future. His historical and political actions reveal a leader who struggled with decisiveness and interpersonal dynamics but excelled in driving change and embracing innovation. Noli's brief tenure as Prime Minister highlighted his ability to inspire and lead with passion, yet his difficulties in managing political relationships and assertively navigating complex political environments ultimately limited his effectiveness. His openness to risk and proactive approach to governance positioned him as a transformative figure in Albanian history, one whose potential was reduced by the challenges of the time.

Ahmet Zogu:

Decision Taking (-3)

Ahmet Zogu's leadership was marked by a mix of hesitation, uncertainty, and charisma, suggesting a leader who grappled with decisiveness but exuded confidence and charm in certain situations. As Prime Minister and later King of Albania, Zogu demonstrated both caution and assertiveness in his decision-making. For instance, his bold move to declare himself King in 1928 reflected a decisive and ambitious action aimed at stabilizing Albania and consolidating power. However, his tenure was also characterized by moments of hesitation and uncertainty, particularly in dealing with internal political rivalries and external pressures. This blend of caution and assertiveness defined his leadership style, as he navigated a complex political landscape with varying degrees of decisiveness.

Interpersonal Relationships (+3)

Zogu's logical thinking, suspicion, and warmth reflected a leader who approached interpersonal dynamics with a blend of rationality and caution. His ability to build alliances and manage relationships was crucial in his rise to power. For example, Zogu effectively leveraged his relationships with tribal leaders and foreign diplomats to strengthen his position and maintain control. Despite his inherent suspicion and wariness of others' intentions, his warmth and logical approach helped him build trust and rapport with key figures, ensuring a degree of stability and support. His interpersonal skills were instrumental in managing the delicate balance of power in Albania during his reign.

Managing Change and Pace (-6)

Zogu's vigilance and resistance to change suggested a leader who valued stability and tradition but struggled to adapt to rapid transformations. His leadership was characterized by a cautious and conservative approach to managing transitions. For instance, Zogu's efforts to modernize Albania were often tempered by a strong desire to maintain traditional structures and avoid radical changes that could destabilize the country. His reluctance to fully embrace sweeping reforms reflected his preference for gradual and controlled change, ensuring stability and continuity. This conservative approach often meant that Albania lagged behind in terms of modernization compared to other European nations.

Facing Risk (0)

Zogu's balanced perspective on risk, with elements of both openness and caution, suggested a pragmatic approach to dealing with uncertain situations. His leadership demonstrated a careful weighing of pros and cons before taking action. For example, his decision to align Albania with Italy in the late 1920s and early 1930s was a calculated risk aimed at securing financial and military support. However, this alliance also exposed Albania to greater influence and eventual invasion by Mussolini's forces in 1939. Zogu's willingness to take calculated risks when necessary highlighted his pragmatic approach, balancing the need for security with the potential benefits of bold decisions.

Summary

Ahmet Zogu's leadership is defined by a complex interplay of caution, charisma, rationality, and pragmatism. His historical and political actions reveal a leader who navigated interpersonal dynamics with a blend of suspicion and warmth, valued stability and tradition,

and approached risk with a careful, pragmatic mindset. Zogu's tenure as Prime Minister and King was marked by efforts to balance modernization with tradition, assertiveness with caution, and strategic alliances with national sovereignty. His leadership style, while conservative and cautious in many respects, also demonstrated moments of boldness and calculated risk-taking, reflecting the multifaceted nature of his rule in Albania

Enver Hoxha:

Decision Taking (-9)

Enver Hoxha's leadership was marked by a mix of insecurity, aggression, and ambition, reflecting a leader who grappled with assertiveness but also possessed strong convictions and a desire for control. During his rule from 1944 to 1985, Hoxha made numerous decisive and often brutal decisions to consolidate power and maintain strict control over Albania. His aggressive purges of political rivals, such as the execution of Koçi Xoxe in 1949, and his rigid enforcement of communist ideology, underscore his blend of insecurity and determination. While he showed assertiveness in eliminating threats, his leadership was often driven by a deep-seated insecurity about maintaining his grip on power.

Interpersonal Relationships (+6)

Hoxha's logical thinking, suspicion, and sharpness reflect a shrewd and politically astute leader who navigated interpersonal dynamics with caution and strategy. His reign was characterized by deep distrust and surveillance, exemplified by the extensive use of the Sigurimi (Albanian secret police) to monitor and control the populace and political elites. Hoxha's ability to understand and manipulate others' motives and intentions allowed him to maintain an iron grip on Albania, ensuring that loyalty to him was paramount. This strategic approach to relationships often led to a climate of fear and repression, as he eliminated any potential threats to his authority.

Managing Change and Pace (0)

Hoxha's mobility and vigilance suggest a leader who was adaptable and alert to emerging threats but also resistant to change and clung to established norms. Throughout his rule, Hoxha demonstrated an ability to adapt to shifting geopolitical landscapes, such as his break with the Soviet Union in 1961 and subsequent alliance with China, and later, the isolationist stance after breaking ties with China in 1978. However, domestically, he fiercely resisted any liberalization or deviation from his strict Marxist-Leninist policies. Hoxha's leadership

style maintained a rigid adherence to established norms, ensuring that Albania remained one of the most isolated and repressive regimes in Europe.

Facing Risk (+24)

Hoxha's independence, stubbornness, and strong judgment marked him as a bold and confident leader who was unafraid to take risks and make tough decisions. His willingness to break with powerful allies like the Soviet Union and China demonstrated his high tolerance for uncertainty and his commitment to maintaining Albania's sovereignty and ideological purity. Hoxha's decision to implement widespread collectivization and industrialization policies, despite their harsh impact on the population, further highlights his readiness to pursue bold initiatives. His leadership thrived in challenging situations, often exhibiting a defiant stance against perceived external and internal threats.

Summary

Enver Hoxha's leadership is defined by a complex interplay of insecurity, aggression, shrewdness, and boldness. His historical and political actions reveal a leader who navigated interpersonal dynamics with strategic caution while fiercely resisting change and maintaining rigid control over Albania. Hoxha's tenure was marked by decisive and often brutal actions to consolidate power, reflecting his deep insecurities and strong convictions. His adaptability in foreign policy contrasts sharply with his domestic conservatism, showcasing a leader who was unafraid to take significant risks to uphold his vision for Albania. Hoxha's legacy is one of repression and isolation, driven by a relentless pursuit of ideological purity and political dominance.

Sali Berisha:

Decision Taking (-6)

Sali Berisha's leadership style is characterized by behind-the-scenes maneuvering, a pleasant demeanor, and ambition, suggesting a leader who may struggle with assertiveness but possesses strong determination and a strategic mindset. During his tenure as President (1992-1997) and later as Prime Minister (2005-2013), Berisha demonstrated his ability to navigate complex political landscapes. His decision to implement significant economic reforms and privatization efforts in the 1990s showcased his ambition and strategic vision. However, these reforms were often marked by controversy and resistance, reflecting his challenges in assertively managing the political fallout and ensuring smooth implementation.

Interpersonal Relationships (+3)

Berisha's calculating nature, suspicion, and political acumen reflect a leader who approaches interpersonal dynamics with caution and strategic thinking. Throughout his political career, Berisha was known for his ability to build alliances and manage political relationships to his advantage. His long-standing rivalry with Fatos Nano and ability to navigate Albania's polarized political environment illustrate his sharp understanding of political dynamics. Berisha's relationships were often based on mutual benefit and strategic calculations, enabling him to maintain influence and control within his party and across the political spectrum.

Managing Change and Pace (-3)

Berisha's vigilance and emphasis on stability suggest a leader who values continuity but may resist rapid change. His leadership style prioritized maintaining the status quo, as seen during his terms in office when he focused on stabilizing Albania's economy and political environment after the turmoil of the 1990s. Berisha's cautious approach to change was evident in his handling of sensitive issues, such as property restitution and judicial reforms, where he often opted for gradual, incremental adjustments rather than sweeping changes. This focus on stability sometimes hindered more dynamic reforms that could have accelerated Albania's progress.

Facing Risk (+6)

Berisha's readiness to set agendas and his resistance to systemic approaches suggest a leader who is assertive and willing to take calculated risks. His bold initiatives, such as the aggressive privatization program in the 1990s and infrastructure development projects during his tenure as Prime Minister, highlight his willingness to pursue ambitious goals. Berisha's assertiveness was also evident in his firm stance on regional issues and his efforts to align Albania with Western institutions, including NATO and the EU. While he preferred a methodical approach to risk management, Berisha was not averse to pursuing bold initiatives when he deemed them necessary for Albania's strategic interests.

Summary

Sali Berisha's leadership is defined by a blend of diplomacy, ambition, and strategic thinking, characterized by cautious interpersonal dynamics, a preference for stability, and a readiness to take calculated risks. His historical and political actions reflect a leader who values

continuity and strategic alliances while navigating the complexities of Albania's political landscape. Berisha's tenure as President and Prime Minister showcased his determination to implement significant reforms and pursue bold initiatives, even amidst resistance and controversy. His leadership style, while methodical and assertive, sometimes struggled with rapid change and assertiveness in decision-making, highlighting both the strengths and limitations of his approach.

Fatos Nano

Decision Taking (-3)

Fatos Nano's leadership style is characterized by a collaborative approach and a preference for working behind the scenes, which suggests a leader who values consensus-building but may struggle with assertiveness. His tenure as Prime Minister of Albania, particularly during the early 2000s, reflected his inclination towards cooperation and inclusivity. For instance, Nano was known for his efforts to form coalitions and work with various political factions to stabilize the government and push through reforms. However, this collaborative approach sometimes led to criticisms of indecisiveness and a lack of strong, assertive leadership, particularly during times of political crises.

Interpersonal Relationships (-6)

Nano's reserved demeanor and perceived lack of political acumen have been noted as challenges in building effective relationships and navigating political dynamics. Throughout his political career, Nano often faced difficulties in maintaining strong alliances and garnering widespread support. His strained relationship with other key political figures, such as Sali Berisha, underscored his challenges in interpersonal dynamics. Nano's leadership was frequently marked by internal party conflicts and difficulties in maintaining cohesion within his own Socialist Party, reflecting his struggles to effectively manage political relationships and dynamics.

Managing Change and Pace (-3)

Nano's consistency and methodical approach to leadership suggest a preference for stability and predictability over rapid change. His time in office was characterized by efforts to maintain a steady course in governance and policy implementation. For example, Nano's approach to economic reforms was often methodical and cautious, prioritizing stability over aggressive transformations. This methodical approach sometimes led to criticisms of inertia

and a lack of innovation, as Nano was seen as resistant to embracing more dynamic and systemic changes that could have accelerated Albania's modernization and integration with European standards.

Facing Risk (0)

Fatos Nano's approach to risk management was cautious and pragmatic, indicating a leader who carefully weighed the pros and cons before making decisions. His handling of Albania's political and economic challenges reflected a balanced perspective on risk. For instance, during his tenure, Nano took calculated risks in pursuing international aid and investment to support Albania's economic development while avoiding overly ambitious projects that could destabilize the fragile economy. His pragmatic approach was also evident in his dealings with international organizations and foreign governments, where he sought to balance Albania's needs with the demands and expectations of international partners.

Summary

Fatos Nano's leadership is defined by a collaborative and methodical approach, characterized by a preference for consensus-building, stability, and cautious risk management. His historical and political actions reveal a leader who values cooperation and inclusivity but faces challenges in assertiveness and political acumen. Nano's tenure as Prime Minister highlighted his efforts to maintain stability and predictability in governance while carefully navigating the complexities of Albania's political and economic landscape. His leadership style, while pragmatic and cautious, sometimes struggled to adapt to dynamic changes and build strong interpersonal relationships, reflecting both the strengths and limitations of his approach

Ilir Meta:

Decision Taking (-12)

Ilir Meta's leadership is marked by a tendency to work behind the scenes and a perceived lack of decisiveness, combined with strong ambition and leadership qualities. This is evident in his political career, where Meta often played a central role in coalition-building and political maneuvering rather than taking bold public stances. For example, during his tenure as Prime Minister and later as President, Meta was known for his behind-the-scenes negotiations and efforts to mediate between conflicting political factions. His role in the political crisis of 2019, where he attempted to mediate between the government and

opposition, highlights his inclination to avoid direct confrontation and instead seek collaborative solutions. However, critics have often pointed out that this approach can be seen as a lack of decisiveness in crucial moments.

Interpersonal Relationships (-6)

Meta's leadership style is characterized by suspicion and a strategic approach to interpersonal dynamics, reflecting his deep understanding of political acumen but a struggle to inspire and mobilize others. His cautious nature was evident during his tenure as President, where he often took a strategic and calculated approach to political alliances and decisions. For instance, Meta's frequent clashes with Prime Minister Edi Rama and his strategic use of veto power to block government decisions demonstrate his cautious and strategic nature. This cautious approach can make it challenging for him to inspire collective action and rally broad support, as seen during his attempts to resolve political deadlocks where he often failed to mobilize broader public or political consensus.

Managing Change and Pace (0)

Meta's adaptability and proactivity in managing transitions are balanced by a tendency to cling to established norms. His political career demonstrates an ability to navigate complex political landscapes and adapt to changing circumstances, such as his shift from being a key figure in the Socialist Party to founding the Socialist Movement for Integration (SMI). However, his reluctance to fully embrace certain reforms and his defense of traditional political structures suggest a resistance to radical changes. For example, his opposition to judicial reforms aimed at tackling corruption reflects his tendency to maintain established norms and resist transformative changes that might disrupt the existing political balance.

Facing Risk (0)

Meta's balanced approach to risk is characterized by pragmatism and caution, reflecting his willingness to take calculated risks while avoiding reckless decisions. His political career is marked by strategic decisions that balance potential benefits and risks. For instance, Meta's decision to form coalitions with various political parties over the years, including both the Socialist Party and the Democratic Party, demonstrates his careful consideration of political risks and benefits. His cautious stance was also evident during the political crisis of 2019, where he called for dialogue and mediation rather than taking a more confrontational approach, highlighting his preference for pragmatic solutions over risky political gambits.

Summary

Illir Meta's leadership is defined by a strategic, cautious, and pragmatic approach, characterized by behind-the-scenes maneuvering and a deep understanding of political dynamics. His historical and political actions reflect a leader who balances ambition with caution, adaptability with resistance to radical change, and pragmatism with a reluctance to inspire and mobilize broad support. Meta's leadership style is shaped by a nuanced understanding of the complexities of Albanian politics, where his strategic decisions and cautious approach have both strengths and limitations.

Edi Rama

Decision Taking (-15)

Edi Rama's leadership style, characterized by a mix of optimism, persuasion, and aggression, often suggests a leader who may struggle with assertiveness and decisiveness. Historically, Rama has faced criticism for his handling of various crises and policy decisions. For instance, during the 2019 earthquake response, while his enthusiasm and public speeches provided initial reassurance, critics argued that the strategic direction and consistency in recovery efforts were lacking. Additionally, his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted challenges in decisively implementing and communicating long-term strategies, revealing a tendency towards reactive rather than proactive decision-making.

Interpersonal Relationships (-15)

Rama's optimistic demeanor and persuasive communication skills paint him as a charismatic leader. However, this charisma sometimes overshadows the depth required for building meaningful interpersonal relationships. Politically, this is evident in his interactions with opposition parties and civil society groups. His leadership has often been marked by public engagement and vibrant communication, yet these interactions frequently lack the substantive, collaborative dialogue necessary for fostering deeper connections. The polarized political environment in Albania, where Rama's government has been accused of marginalizing dissenting voices, further underscores his challenges in nurturing strong interpersonal bonds.

Managing Change and Pace (+3)

Rama's activity and flexibility are indicative of a leader who is proactive and adaptable, qualities necessary for managing transitions effectively. This adaptability was evident in his

urban renewal projects in Tirana, which he spearheaded during his tenure as mayor. These projects demonstrated his willingness to embrace change and innovation. However, the same projects also faced criticism for their rapid implementation and perceived lack of consultation with stakeholders, pointing to a potential shortfall in maintaining stability and consistency. His approach to governance often involves swift, bold moves that bring about significant change, but sometimes at the expense of thorough planning and steady execution.

Facing Risk (0)

Edi Rama's determination and confidence position him as a leader who confronts risk with resilience. His tenure has seen several instances where his strong-willed approach came to the fore, such as his stance on EU integration and his firm negotiations with international bodies. However, these qualities also highlight a lack of diplomatic finesse in managing uncertain situations. For example, his aggressive rhetoric and actions during regional disputes and internal political confrontations often intensified tensions rather than diffusing them. While Rama's boldness can drive decisive action, it sometimes exacerbates conflicts and complicates resolution efforts.

Summary

Edi Rama's leadership is marked by a blend of charisma, adaptability, and boldness, intertwined with challenges in decisiveness, interpersonal depth, and diplomatic risk management. His historical and political actions reflect a complex leadership style that strives for dynamic change but occasionally falters in strategic consistency and relational depth

These descriptions offer insights into his strengths, weaknesses, and leadership style based on their dominant traits.

4.2.10 The common traits among these leaders:

1. Decision Making:

- Generally, most of the leaders exhibit some level of struggle with assertiveness and decisiveness, with scores ranging from -3 to -15. This suggests a common trait of grappling with making firm decisions or showing hesitancy in leadership roles.

2. Interpersonal Relationships:

- There is a prevalent theme of challenges in building effective relationships and navigating political dynamics among the leaders, with scores ranging from -6 to -15. This indicates difficulties in persuading, inspiring action, and forging meaningful connections with others.

3. **Managing Change and Pace:**

- The majority of the leaders show strengths in adaptability, proactiveness, and alertness to change, with scores ranging from +3 to +15. This suggests a common trait of thriving in dynamic environments and being agile in managing transitions.

4. **Facing Risk:**

- There is variability among the leaders regarding their approach to risk, with scores ranging from -9 to +24. However, the overall trend indicates a willingness to take calculated risks when necessary, balanced with elements of caution and pragmatism.

Overall, these leaders share characteristics such as struggles with decision-making and interpersonal relationships, while also demonstrating strengths in adaptability and facing risk, albeit to varying degrees.

4.2.11 Patterns and differences dominant features of important personalities

Comparing the dominant traits of prominent historical figures in Albania, several patterns and distinctions emerge:

Decision Making: Qemali, Fan Noli, and Sali Berisha demonstrate negative scores in decision-making, indicating traits associated with hesitancy, indecision, or aggression. Conversely, Ahmet Zogu and Fatos Nano exhibit traits suggesting a more calculated approach, while Enver Hoxha and Ilir Meta show a strong inclination towards assertiveness and leadership in decision-making, albeit with different styles.

Interpersonal Relationships and Information Handling: Across the board, there is a tendency towards negative scores in traits related to interpersonal relationships and information handling, particularly for figures like Qemali, Fan Noli, and Edi Rama. This suggests challenges in communication, persuasion, and openness to new ideas. However, figures like Ahmet Zogu and Enver Hoxha show more balanced traits in this regard.

Managing Change and Pace: Ahmet Zogu stands out with a positive score in managing change and pace, indicating traits associated with adaptability and agility. On the other hand, figures like Qemali and Fan Noli show less favorable scores, suggesting potential challenges in adapting to change.

Facing Risk: There is a mixed picture in dealing with risk. Enver Hoxha demonstrates a significant positive score, suggesting a propensity for risk-taking and independence. However, figures like Qemali, Fan Noli, and Edi Rama show negative scores, indicating traits associated with caution or discomfort with risk.

Overall, while each historical figure possesses a unique combination of traits, there are noticeable trends in their dominant characteristics. These findings offer insights into their leadership styles and may shed light on their actions and decisions throughout history

4.3 Comparing the traits of students with the seasoned leaders

Comparing the traits of the students with those of the seasoned leaders reveals interesting similarities and differences:

Table 5: Comparing the dominant traits of the students with those of the seasoned leaders:

Trait Category	Students	Seasoned Leaders
Decision Making	Varied assertiveness and determination	Mix of decisiveness, hesitancy, and aggression
People and Information handling	Challenges in communication	Mix of challenges and balanced traits in interpersonal dynamics
Managing Change and Pace	Varied adaptability and agility	Mix of adaptability and resistance to change
Facing Risk	Mix of risk propensity	Mix of risk-taking and caution

Own Research Results

This table (Table 5) provides a concise comparison of the dominant traits observed among students and seasoned leaders, highlighting both similarities and differences across various trait categories.

Decision Making:

Students: The dominant trait among students is often decision-making, with varying levels of assertiveness and determination.

Seasoned Leaders: Some seasoned leaders exhibit similar traits of decisiveness and determination, while others show traits of hesitancy or aggression. Overall, there is a mix of leadership styles among seasoned leaders.

People and Information Handling:

Students: There tends to be a negative trend in traits related to interpersonal relationships and information handling among students, indicating challenges in communication and openness to new ideas.

Seasoned Leaders: Similarly, some seasoned leaders display traits suggesting difficulties in interpersonal relationships and information handling, while others exhibit more balanced traits in these areas, reflecting their ability to navigate complex social and informational dynamics.

Managing Change and Pace:

Students: The traits related to managing change and pace vary among students, with some showing adaptability and agility while others demonstrate challenges in adapting to change.

Seasoned Leaders: There is a mix of scores among seasoned leaders in managing change and pace. Some exhibit positive traits associated with adaptability, while others show traits suggesting resistance to change.

Facing Risk:

Students: There is a mix of attitudes towards risk among students, with some showing a propensity for risk-taking and independence, while others demonstrate caution or discomfort with risk.

Seasoned Leaders: Similar to students, seasoned leaders also exhibit a mix of attitudes towards risk. Some show a willingness to take risks and make bold decisions, while others demonstrate caution and preference for stability.

Overall, while there are similarities between the traits of students and seasoned leaders, there are also notable differences. Students may exhibit traits that align with or contrast those of seasoned leaders, reflecting the diversity of leadership styles and approaches within a given population. Additionally, the comparison highlights the potential for growth and development in leadership abilities as individuals progress from studenthood to seasoned leadership roles.

4.3.1 Comparing the common traits of leaders and Gen Z students

Comparing the common traits observed among the leaders (as a group) with the traits of Generation Z students (as a group) and their political aspirations reveal some interesting parallels:

Trait Dominance and Political Aspirations:

Both the leaders and the Generation Z students show a strong presence of traits related to decision-making and facing risk. This suggests that traits associated with risk assessment, decisiveness, and determination are prevalent among both groups.

Impact on Political Aspirations:

The analysis of the students' traits indicates that different dominant traits correlate with varying political aspirations. Similarly, among the leaders, traits such as facing risk and decision-making are likely to influence their leadership styles and political strategies.

Significance of Traits in Political Aspirations:

Traits related to decision-taking and determination are highlighted as crucial factors shaping political aspirations among the Generation Z students. Similarly, among the leaders, these traits play a significant role in their approach to leadership and politics.

Implications for Leadership and Politics:

The findings from both the leaders and the Generation Z students suggest that certain personality traits may predispose individuals towards specific roles in politics. Understanding these traits can inform efforts to nurture and develop future leaders, aligning their characteristics with the demands of leadership roles in politics.

Overall, the comparison emphasizes *the importance of personality traits in shaping individuals' political aspirations and leadership styles, highlighting potential implications for leadership development and political engagement across different generations.*

4.3.2 Identifying similarities between 8 leaders and Generation Z students

Based on the provided descriptions of the eight leaders and the traits dominant among Generation Z students, we can identify similarities between the traits exhibited by the leaders and those prevalent among the students:

Facing Risk:

Enver Hoxha stands out among the leaders with a significantly high score in facing risk (+24). This trait aligns with the dominant trait among the students, suggesting a willingness to take risks and navigate uncertain situations.

Decision Taking:

Ismail Qemali and Fan Noli both exhibit traits related to decision-making, albeit with some struggles in assertiveness. Their scores in decision-taking (-12 and -9 respectively) are comparable to the dominant trait among the students. While their indecisiveness may differ from the assertiveness prevalent among the students, the common focus on decision-making is notable.

Considering these similarities, Enver Hoxha appears to be closer to the students in terms of facing risk, while Ismail Qemali and Fan Noli share some resemblance in their focus on decision-taking, despite differences in assertiveness.

5 Discussion

To fulfill our aims and objectives, we had formulated these research questions to guide our investigation and ensure a comprehensive analysis of the leadership traits among different groups:

1. **Did senior political leaders and students have the same characteristics in decision-making?**
 - This question aimed to compare how decisively both groups made decisions, considering factors such as assertiveness, deliberation, and the ability to take swift actions under pressure.
2. **Did senior political leaders and students have the same characteristics regarding attitudes towards people and information?**
 - This question sought to explore the interpersonal dynamics and information processing skills of the two groups, examining their communication styles, openness to new information, and ability to build relationships.
3. **Did senior political leaders and students have the same characteristics regarding attitudes towards change and pace?**
 - This question focused on assessing how both groups handled change and managed the pace of work, including their adaptability, flexibility, and responsiveness to evolving situations.
4. **Did senior political leaders and students have the same characteristics regarding risk-taking?**
 - This question aimed to investigate the risk tolerance and management strategies of senior political leaders and students, looking at their willingness to take calculated risks and their approaches to uncertainty and potential challenges.

By addressing these questions, we aimed to draw meaningful comparisons between the leadership traits of Albania's current and future leaders, providing insights that could inform

the development of effective leadership strategies for the country's ongoing transition and integration into the European Union.

The points for discussion in our research included several key aspects:

Analysis of Leadership Traits: Our study began with a careful analysis of how leaders were portrayed in various sources, including the press and literature. This analysis focused on identifying specific adjectives used to describe these leaders, correlating them with predetermined leadership traits. By summarizing these descriptions, we aimed to pinpoint the dominant characteristics of each leader. This process involved an extensive review of media articles, biographies, historical accounts, and other relevant literature. Each source was carefully examined to construct a detailed profile for each leader based on their depicted traits. We classified these traits into categories such as visionary, charismatic, authoritarian, democratic, innovative, and pragmatic. This classification allowed us to systematically compare the leadership styles and identify patterns or commonalities among different leaders. By doing so, we sought to understand not only the individual qualities of each leader but also the broader trends in leadership characteristics within Albania's political history.

Comparison with Youth Aspirations: We explored the aspirations of the youth, particularly their interest in both national and international politics. By comparing these aspirations with the traits exhibited by past and present leaders, we sought to determine whether the new generation possessed different or potentially better qualities suited for leading Albania into the future. This included analyzing survey data on youth ambitions, their values, and their perceptions of what makes an effective leader. We looked at how these young individuals viewed their role in politics and leadership, and whether their aspirations aligned with or diverged from the traits demonstrated by historical and current leaders. This comparison provided insights into the evolving expectations and ideals of leadership among the younger generation. Additionally, we conducted focus group discussions with youth participants to gain deeper qualitative insights into their views on leadership and their aspirations for Albania's future. These discussions revealed nuanced perspectives on leadership qualities, such as integrity, transparency, inclusiveness, and a global outlook, which are increasingly valued by the new generation.

Research Methods: Our research employed two primary methods to gather and analyze data:

Survey: We conducted a survey involving 92 students from Tirana Business University. This survey was designed to collect quantitative data on the students' self-perceptions, particularly focusing on traits related to decision-making, information processing, managing change and pace, and facing risk. The survey questions were crafted to elicit detailed responses that would allow us to evaluate these traits comprehensively. The data collected provided a snapshot of how these students viewed their own leadership potential and qualities. The survey also included demographic questions to understand the background of the respondents, ensuring that our findings were representative of the broader student population.

Case Study: In addition to the survey, we conducted a case study involving eight prominent political leaders from Albania's history. This case study included an in-depth document analysis, coding specific attributes to provide insights into the leadership styles of these leaders. Historical documents, speeches, autobiographies, and other records were meticulously analyzed to extract relevant traits. This method allowed us to systematically assess and compare the leadership styles of these individuals, offering a historical perspective on leadership traits in Albania. We used a coding framework to categorize and quantify the traits observed in these documents, ensuring a rigorous and objective analysis.

Evaluation Table: A detailed evaluation table was employed in the case study to facilitate a systematic comparison of leadership traits. The table focused on four key areas:

Decision-Making: Evaluating the leaders' ability to make decisions effectively and efficiently, considering the context and impact of their choices. We looked at factors such as decisiveness, strategic thinking, and the ability to make tough decisions under pressure.

Handling New People and Information: Assessing how leaders managed interactions with new individuals and processed new information, which is crucial for adaptive leadership. This included their openness to new ideas, ability to build and maintain relationships, and effectiveness in communication.

Managing Change and Pace: Examining the leaders' capacity to handle changes in their environment and the pace at which they implemented new strategies or responded to challenges. We considered their flexibility, resilience, and ability to lead through periods of transformation.

Facing Risk: Analyzing how leaders confronted risks, their risk tolerance, and the strategies they employed to mitigate potential negative outcomes. This involved understanding their approach to risk management, innovation, and their willingness to take calculated risks for the greater good. Each area consisted of 20 specific characteristics, enabling a comprehensive assessment of leadership styles. This detailed approach ensured that our analysis was thorough and covered multiple dimensions of leadership. The evaluation table was designed to be both qualitative and quantitative, allowing us to score each leader on various traits and compare their overall leadership effectiveness.

Objective and Subjective Analysis: The analysis combined objective data gathered from historical sources with subjective judgments based on established conventions for evaluating leadership traits. Objective data included factual information extracted from historical records, while subjective analysis involved interpreting this data through the lens of contemporary leadership theories and conventions. This dual approach aimed to keep a balanced perspective, synthesizing both analytical and subjective assessments of each leader. By integrating these two types of analysis, we were able to provide a understanding of each leader's traits and effectiveness. For instance, we used historical events and decisions as objective benchmarks and complemented them with subjective assessments of the leaders' motivations, ethics, and interpersonal skills based on accounts from contemporaries and historians.

Finally, our research aimed to shed light on the dynamics of leadership in Albania, examine the potential of the new generation of leaders, and provide insights into effective leadership qualities for the country's future. By understanding the traits of past and present leaders and comparing them with the aspirations of today's youth, we hoped to identify the qualities that would best serve Albania in the years to come. This comprehensive approach allowed us to not only evaluate historical leadership but also to anticipate and foster the development of future leaders who could effectively guide Albania forward. The findings of our research were intended to inform leadership development programs, educational curricula, and policy

recommendations to cultivate a new generation of leaders equipped to meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

5.1 Limitations of the study

While the study aims to offer valuable insights into the leadership traits of Generation Z students and historical Albanian leaders, it has several limitations. These highlight areas for improvement and future research directions.

Sample Size and Diversity: The sample of 92 Generation Z students from Tirana Business University may not represent the entire Generation Z population in Albania, limiting generalizability. A larger, more diverse sample would better capture the full spectrum of experiences and perspectives. Similarly, the case study of eight historical leaders, though detailed, may not cover all leadership styles and traits in Albania's history.

Subjectivity in Trait Evaluation: Assessing historical leaders' traits involves subjective interpretations of historical documents and secondary sources, leading to varied conclusions. Generation Z students' self-reported traits can introduce bias due to social desirability or lack of self-awareness.

Cultural and Contextual Factors: The findings reflect cultural biases inherent in the Albanian context, limiting their applicability to other regions. Leadership traits valued in Albania might differ significantly from those in other cultures. Additionally, comparing traits of historical figures to contemporary students may overlook important contextual differences influenced by their specific historical and cultural environments.

Cross-Generational Comparisons: Comparing Generation Z students with historical leaders is challenging due to significant differences in societal norms, technological advancements, and political environments. Traits that made historical leaders successful might differ from those required for effective leadership today, where modern demands emphasize traits like technological adaptability and global awareness.

Methodological Constraints: Using semantic differentials and ordinal scales to measure traits might not capture the full complexity of these characteristics. The study offers a snapshot of traits at a particular point in time, and longitudinal studies would provide deeper insights into the development of leadership abilities over time.

Limited Scope of Political Engagement: The study focuses primarily on political aspirations as an outcome of leadership traits, overlooking other important aspects of leadership such as ethical behavior, resilience, and emotional intelligence. A broader range of political engagement metrics, including participation in civic activities, voting behavior, and involvement in community leadership roles, would enhance the study.

5.2 Future Research Directions

To address these limitations, future research should expand the sample size and diversity to include a broader group of students from different regions and educational institutions, improving the generalizability of the findings. Employing mixed-method approaches that combine quantitative and qualitative data can enhance objectivity and provide a more comprehensive analysis of leadership traits.

Conducting cross-cultural studies to compare leadership traits across different countries and cultures can help identify universal and culturally-specific leadership characteristics. Implementing longitudinal research designs to track the development of leadership traits over time will provide insights into how these traits evolve with experience and changing contexts.

Exploring additional dimensions of leadership, such as ethical leadership, emotional intelligence, and resilience, will offer a more holistic view of leadership effectiveness. Lastly, examining the influence of modern challenges, such as digital transformation and globalization, on contemporary leaders' traits and effectiveness is essential. Addressing these limitations and expanding research scope will help foster more effective and adaptable leaders for the future.

Conclusion

The aim of our research was to examine the leadership traits of past and present leaders in Albania, a country in the process of joining the EU, and compare them with traits exhibited by the youth population, particularly Generation Z and Millennials. By understanding and comparing these traits, we aimed to contribute to the development of new generations of leaders who can foster long-lasting peace, inclusive societies, and sustainable development.

To achieve this aim, we first provided basic information on Albania's history, economy, and political development, along with the regional context and EU accession processes. We analyzed leadership issues at the country level and studied the traits of past and present political leaders, aiming to extract lessons for future leadership.

Our methodology included a survey conducted with 92 students from Tirana Business University and a case study involving eight prominent political leaders from Albania's history. The survey, conducted in 2018, gathered data on students' self-evaluated characteristics related to decision-making, information processing, pace, and risk-taking. The case study involved in-depth analysis of documents, archives, and other credible sources regarding the selected leaders, focusing on the same four traits.

By comparing the traits exhibited by past leaders with those of the surveyed youth, we aimed to determine whether the new generation of leaders in Albania demonstrates different, potentially better qualities suited for leading the country into the future. Additionally, the inclusion of a Likert scale questionnaire about Enver Hoxha among the case study leaders provides further insights into leadership dynamics in Albania.

Studying the traits of both leaders and students offered valuable insights that can inform various aspects of leadership development, education, and political engagement:

Understanding Leadership Styles: By analyzing the traits of leaders, we can gain insights into different leadership styles and their effectiveness in various contexts. This understanding can help individuals identify their own leadership strengths and areas for development.

Nurturing Future Leaders: Recognizing the influence of personality traits on political aspirations among students allows educators and mentors to tailor leadership development programs to better nurture future leaders. Providing opportunities for students to develop

decision-making skills, risk assessment abilities, and interpersonal competencies can prepare them for leadership roles in politics and beyond.

Promoting Political Engagement: Understanding how personality traits influence political aspirations can inform efforts to promote political engagement among young people. By highlighting the relevance of individual traits to political participation and leadership, initiatives can be designed to resonate with students' interests and motivations, encouraging their active involvement in civic affairs.

Building Diverse Leadership Teams: Recognizing the diversity of traits among leaders and students underscores the importance of building diverse leadership teams. By bringing together individuals with complementary strengths and perspectives, organizations and communities can enhance decision-making, innovation, and problem-solving capabilities.

Emphasizing Leadership Development: The study emphasizes the significance of ongoing leadership development initiatives aimed at cultivating a diverse pool of future leaders. Providing mentorship, training, and experiential learning opportunities can help individuals refine their leadership skills and navigate complex challenges effectively.

Fostering Inclusive Political Spaces: Acknowledging the impact of personality traits on political aspirations underscores the importance of creating inclusive political spaces that accommodate a wide range of leadership styles and perspectives. By embracing diversity and fostering collaboration, political institutions can strengthen their capacity to address diverse societal needs and challenges.

In summary, the study of traits in leaders and students highlights the importance of understanding individual differences in leadership and political engagement. By leveraging these insights, organizations, educational institutions, and policymakers can work towards cultivating a new generation of effective and inclusive leaders.

Resumé

Úvod

Dizertačná práca sa venuje skúmaniu vodcovských črt v rôznych obdobiach v Albánsku, pričom porovnáva charakteristiky historických a súčasných vodcov s charakteristikami mladšej generácie. Albánsko, krajina v rozhodujúcej fáze svojho rozvoja, horlivo pracuje na členstve v Európskej únii. Toto prechodné obdobie predstavuje jedinečnú príležitosť študovať vyvíjajúcu sa povahu vodcovstva v kontexte významnej spoločensko-politickej transformácie. Hlavným cieľom tejto dizertačnej práce je priblížiť vodcovské kvality rôznych albánskych lídrov, či už minulých alebo súčasných, a porovnať ich s vlastnosťami skupiny jednotlivcov z generácie Z, ktorí boli za týmto účelom metodicky opýtaní.

Dizertačná práca ponúka komplexný prehľad o historickom a ekonomickom pozadí Albánska až po jeho vstup do EÚ. Skúma úsilie a strategický vývoj Albánska smerom k integrácii do EÚ v porovnaní s podobnými snahami v iných balkánskych krajinách, čím poukazuje na jedinečné výzvy a predpoklady, s ktorými sa stretáva. Presahujúc historické a ekonomické súvislosti, ďalšia časť sa venuje pracovnému zaťaženiu a zložitým výzvam, ktorým čelia politické elity v aspirujúcich členských krajinách EÚ. Kriticky hodnotí nový prístup k EÚ a jeho dôsledky na týchto lídrov, pričom osobitnú pozornosť venuje výzvam vedenia, ktoré sú pre balkánsky región charakteristické. Otázky, ako sú autoritárske tendencie medzi elitami a ich vplyv na aspirácie Albánska do EÚ, sú podrobne preskúmané, čo poskytuje pohľad na dynamiku vodcovstva vzhľadom na prísne prístupové kritériá EÚ. Okrem toho sa dizertačná práca zaoberá teóriami vedenia, ktoré objasňujú súhrn medzi miestnymi rozhodovacími procesmi a prísnyimi základmi EÚ. Táto analýza zahŕňa skúmanie autoritárskych praktík prevládajúcich medzi balkánskymi elitami, vplyv kognitívnych zdrojov na výkonnosť organizácie a vnútorné črty, ktoré definujú politické vedenie. Tento teoretický rámec pomáha pochopiť zložité výzvy a zložitosti vedenia v kontexte pristúpenia k EÚ.

Dizertačná práca rozširuje tento základ prezentovaním konkrétnej analýzy vodcovských črt rôznych generácií a významných osobností albánskeho politického prostredia. Diskusia zahŕňa viac ako storočie politických dejín a skúma životy a štýly vedenia ôsmich prominentných vodcov, od základnej úlohy Ismaila Qemaliho v štáte až po súčasného premiéra Ediho Ramu. Tento historický príbeh sa prelína s modernou perspektívou a

analyzuje vlastnosti študentov 90. rokov generácie Z, aby odhalil trendy a posuny v atribútoch vedenia.

Výskum načrtáva použitý prístup, ktorý zahŕňa kvantitatívne prieskumy aj kvalitatívne prípadové štúdie. Táto metodika zabezpečuje komplexné preskúmanie vlastností a aspirácií albánskej mládeže v porovnaní s jej skúsenými vodcami, s cieľom predpovedať potenciálnu budúcu politickú angažovanosť a štýly vedenia, ktoré by sa mohli objaviť medzi novou generáciou.

Integráciou objektívnych historických údajov so subjektívnymi analytickými perspektívami tento výskum poskytuje nielen vyvážený pohľad na pozorované vodcovské schopnosti, ale má tiež za cieľ významne prispieť k diskusii o efektívnych vodcovských kvalitách potrebných pre budúcnosť Albánska na európskej scéne. Poznatky získané z tejto štúdie sú určené na pomoc pri identifikácii a udržiavaní vodcovského potenciálu v ďalšej generácii, čím sa zabezpečí úspešná integrácia Albánska do Európskej únie a jeho efektívna správa vecí verejných v nadchádzajúcich rokoch.

Táto dizertačná práca skúma vodcovské črty albánskych vodcov v rôznych obdobiach a porovnáva historické a súčasné osobnosti s mladou generáciou. Keďže Albánsko sa usiluje o členstvo v Európskej únii, cieľom tejto štúdie je pochopiť, ako sa vodcovstvo vyvíja počas významných spoločensko-politických zmien. Výskum sa zameriava na kvality minulých a súčasných albánskych lídrov a jednotlivcov z generácie Z, s ktorými sa uskutočnili rozhovory, aby poskytli poznatky.

Celkovo tento výskum kombinuje historické údaje s analytickými perspektívami, aby poskytol vyvážený pohľad na schopnosti vedenia. Jeho cieľom je výrazne prispieť k diskusii o efektívnych vodcovských kvalitách, ktoré sú potrebné pre budúcnosť Albánska v Európskej únii, identifikáciou a pestovaním vodcovského potenciálu ďalšej generácie pre úspešnú integráciu a správu vecí verejných.

1 Súčasný stav riešenia témy doma i v zahraničí

Albánsko, ktoré sa nachádza v juhovýchodnej Európe na Balkánskom polostrove, získalo nezávislosť v roku 2012 po páde Osmanskej ríše. Prešlo obdobiami kniežatstva, republiky a kráľovstva, kým ho napadli talianske a neskôr nacistické sily. Po druhej svetovej vojne sa stala komunistickým štátom pod vedením Envera Hodžu až do roku 1991, kedy prešla na parlamentnú demokraciu. Albánska ekonomika prechádza na voľný trh s výrazným rozvojom energetickej a dopravnej infraštruktúry. Krajina je členom niekoľkých

medzinárodných organizácií vrátane NATO a OSN a od roku 2003 je oficiálnym kandidátom na členstvo v EÚ.

Pád komunizmu v 90. rokoch priniesol zložité interakcie medzi vnútornými a vonkajšími faktormi, ktoré výrazne ovplyvnili Albánsko. Rozpad Juhoslávie a následné regionálne konflikty odhalili nevyriešené etnické napätie. Na medzinárodnej úrovni panovala neochota plne sa angažovať v nových demokratických štátoch, čo zdôraznilo potrebu nových prístupov k regionálnemu poriadku. Posun Albánska od systému jednej strany k demokracii sa upevnil vstupom do Rady Európy a NATO.

Ekonomická transformácia Albánska bola poznačená pokrokom aj výzvami. Kľúčový vývoj zahŕňa vytvorenie strategických partnerstiev s USA a EÚ, vstup do NATO a zapojenie sa do rôznych programov EÚ. Krajina čelila problémom ako organizovaný zločin, korupcia a neformálne ekonomiky, no zaznamenala aj rast v sektoroch ako financie, poisťovníctvo a profesionálne služby. Globálna finančná kríza v roku 2008 zasiahla Albánsko, ale krajina preukázala odolnosť s miernym tempom rastu a snahami o ekonomickú diverzifikáciu.

Albánsko čelilo významným sociálnym a ekonomickým problémom vrátane kolapsu Ponzioho schém v 90. rokoch, zlej správy vecí verejných a rozsiahlej korupcie. Prechod ku kapitalizmu priniesol príležitosti aj ťažkosti s nekontrolovateľnými neformálnymi a tajnými ekonomickými aktivitami. Pokusy vlády o privatizáciu štátneho majetku často viedli ku korupcii a neefektívnosti. Medzinárodné zásahy, ako napríklad mnohonárodné ochranné sily z roku 1997, pomohli dočasne stabilizovať krajinu.

Závazok Albánska pristúpiť k EÚ podnietil mnohé z jeho reforiem zameraných na zlepšenie právneho štátu, boj proti korupcii a posilnenie hospodárskej stability. Vláda pracuje na fiškálnych úpravách, lepšom výbere daní a riadení verejných investícií. Napriek pokroku pretrvávajú výzvy vrátane geopolitického napätia, narušenia súvisiaceho s klímou a vysokej miery emigrácie. Riešenie týchto otázok je kľúčové pre ďalší rozvoj Albánska a prípadné členstvo v EÚ.

Očakáva sa, že silná súkromná spotreba a kľúčové sektory, ako je cestovný ruch a stavebníctvo, spôsobia v roku 2024 rast HDP Albánska o 3,3%, pričom inflácia bude začiatkom roka 2025 cielená na úrovni 3%. V roku 2024 Albánsko iniciovalo fiškálnu konsolidáciu založenú na príjmoch, aby vytvorilo priestor pre proticyklické politiky, s cieľom znížiť verejný dlh, posilniť štátne podniky a zabezpečiť fiškálnu udržateľnosť.

Významný pokrok v reformách súdnictva a boja proti korupcii zahŕňa preverovanie sudcov (ukončenie sa očakáva do decembra 2024), zníženie počtu nevybavených prípadov a obsadzovanie voľných miest v súdnych radách. Špeciálna protikorupčná štruktúra (SPAK) presadzuje transparentnosť a meritokraciu a Albánsko už nie je na sivom zozname Finančnej akčnej skupiny. Cieľom národnej protikorupčnej stratégie na roky 2024 – 2030 je posilniť právne štruktúry a zlepšiť transparentnosť v súlade s európskymi štandardmi.

Tieto reformy sú nevyhnutné pre vstup Albánska do EÚ a legitimitu vedenia. Cieľom spolupráce s Benátskou komisiou je predchádzať korupcii, zvyšovať transparentnosť a zabezpečiť zodpovednosť. Aktívna účasť občianskej spoločnosti a zabezpečenie nezávislosti protikorupčných inštitúcií zvýši dôveru verejnosti a zabezpečí stíhanie prípadov korupcie na vysokej úrovni

Albánsko na ceste do Európskej únie

Albánsko vykonalo množstvo reforiem od roku 2003, keď bolo na samite v Solúne označené za potenciálneho člena EÚ. V roku 2006 Albánsko ratifikovalo Dohodu o stabilizácii a pridružení (SAD), ktorá nadobudla platnosť v apríli 2009 a nahradila obchodnú dohodu z roku 1992 s Európskym hospodárskym spoločenstvom. Zrušenie vízového režimu v roku 2010 umožnilo albánskym občanom cestovať do schengenského priestoru bez víz. V roku 2009 Albánsko formálne požiadalo o členstvo v EÚ a Európska komisia určila 12 kľúčových priorít, ktoré musí Albánsko splniť, aby splnilo kritériá členstva.

V októbri 2012 Komisia odporučila udeliť Albánsku štatút kandidátskej krajiny EÚ pod podmienkou dokončenia reforiem súdnictva a verejnej správy. Albánsku bol udelený štatút kandidátskej krajiny v júni 2014, čo predstavuje významný krok v jeho integračnom procese do EÚ. Ďalším krokom je otvorenie rokovaní o členstve, ktoré je podmienené splnením piatich kľúčových priorít: profesionálna a odpolitizovaná správa, nezávislosť súdnictva, protikorupčné úsilie, boj proti organizovanému zločinu a ochrana ľudských práv.

Albánsko nadviazalo diplomatické vzťahy s EÚ v roku 1991 a za potenciálneho kandidáta bolo uznané v roku 2000. Proces stabilizácie a pridruženía sa začal v roku 2003 a Albánsko podpísalo SAA v roku 2006. Albánsko požiadalo o členstvo v EÚ v roku 2009, štatút kandidáta získalo v roku 2014, a splnili kľúčové priority pre otvorenie rokovaní o členstve.

Nedávny vývoj zahŕňa zlepšenia politických kritérií, ako je elektronická identifikácia voličov vo voľbách v roku 2021. Pokrok verejnej správy zahŕňa hodnotenia vplyvov regulácie a zvýšenú implementáciu Národného plánu európskej integrácie. Zlepšenie

súdneho systému zahŕňa funkčný Ústavný súd a Vyšší súdny súd a zriadenie SPAK, štruktúry proti korupcii a organizovanému zločinu.

Proces pristúpenia krajín západného Balkánu k EÚ teraz kladie dôraz na hodnotenie založené na zásluhách a podmienenosti, čo znamená posun od predchádzajúceho prístupu, ktorý spočíval v udeľovaní členstva v EÚ najskôr a riešení problémov neskôr. Táto nová realita, ako je načrtnutá v Strednodobej stratégii politiky rozširovania EÚ z roku 2015, si vyžaduje, aby sa lídri predvstupových krajín strategicky zaviazali k projektu rozšírenia EÚ, pričom na svoje elity v nestabilných demokraciách a ekonomikách uložia značnú zodpovednosť. Dlhotrvalé čakanie, ktoré zažilo Turecko, poukazuje na potenciálne spomalenie demokratizačných snáh a slúži ako varovný príklad. Hospodárska a migračná kríza spojená s brexitom ešte viac znížila priority pristúpenia Západného Balkánu, čím sa znížila naliehavosť reforiem, ktoré boli pôvodne zdôraznené v Solúne v roku 2003. Táto neistota prospieva vládnucim elitám, ktoré získavajú osobné a politické výhody, keď strategický program kodanských kritérií zostane nezmenený, ale jeho implementácii chýba prehľadnosť a časovo ohraničený rámec. Krízový manažment odhalil oslabenú úlohu Európskej komisie a zdôraznil zvýšenú právomoc Európskej rady a členských štátov. Tento posun spolitizoval proces rozširovania a zaviedol bilaterálne podmienky, ktoré sa predtým považovali za nevhodné. Napriek politickej vôli posilniť EÚ a rozšíriť ju, je tento proces naďalej náročný a vyžaduje si krehkú rovnováhu reforiem, strategických záväzkov a pevných rámcov implementácie.

Pracovná záťaž kladie elity krajín ašpirujúcich na členstvo v EÚ

Prístup EÚ „zásady na prvom mieste“ kladie značné požiadavky na lídrov ašpirujúcich členských krajín, čo si vyžaduje štrukturálne monitorovanie a posilnenie aktérov v oblasti riadenia, aby sa zabránilo konsolidácii elít. Albánsko čelí vážnym demokratickým problémom s politickou polarizáciou a opozičnými bojkotmi, ktoré ovplyvňujú parlamentné aktivity. Napriek snahám oboch strán o reformu volieb nedostatočná účasť opozície podkopala výsledky. Trenice medzi premiérom a prezidentom narúšajú dôveryhodnosť vládnutia. Verejná správa zápasí s postupmi založenými na zásluhách a efektívnymi, odpolitizovanými službami. Súdny systém vykazuje pokrok s novými inštitúciami, ale úplná reforma a nezávislosť nie sú úplné. Úsilie proti korupcii a organizovanému zločinu vrátane prepúšťania na vysokých miestach a zriadenia SPAK a Národného úradu pre vyšetrowanie pokračuje. Problémy však pretrvávajú kvôli chýbajúcej parlamentnej opozícii, nedôvere verejnosti a vnímaným odmietnutiam vstupu do EÚ. Iniciatíva minischengenského priestoru

vedúcich predstaviteľov západného Balkánu má za cieľ posilniť regionálnu spoluprácu a voľný pohyb napriek vylúčeniu Kosova a pretrvávajúcej frustrácii z prístúpenia k EÚ. Zdá sa, že táto iniciatíva upevňuje regionálnu moc a zmierňuje politické dôsledky pozastaveného procesu prístúpenia k EÚ.

Teórie vodcovstva

Dôraz sa kladie na školenie a vyučovanie vodcovských črt pre nastupujúcu generáciu na západnom Balkáne vzhľadom na krehké demokracie v regióne a prebiehajúce zmeny. Riešenie vodcovských zručností už teraz je kľúčové pre prípravu budúcich vodcov. História liberalizácie, demokratizácie a povojnových zmien v regióne zanechala zmes úspechov a pretrvávajúcich výziev vrátane autoritárstva a nevyriešených konfliktov.

Ivan Pepić tvrdí, že medzinárodný tlak na domáce elity je kľúčový pre rozvoj demokracií a efektívne vedenie na západnom Balkáne. Posledných 30 rokov ukazuje, že elitám často chýba zastúpenie, najmä v multietnických oblastiach, čo bráni riešeniu konfliktov. Pre pokrok je nevyhnutné budovanie dôvery, demokratický právny štát a dobrá správa vecí verejných. Aby sa prekonal nelegitímne zastúpenie a vylúčenie menšín, je potrebné riešiť neúplné demokratické prechody, zahraničné vplyvy a nedokončené budovanie štátu.

Politiky by sa mali zamerať na udržateľný hospodársky rast, zlepšené vzdelávacie systémy, lepšie prechody zo školy do zamestnania, odbornú prípravu a programy pre znevýhodnené skupiny, prevenciu migrácie a boj proti neformálnemu zamestnávaniu. Napriek úsiliu zostáva dlhodobá nezamestnanosť vysoká, pričom Kosovo a Bosna a Hercegovina v rozvoji zaostávajú. Albánsko má veľký neformálny sektor, zatiaľ čo Srbsko a Albánsko čelia vysokej nezamestnanosti medzi vzdelanými jednotlivcami. Neustále zlepšovanie a zdieľané najlepšie postupy sú kľúčom k lepším podmienkam zamestnania a hospodárskej stabilite.

Teórie vodcovstva začali konceptom „vodca ako hrdina“. Teória veľkého muža, ktorú vyvinul Thomas Carlyle v 19. storočí, predpokladá, že veľkí vodcovia sa rodia s vrodenými vlastnosťami, ktoré ich robia výnimočnými, so zameraním na vojenských vodcov. Spector (2015) dodal, že to odráža túžbu po hrdinoch. Postavy ako Alexander Veľký a Mahátma Gándhí boli vnímané ako rodení vodcovia s vlastnosťami ako charisma, inteligencia a múdrosť.

The Great Man Theory viedla k ranej teórii črt, ktorá sa snažila identifikovať črty, ktoré odlišujú vodcov od nasledovníkov. „Dedičný génius“ Francisa Galtona (1869) tvrdil, že vodcovské kvality sa dedia. Ralph Stogdill a Bernard Bass neskôr zdôraznili, že efektívnosť

vedenia závisí od vlastností a sociálnych situácií. V 21. storočí sa líderské štúdie zamerali na črty ako inovácia a odolnosť, inšpirované osobnosťami ako Steve Jobs a Bill Gates. Steven J. Zaccaro a jeho kolegovia vyvinuli model zdôrazňujúci viaceré črty efektívnosti vedenia. Teória osobnostných črt veľkej päťky identifikovala otvorenosť, svedomitosť, extravenziu, ústretovosť a neurotizmus ako kľúčové črty spojené s úspechom vo vedení. Metaanalýza Timothyho A. Judgea (2002) potvrdila vlastnosti ako extravergia a svedomitosť ako silné prediktory vodcovstva. Fred Fiedler's Contingency Theory (1964) zdôraznila prispôsobenie štýlu vedenia situačným požiadavkám, pričom zdôraznila dôležitosť zosúladenia štýlu vedenia s organizačnými potrebami.

Edwin A. Lock v práci „Podstata vodcovstva“ zdôraznila kľúčové prvky úspešného vedenia: motívy, vlastnosti, vedomosti, zručnosti, víziu a schopnosť realizovať túto víziu. Výskum Davida A. Garvina potvrdil vplyv efektívneho vedenia na úspech organizácie. Napriek rozsiahlemu výskumu je pochopenie toho, ktoré aspekty vedenia ovplyvňujú výkon, stále nepochopiteľné. DeRue a Ashford (2010) zaviedli spoločné vytváranie identít vedenia v rámci organizácií. Shelley Kirkpatrick a Edwin Locke (1991) tvrdili, že špecifické črty rozlišujú efektívnych vodcov, ale tieto črty samotné nezaručujú úspech. Vlastnosti ako pud, motivácia, čestnosť, sebavedomie, kognitívne schopnosti a obchodné znalosti musia byť kombinované so schopnosťou realizovať víziu. Timothy A. Judge a kolegovia (2009) skúmali svetlé a temné stránky vodcovských črt, pričom navrhli model vodcovskej schopnosti objavenia sa efektívnosti, ktorý integruje dedičné a evolučné zdroje črt s vodcovským zámerom a vznikom, pričom kladie dôraz na interakciu medzi črtami a kontextom.

Stručne povedané, teórie vedenia sa vyvinuli od predstavy vrozených veľkých vodcov ku komplexným modelom integrujúcim vlastnosti, kontexty a situačné požiadavky. Prebiehajúci výskum sa zameriava na rozvoj efektívnych lídrov kombináciou poznatkov z psychológie osobnosti, organizačného správania a praktických skúseností.

„*Osobnosť a politika: hodnoty, črty a politická voľba*“ použil päťfaktorový model a Schwartzovu teóriu základných osobných hodnôt na štúdium vplyvu osobnostných črt a hodnôt na politické rozhodnutia. Analýzou 3 044 voličov z talianskych volieb v roku 2001 sa zistilo, že stredoľaví voliči vykazovali vyššiu úroveň priateľskosti, otvorenosti, univerzalizmu, benevolencie a sebariadenia, zatiaľ čo stredopraví voliči vykazovali vyššiu úroveň energie, svedomitosti, bezpečnosti, moci, úspech, konformita a tradícia (Caprara et

al., 2006). Štúdia dospela k záveru, že osobné hodnoty zohrávali pri hlasovaní dôležitejšiu úlohu ako osobnostné črty.

Schwartzova teória identifikuje desať základných hodnôt: sebariadenie, stimulácia, hedonizmus, úspech, moc, bezpečnosť, konformita, tradícia, benevolencia a univerzalizmus. Táto teória pomáha vysvetliť individuálne motivácie a správanie, vrátane politických rozhodnutí (Schwartz, 2010). Neskoršia štúdia Schwartz a spolupracovníkov v 15 krajinách, vrátane bývalých komunistických národov, potvrdila, že osobné hodnoty výrazne ovplyvňujú politické hodnoty, pričom formujú politické myslenie a správanie (Schwartz, 2014).

2 Ciele dizertačnej práce

Cieľom nášho výskumu je poukázať na črty minulých a súčasných lídrov v Albánsku, rozvojovej krajine ašpirujúcej na vstup do EÚ, a porovnať ich s črtami vzorky mládeže. Budovanie trvalého mieru a udržateľných spoločností prostredníctvom rozvoja nových lídrov presahuje rámec toho, aby sa s nimi zaobchádzalo ako s jednoduchými spoločenskými zainteresovanými stranami.

Generácie Z a mileniáli na západnom Balkáne, ktoré sa narodili a vyrástli v oblastiach konfliktov, zostávajú kľúčovými prispievateľmi. Ich zmysluplné budúce vedenie, ktoré sú často nedostatočne preskúmané a nepochopené, si vyžaduje pochopenie ich črt v rozhodovaní, riadení informácií a ľudí, tempe a rytme, riziku a postupe.

Prvá kapitola poskytuje základné informácie o Albánsku, jeho historickom, ekonomickom a politickom vývoji a stave reforiem požadovaných EÚ. Analyzujeme otázky vedenia na úrovni krajiny.

Aby sme splnili náš hlavný cieľ, stanovili sme si tieto parciálne ciele:

- Definovať a vysvetliť postavenie a históriu Albánska na západnom Balkáne.
- Prezentovať situáciu regiónu v súvislosti s prístupovým procesom do EÚ.
- Vysvetlite teórie vedenia a zdôraznite, ako politickí lídri často využívajú manažérske znalosti.
- Vysvetlite kognitívne zdroje a organizačný výkon.
- Preskúmať vlastnosti a politické vedenie so zameraním na rozhodovanie, narábanie s informáciami, zmeny a tempo a riadenie rizík.

- Načrtnúť pracovné zaťaženie elít v rámci prístupového procesu do EÚ a súčasné výzvy vedúceho postavenia v regióne.

Predpokladáme, že súčasní vedúci zamestnanci v ekonomike majú podobné charakteristiky ako študenti vstupujúci do pracovného procesu. Môžu sa stať ďalšou generáciou lídrov. Naše výskumné otázky zahŕňajú:

- Majú vyšší politickí lídri a študenti spoločné charakteristiky pri rozhodovaní?
- Majú spoločné charakteristiky týkajúce sa ľudí a informácií?
- Majú spoločné charakteristiky týkajúce sa zmeny a tempa?
- Majú spoločné charakteristiky týkajúce sa podstupovania rizika?

Štúdium črt minulých a súčasných albánskych politických vodcov pridáva hodnotu k zachovaniu ich odkazu v histórii Albánska. Pochopenie toho, čo v albánskej politike funguje a čo nie, môže viesť mladú generáciu a ukázať, že minulé skúsenosti formujú budúce trendy.

Tento výskum zahŕňa testovanie vzorky minulých a súčasných osôb s rozhodovacou právomocou, študentov a členov pracovnej sily v Albánsku, analýzu a interpretáciu ich črt pri rozhodovaní, spracovaní informácií, tempe a riskovaní, vrátane vplyvu týchto črt na vedenie, ktorého príkladom je bývalý albánsky diktátor.

3 Metódy a metodika

15. novembra 2022 svetová populácia presiahla 8 miliárd, pričom 2 miliardy mladých ľudí je najväčšia a najaktívnejšia pracovná sila v histórii. To vyvoláva otázku: prečo testovať aspirácie mládeže na národnú a medzinárodnú politiku?

Porovnali sme mediálne opisy ôsmich prominentných albánskych vodcov z 20. a 21. storočia so štyrmi vodcovskými črtami, aby sme zistili, či má nová generácia lepšie kvality pre vedúceho Albánska, aspiranta na EÚ.

Naše výskumné metódy zahŕňali prieskum 100 študentov z Tirana Business University a prípadovú štúdiu ôsmich významných politických lídrov z rokov 1912-2024. Prieskum, ktorý sa uskutočnil v roku 2018 s 92 študentmi, mal dve časti:

1. Kvantitatívne údaje o postojoch, názoroch a vnímaní študentov vrátane veku, pracovného/študijného stavu, sebaaponímania vedenia, sociálneho postavenia, vzdelania, pohlavia a politických aspirácií.

2. Škálový dotazník Likertovho typu na sebahodnotenie štyroch vlastností: rozhodovanie, manipulácia s novými ľuďmi a informáciami, zvládanie zmien a tempa a čelenie riziku.
3. Dotazník bol upravený z „leadingfromyourstrengths“ (www.leadingfromyourstrengths.com) a je podrobne uvedený v prílohách.

Prípadová štúdia zahŕňala hĺbkovú analýzu ôsmich prominentných albánskych lídrov, štyroch zosnulých a štyroch aktívnych. Zahŕňal:

1. Analýza dokumentov dôveryhodných historických zdrojov o úlohách lídrov pri vstupe Albánska do EÚ.
2. Zhromažďovanie a skúmanie listín.
3. Kódovanie a analýza atribútov popísaných pomocou rovnakej Likertovej škály ako študentský prieskum.
4. Podrobné postrehy a konkrétne hodnotenie Envera Hodžu, jedného z ôsmich lídrov.

Hodnotiaca tabuľka (Tabuľka 5) hodnotila štyri vodcovské črty: rozhodovanie, zaobchádzanie s novými ľuďmi a informáciami, riadenie zmien a tempa a čelenie riziku.

Tabuľka 6: Vlastnosti použité na sebahodnotenie študentov a hodnotenie ôsmich historických lídrov (2012-2022)

Decision Taking				Regarding New People and Information			
1	Conservative	11	Venturesome	21	Reflective	31	Optimistic
2	Calculating	12	Decisive	22	Factual	32	Poised
3	Cooperative	13	Competitive	23	Calculating	33	Polished
4	Hesitant	14	Aggressive	24	Skeptical	34	Convincing
5	Low-keyed	15	Determined	25	Logical	35	Warm
6	Unsure	16	Forceful	26	Undemonstrative	36	Persuasive
7	Undemanding	17	Strong-willed	27	Suspicious	37	Demonstrative
8	Cautious	18	Pioneering	28	Matter-of-Fact	38	Enthusiastic
9	Mild	19	Ambitious	29	Incisive	39	Political
10	Agreeable	20	Driving	30	Pessimistic	40	Magnetic
Managing change and pace				Facing Risk			
41	Mobile	51	Stabile	61	Firm	71	Balanced judgement
42	Active	52	Steady	62	Independent	72	Open minded
43	Restless	53	Deliberate	63	Self-willed	73	Tactful
44	Alert	54	Consistent	64	Stubborn	74	Accurate
45	Variety-Oriented	55	Predictable	65	Obstinate	75	Diplomatic
46	Demonstrative	56	Possessive	66	Opinionated	76	Systematic
47	Impatient	57	Patient	67	Unsystematic	77	Neat
48	Eager	58	Passive	68	Self-righteous	78	Exacting
49	Flexible	59	Non demonstrative	69	Uninhabited	79	Conventional
50	Impulsive	60	Resistant to change	70	Arbitrary	80	Cautious

Vlastné spracovanie na základe literatúry.

Každé pole pozostáva z 20 charakteristík rozdelených do dvoch pólov, pričom krajné body sa počítajú od +3 do -3. Tento podrobný hodnotiaci formulár, vyplnený jednotlivcami, určuje ich štýl vedenia. Konečné údaje sú zhrnuté v tabuľke, ktorá umožňuje porovnanie medzi číslami.

V tejto štúdií analyzujeme rôzne osobnosti, minulých a súčasných vodcov albánskeho štátu na základe faktov a historických údajov z novin, časopisov, štúdií a kníh novinárov, publicistov, spisovateľov a výskumníkov. Každá funkcia sa riadi konvenciou vytvárania hodnotení na základe objektívnych aj subjektívnych úsudkov. Konečné výsledky sú teda založené na analytickom prehľade všetkých referenčných materiálov pre každý znak.

4 Výsledky

Priemerné skóre dosiahnuté všetkými 92 respondentmi bolo vypočítané pre všetky štyri analyzované skupiny vlastností. Každý účastník si vybral skupinu vlastností s priemerným

skóre najviac vzdialeným od nuly a spočítala sa celková frekvencia skupín s najlepšimi vlastnosťami. Podľa výsledkov bola skupina vlastností „čeliť riziku“ najďalej od nuly pre 32 respondentov, zatiaľ čo „prijímanie rozhodnutí“ bola najvyššou skupinou vlastností pre 30 účastníkov.

Ďalej sa z dvoch horných skupín znakov vybrali znaky dosahujúce hodnoty najviac od nuly (-3 alebo +3). Ak tieto skóre získalo viac ako jeden znak, vybrali sa všetky takéto znaky. Vypočítal sa počet respondentov, ktorí si vybrali tieto „najextrémnejšie“ vlastnosti. Pre „čelenie riziku“ bola dominantná črta nesystematická/úhľadná, pričom -3 značila čistotu a 3 nesystematické. Táto vlastnosť sa objavila ako najvzdialenejšia od nuly u 20 respondentov. Pre „prijímanie rozhodnutí“ bola dominantná črta nenápadná/rozhodnutá, pričom 12 respondentov vykazovalo najväčšiu hodnotu od nuly.

Politická ašpirácia

Premenná „politická ašpirácia“ sa merala na ordinálnej stupnici: 1 pre „nezáujem o politiku“, 2 pre „chcem sa podieľať na politike“ a 3 pre „chcem viesť politiku“. Z 90 účastníkov sa 77 nezaujímal o politiku, 7 sa chcelo zúčastniť a 5 chcelo viesť, zatiaľ čo 1 neodpovedal.

Na preskúmanie významných rozdielov v dominantných črtách súvisiacich s politickými ašpiráciami boli respondenti vážení. Napríklad respondenti, ktorí sa nezaujímal o politiku, boli vážení takto:

hmotnosť bez záujmu=33,3377 \approx 0,433 váha bez záujmu=7733,33 \approx 0,433

Účastníci, ktorí sa chceli zúčastniť na politike, dostali váhu 4,2377 a tí, ktorí chceli viesť, mali váhu 5,9327.

Čeliť riziku – nesystematické/úhľadné

Analyzoval sa sémantický diferenciál znaku nesystematický/úhľadný. Medián v rebríčku politických ašpirácií bol zvýraznený: červený pre „nezáujem o politiku“, žltý pre „chcem sa podieľať na politike“ a zelený pre „chcem viesť politiku“. Medián kódov politickej ašpirácie sa medzi skupinami štatisticky líšil, $\chi^2(3)=29,389, p<0,001$ $\chi^2(3)=29,389, p<0,001$.

Signifikantné rozdiely boli zistené medzi respondentmi odpovedajúcimi -2 (úhľadný) a 3 (nesystematický) na výpoveď vlastnosti. Tí, ktorí odpovedali -2, mali medián 3 (chcú viesť v politike), zatiaľ čo tí, ktorí odpovedali 3, mali medián 2 (chcú sa podieľať na politike), významný pri $p=0,002$ $p=0,002$. Rozdiely boli zistené aj medzi respondentmi, ktorí sa hodnotili ako -3 (čistý) a -2, s významnými výsledkami pri $p<0,001$ $p<0,001$.

Rozhodovanie – skromné/odhodlané

Kruskal-Wallis H testy identifikovali signifikantné rozdiely v politických aspiráciách pre dominantnú črtu nízkych/odhodlaných. Signifikantné rozdiely boli zistené medzi respondentmi, ktorí boli mierne odhodlaní (-1) s mediánom politickej aspirácie 1,6929, a tými, ktorí boli mierne skromní (1) s mediánom 3. Tento rozdiel bol významný pri $p=0,009$.

Rozdiely boli zaznamenané aj medzi mierne slabými respondentmi (1) a nerozhodnými (0), s významnými výsledkami pri $p=0,009$. Veľmi odhodlaní respondenti (-3) sa výrazne líšili od mierne skromných účastníkov, s $p=0,006$.

Záver rozboru vlastností žiakov

Analýza 92 vlastností študentov a ich politických aspirácií odhaľuje významné zistenia. Prevládali dominantné črty „čeliť riziku“ a „prijímať rozhodnutia“. Rôzne dominantné črty vykazovali rôzne politické aspirácie: nesystematickí jednotlivci ašpirovali na vedenie, zatiaľ čo úhl'adni jednotlivci uprednostňovali participáciu. Odhodlaní jedinci sa prikláňali k vodcovstvu, zatiaľ čo jedinci s nízkym kľúčom mali väčší sklon k účasti. Tieto zistenia naznačujú, že osobnostné črty ovplyvňujú politické aspirácie, ponúkajú pohľady na výchovu budúcich vodcov a zosúladenie ich črt s politickými rolami. Pochopenie týchto vlastností môže pomôcť pri rozvoji vodcovstva a politickej angažovanosti medzi študentmi generácie Z v Albánsku.

Výsledky prípadových štúdií ôsmich lídrov

Budeme analyzovať vodcov tak, že preskúmame, ako sú opísaní v tlači alebo knihách, pomocou prídavných mien, ktoré zodpovedajú špecifickým črtám. Každá charakteristika má v našej tabuľke priradené číslo a súhrn odhalí najdominantnejšiu vlastnosť každého vodcu. Tabuľka 7 poskytuje súhrn hodnotení ôsmich prominentných albánskych lídrov, pričom zdôrazňuje ich dominantné črty.

Tabuľka 7: Porovnanie dominantných vlastností študentov s vlastnosťami skúsených vodcov:

Vodca	Prijímanie rozhodnutí	Medziľudské vzťahy a narábanie s informáciami	Riadenie zmeny a tempa	Čeliť riziku
Ismail Qemali	-12	-15	+12	-15
Fan Noli	-9	-12	+15	-9
Ahmet Zogu	-3	3	-6	0
Enver Hoxha	-9	+6	0	+24
Sali Berisha	-6	+3	-3	+6
Fatos Nano	-3	-6	-3	0
Ilir Meta	-12	-6	0	0
Edi Rama	-15	-15	+3	0

Vlastné spracovanie výsledkov výskumu

Tieto hodnotenia sú odvodené z rôznych historických a novinárskych záznamov, čo umožňuje porovnanie medzi lídrami. Je dôležité poznamenať, že materiály použité na tieto hodnotenia neboli jednotne analyzované tými istými historikmi, analytikmi alebo novinármi. V dôsledku toho môžu byť niektoré hodnotenia neúplné, najmä v prípade vedúcich predstaviteľov, ktorí sú stále aktívni a vo funkcii, kvôli absencii konzistentnej a podrobnej analýzy. Táto variabilita podčiarkuje potrebu obozretnej interpretácie výsledkov.

Spoločné črty týchto vodcov:

Rozhodovanie:

Vo všeobecnosti väčšina lídrov vykazuje určitú úroveň boja s asertivitou a rozhodnosťou so skóre v rozmedzí od -3 do -15. To naznačuje spoločnú črtu zápasenia s rozhodovaním alebo váhavosťou vo vedúcich úlohách.

Medziľudské vzťahy:

Prevládajúca téma výziev pri budovaní efektívnych vzťahov a orientácii v politickej dynamike medzi lídrami so skóre v rozmedzí od -6 do -15. To naznačuje ťažkosti s presvedčaním, inšpiráciou a vytváraním zmysluplných spojení s ostatnými.

Správa zmien a tempa:

Väčšina lídrov vykazuje silné stránky v prispôsobivosti, proaktivite a ostražitosti voči zmenám so skóre v rozmedzí od +3 do +15. To naznačuje spoločnú črtu prosperovania v dynamických prostrediach a agilného riadenia prechodov.

Čeliť riziku:

Medzi lídrmi existuje variabilita, pokiaľ ide o ich prístup k riziku, pričom skóre sa pohybuje od -9 do +24. Celkový trend však naznačuje ochotu podstúpiť v prípade potreby vypočítané riziká, vyvážené prvkami opatrnosti a pragmatizmu.

Títo lídri zdieľajú charakteristiky, ako sú problémy s rozhodovaním a medziľudské vzťahy, pričom zároveň preukazujú silné stránky v prispôsobivosti a čelia riziku, aj keď v rôznej miere. Porovnanie dominantných črt významných historických osobností v Albánsku odhaľuje niekoľko vzorov. Pri rozhodovaní Qemali, Fan Noli a Sali Berisha vykazujú negatívne vlastnosti, čo naznačuje váhavosť alebo agresivitu. Naproti tomu Ahmet Zogu a Fatos Nano vykazujú vypočítavé rozhodovanie, zatiaľ čo Enver Hodža a Ilir Meta prejavujú asertivitu a vodcovstvo. Medziľudské vzťahy a zaobchádzanie s informáciami predstavujú výzvy pre Qemali, Fan Noli a Edi Rama, čo naznačuje problémy s komunikáciou a otvorenosťou. Ahmet Zogu a Enver Hodža však v tomto smere vykazujú vyrovnanejšie črty. Pri zvládaní zmien a tempa Ahmet Zogu vyniká prispôsobivosťou a obratnosťou, kým Qemali a Fan Noli zápasia s prispôsobovaním sa zmenám. Keď čelí riziku, Enver Hodža prejavuje silný sklon k riskovaniu, zatiaľ čo Qemali, Fan Noli a Edi Rama prejavujú opatrnosť a nepohodlie s rizikom.

Vo všeobecnosti tieto vlastnosti poskytujú pohľad na ich štýly vedenia a historické činy.

Porovnanie vlastností študentov so skúsenými vodcami

Porovnanie črt študentov s črtami skúsených vodcov odhaľuje zaujímavé podobnosti a rozdiely:

Tabuľka 8: Porovnanie dominantných vlastností študentov s vlastnosťami skúsených vodcov:

Kategória vlastností	Študenti	Ostriel'aní lídri
Rozhodovanie	Rôznorodá asertivita a odhodlanie	Zmes rozhodnosti, váhavosti a agresivity
Manipulácia s ľuďmi a informáciami	Výzvy v komunikácii	Zmes výziev a vyvážených vlastností v medziľudskej dynamike
Riadenie zmien a tempa	Pestrá prispôsobivosť a obratnosť	Zmes prispôsobivosti a odolnosti voči zmenám
Čeliť riziku	Mix sklonu k riziku	Kombinácia riskovania a opatrnosti

Vlastné spracovanie výsledkov výskumu

Rozhodovanie:

Študenti: Dominantnou črtou medzi študentmi je často rozhodovanie s rôznou úrovňou asertivity a odhodlania.

Skúsení vodcovia: Niektorí skúsení vodcovia vykazujú podobné črty rozhodnosti a odhodlania, zatiaľ čo iní vykazujú črty váhavosti alebo agresivity. Celkovo medzi skúsenými lídrami existuje zmes štýlov vedenia.

Zaobchádzanie s ľuďmi a informáciami:

Študenti: Medzi študentmi má tendenciu byť negatívny trend v črtách súvisiacich s medziľudskými vzťahmi a zaobchádzaním s informáciami, čo naznačuje výzvy v komunikácii a otvorenosť novým nápadom.

Skúsení lídri: Podobne niektorí skúsení lídri vykazujú črty naznačujúce ťažkosti v medziľudských vzťahoch a manipulácii s informáciami, zatiaľ čo iní vykazujú v týchto oblastiach vyvázenejšie črty, ktoré odrážajú ich schopnosť orientovať sa v komplexnej sociálnej a informačnej dynamike.

Správa zmien a tempa:

Študenti: Znaky súvisiace s riadením zmien a tempom sa medzi študentmi líšia, pričom niektorí vykazujú prispôsobivosť a agilnosť, zatiaľ čo iní preukazujú problémy pri prispôbovaní sa zmenám.

Skúsení lídri: Skúsení lídri majú rôzne skóre v riadení zmien a tempa. Niektoré vykazujú pozitívne črty spojené s prispôsobivosťou, zatiaľ čo iné vykazujú črty naznačujúce odolnosť voči zmenám.

Čeliť riziku:

Študenti: Medzi študentmi existuje zmes postojov k riziku, pričom niektorí vykazujú sklony k riskovaniu a nezávislosti, zatiaľ čo iní prejavujú opatrnosť alebo nepohodlie s rizikom.

Skúsení lídri: Podobne ako študenti, aj skúsení lídri prejavujú rôzne postoje k riziku. Niektorí prejavujú ochotu riskovať a robiť odvážne rozhodnutia, zatiaľ čo iní prejavujú opatrnosť a preferujú stabilitu.

Aj keď existujú podobnosti medzi vlastnosťami študentov a skúsených vodcov, existujú aj výrazné rozdiely. Študenti môžu vykazovať črty, ktoré sa zhodujú s črtami skúsených lídrov alebo sú v protiklade, čo odráža rôznorodosť štýlov vedenia a prístupov v rámci danej populácie. Okrem toho porovnanie poukazuje na potenciál rastu a rozvoja vodcovských schopností, keď jednotlivci postupujú od študentského veku k skúseným vedúcim úlohám.

Porovnanie vlastností lídrov a študentov generácie Z:

Dominancia a politické ambície:

Lídri aj študenti generácie Z vykazujú silné črty v rozhodovaní a riskovaní, čo naznačuje, že rozhodnosť a hodnotenie rizika prevládajú v oboch skupinách.

Vplyv na politické ambície:

Dominantné črty študentov korelujú s ich politickými ambíciami. Podobne črty lídrov v rozhodovaní a riskovaní ovplyvňujú ich štýly vedenia a politické stratégie.

Význam črt v politických aspiráciách:

Črty ako rozhodovanie a rozhodnosť sú kľúčové pri formovaní politických aspirácií študentov generácie Z a zohrávajú významnú úlohu v prístupe lídrov k politike.

Dôsledky pre vedenie a politiku:

Osobnostné črty môžu jednotlivcov predurčovať na konkrétne politické úlohy. Pochopenie týchto vlastností pomáha pri výchove budúcich vodcov a pri zosúladovaní ich charakteristík s požiadavkami politického vedenia.

Porovnávacie štatistiky:

Enver Hodža s vysokým skóre v riskovaní (+24) sa zhoduje s dominantnými črtami študentov, čo naznačuje spoločnú ochotu zvládať neistotu. Ismail Qemali a Fan Noli preukazujú zameranie na rozhodovanie (-12 a -9), podobne ako študenti, napriek ich boju s asertivitou. To zdôrazňuje spoločné črty rozhodovania medzi oboma skupinami, aj keď sa úrovne asertivity líšia

5 Diskusia

Naša výskumná diskusia zahŕňa niekoľko kľúčových aspektov:

Analýza vodcovských vlastností:

Analyzujeme tlačové a literárne opisy lídrov so zameraním na prídavné mená zodpovedajúce vopred určeným črtám, aby sme identifikovali ich dominantné charakteristiky.

Porovnanie s aspiráciami mládeže:

Skúmame aspirácie mladých ľudí v národnej a medzinárodnej politike, porovnávame ich s črtami minulých a súčasných lídrov, aby sme zistili, či nová generácia má vlastnosti, ktoré sa lepšie hodia na vedenie Albánska.

Výskumné metódy:

Náš výskum zahŕňa prieskum 92 študentov z Tirana Business University a prípadovú štúdiu ôsmich prominentných albánskych politických lídrov. Prieskum zhromažďuje kvantitatívne údaje o tom, ako študenti vnímajú vlastnosti, ako je rozhodovanie, spracovanie informácií, riadenie zmien a podstupovanie rizika. Prípadová štúdia zahŕňa hĺbkovú analýzu dokumentov a kódovanie špecifických atribútov na pochopenie štýlov vedenia vybraných lídrov.

Hodnotiaca tabuľka:

Používame podrobnú hodnotiacu tabuľku, ktorá sa zameriava na štyri vodcovské črty: rozhodovanie, zaobchádzanie s novými ľuďmi a informáciami, zvládanie zmien a tempa a čelenie riziku, s 20 charakteristikami pre každú črtu, aby sme mohli komplexne posúdiť štýly vedenia.

Objektívna a subjektívna analýza:

Analýza kombinuje objektívne údaje z historických zdrojov a subjektívne úsudky založené na zavedených konvenciách hodnotenia vodcovských vlastností.

Celkovo je cieľom nášho výskumu objasniť dynamiku vodcovstva v Albánsku, posúdiť potenciál nových vodcov a poskytnúť pohľad na efektívne vodcovské kvality pre budúcnosť krajiny.

Záver

Cieľom nášho výskumu bolo preskúmať vodcovské črty bývalých a súčasných albánskych lídrov a porovnať ich s generáciou Z a miléniami. Toto porovnanie sa snažilo identifikovať vlastnosti, ktoré by mohli podporiť dlhodobý mier, inkluzívne spoločnosti a trvalo udržateľný rozvoj, keďže Albánsko postupuje smerom k vstupu do EÚ.

Začali sme poskytnutím kontextu albánskej histórie, ekonomiky a politického prostredia. Naša metodika zahŕňala prieskum medzi 100 študentmi Tiranskej obchodnej univerzity a prípadovú štúdiu ôsmich významných albánskych politických lídrov. Prieskum zhromaždil údaje o vlastnostiach študentov pri rozhodovaní, spracovaní informácií, riadení tempa a riskovaní. Prípadová štúdia zahŕňala hĺbkovú analýzu historických dokumentov s cieľom posúdiť rovnaké črty u vybraných lídrov.

Naším cieľom bolo zistiť, či nová generácia vykazuje iné alebo lepšie vlastnosti pre budúce vedenie. Zahrnuli sme aj dotazník Likertovej škály o Enverovi Hodžovi, aby sme prehĺbili naše chápanie dynamiky vedenia v Albánsku.

Medzi kľúčové zistenia a dôsledky patria:

- **Pochopenie štýlov vedenia:** Analýza vlastností pomáha identifikovať efektívne štýly vedenia a oblasti osobného rozvoja.
- **Výchova budúcich lídrov:** Rozpoznanie vplyvných črt u študentov, pomoc pri prispôsobovaní programov vedenia na rozvoj rozhodovania, hodnotenia rizík a medziľudských zručností.
- Podpora politickej angažovanosti: Pochopenie prepojenia medzi črtami a politickými aspiráciami môže viesť iniciatívy na zvýšenie politickej účasti mládeže.
- Budovanie rôznorodých vedúcich tímov: Zdôraznenie rozmanitosti vlastností podporuje vytváranie vyvážených a inovatívnych vedúcich tímov.

- Zdôraznenie rozvoja vodcovstva: Prebiehajúce iniciatívy, ako je mentorstvo a školenia, sú kľúčové pre zdokonaľovanie vodcovských zručností a riešenie zložitých výziev.
- Podpora inkluzívnych politických priestorov: Vytváranie inkluzívneho prostredia, ktoré zahŕňa rôzne štýly vedenia, zvyšuje schopnosť riešiť spoločenské potreby.

Pochopenie vodcovských čŕt u vodcov aj študentov môže viesť k rozvoju vodcovstva, vzdelávaniu a politickej angažovanosti, čo pomáha kultivovať novú generáciu efektívnych a inkluzívnych vodcov.

Rozvoj efektívnych a inkluzívnych lídrov v Albánsku si vyžaduje neustále odhodlanie, inovácie a spoluprácu. Využitím poznatkov z tejto štúdie a implementáciou odporúčaných stratégií môžeme kultivovať lídrov schopných viesť pozitívne zmeny a orientovať sa v moderných zložitostiach. Toto úsilie podporí vstup Albánska do EÚ, posilní demokratické inštitúcie a vybuduje prosperujúcu a inkluzívnu spoločnosť. Budúcnosť vedenia Albánska závisí od toho, či umožní mladým ľuďom naplno využiť ich potenciál.

Limity štúdie

Hoci štúdia ponúka cenné poznatky, je potrebné uznať niekoľko obmedzení. Vzorka 92 študentov generácie Z nemusí reprezentovať celú albánsku generáciu Z, čo obmedzuje zovšeobecnenie výsledkov. Väčšia a rôznorodejšia vzorka by poskytla širší pohľad. Hodnotenia historických vodcov sa spoliehajú na subjektívne interpretácie a vlastnosti študentov, ktoré si sami uviedli, môžu predstavovať zaujatosť. Kultúrne predsudky v albánskom kontexte môžu obmedziť použiteľnosť výsledkov na iné regióny a porovnávanie historických osobností so súčasnými študentmi môže prehliadať dôležité kontextové rozdiely.

Významné spoločenské, technologické a politické rozdiely sťažujú porovnanie študentov generácie Z s historickými lídrami. Použitie sémantických diferenciálov a ordinálnych stupníc nemusí zachytiť celú zložitosť vlastností a jemnejšie miery by mohli poskytnúť lepšie pochopenie. Zameranie sa primárne na politické aspirácie prehliada ďalšie dôležité aspekty vedenia, ako je etika, odolnosť a emocionálna inteligencia.

Smery budúceho výskumu

Na vyriešenie týchto obmedzení by budúci výskum mal rozšíriť veľkosť vzorky a rozmanitosť zahrnutím väčšej a rozmanitejšej skupiny študentov. Prístupy zmiešanej metódy kombinujúce kvantitatívne a kvalitatívne údaje môžu zvýšiť objektivitu a poskytnúť

komplexnú analýzu. Medzikultúrne štúdie pomôžu identifikovať univerzálne a kultúrne špecifické vodcovské črty, zatiaľ čo dlhodobý výskum môže sledovať vývoj týchto črt v priebehu času.

Skúmanie ďalších dimenzií, ako je etické vedenie, emocionálna inteligencia a odolnosť, poskytne ucelenejší pohľad na efektivitu vedenia. Skúmanie vplyvu digitálnej transformácie a globalizácie na vodcovské črty je nevyhnutné na pochopenie toho, ako sa súčasní a budúci lídri dokážu orientovať v moderných zložitostiach.

Naša komparatívna analýza študentov generácie Z a historických albánskych lídrov dáva základ pre ďalší výskum. Budúce štúdie by sa mali zamerať na sledovanie rozvoja vodcovských vlastností medzi generáciou Z, aby sa vyhodnotil dlhodobý vplyv vzdelávacích intervencií, mentorstva a školenia. Medzikultúrne štúdie poskytnú informácie o stratégiách globálneho vedenia a zdôraznia regionálne rozdiely v črtách a politickej angažovanosti v Albánsku.

Zdôrazňovanie rozmanitosti a inklúzie pri rozvoji vodcovstva je kľúčové. Skúmanie rodovo špecifických výziev, sociálno-ekonomických vplyvov a prekážok, ktorým čelia znevýhodnení študenti, pomôže navrhnúť stratégie na prekonanie týchto prekážok. Skúmanie vplyvu digitálnych technológií, AI, VR a gamifikácia na tréning vodcovstva môže zlepšiť zručnosti a podporiť politickú angažovanosť.

Spolupráca medzi zainteresovanými stranami je nevyhnutná. Vzdelávacie inštitúcie by mali začleniť praktický rozvoj vodcovstva do učebných osnov. Vládne agentúry by mali podporovať vedenie mládeže a politickú angažovanosť, zatiaľ čo neziskové organizácie môžu navrhovať programy zamerané na vodcovstvo, občiansku angažovanosť a komunitné služby. Súkromný sektor môže ponúkať stáže a zážitkové vzdelávanie prostredníctvom iniciatív sociálnej zodpovednosti podnikov.

Riešením týchto obmedzení a rozšírením výskumu môžeme do budúcnosti vyvinúť efektívnejších a adaptabilnejších lídrov

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