European Institutions, Human Rights, and Democracy in Albania

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Abstract

This paper concerns the development of basic human rights and democratization in Albania and upcoming challenges ahead, which reveal how there are still concerns to improve upon existing legal, social, and political structures to foster a climate of change. These are of even more concern if Albania wishes to become a full-fledged EU member. Promoting positive change through cooperative efforts with the EU and the Council of Europe are some important factors involved in stabilizing Albania enough for possible membership, with respect to resolving human rights and democratization issues spelled out in the Copenhagen Criteria.

Key Words: Albania, human rights, democratization, European Union, Copenhagen Criteria.

Introduction: What difference do European institutions make for human rights and democracy in Albania, and how well have these institutions worked to improve human rights in Albania over the past few decades? First, human rights and democratization are important factors for the world as a whole; For example, the link between democracy and human rights is captured in article 21(3) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states:

> *"The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures"*(UN, 2014).

Second, the European Union (EU) believes that democracy and human rights are universal values that should be vigorously promoted around the world. They are integral to effective work on poverty alleviation and conflict prevention and resolution, in addition to being valuable bulwarks against terrorism. Having come into force on 1 January 2007, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) is the concrete expression of the EU's intention to integrate the promotion of democracy and human rights into all of its external policies (European Commission, 2012). And finally, in a general sense, human

rights and democratization are important factors for not only Albania, but the world as a whole, since both concepts are essential to the acceptance among the international community about the centrality of human rights and their importance in democracy and development.

This research utilizes several themes: specifically, political, economic, and social stability, connect to explain the EU's role in promoting democracy and human rights and combine to explain the European community's role in promoting democracy and human right in Albania. Additionally, several overarching themes such as political stability, stable industries, corruption, illegal activities involving the black market, organized crime, tourism, electoral legitimacy, and improving the rights of specific minorities, connect certain subcategories affecting EU and the Council of Europe and also explain how particular subcategories affect the European Union and the Council of Europe; additionally, of importance is Albania's Industries, Reducing Corruption and Enlargement Fatigue, Increasing Political Stability, Reducing Illegitimate Markets, and Reforming the Judiciary. The dependent variable for this study is how the impact of human rights and democratization efforts in Albania affect the implementation of European Union and Council of Europe approaches. More specifically, one can examine how the EU and the Council of Europe regard Albania's efforts to legitimize judicial and political institutions, reduce corruption, stabilize industries, and improve human rights from a bottom-up approach. First, this research defines human rights according to the Copenhagen criteria under the European Union:

3. *The Copenhagen criteria.*

The Copenhagen criteria, which were adopted by the EU member states on June 22, 1993, spell out the membership conditions for countries that aspire to join the Union. The paragraph that sets the criteria reads:

"Membership requires that the candidate country has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for the protection of minorities, the existence of a functioning *market economy* as well as the *capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces* within the Union (European Council in Copenhagen, 1993).

With its two halves corresponding to the "political" and "economic" criteria for membership, respectively, the paragraph reveals the EU's human rights approach in two important ways. First, politically, human rights are effectively defined as those rights limited to civil and political rights (and all related documents and discussions about meeting the membership criteria reflect this

1 narrow definition of human rights). Second, economically, members are expected to demonstrate their commitment to the market economy and market forces by privatizing state

[1] The bias in favor of civil and political rights is clear in the wording of reports issued annually to assess the progress in candidate countries. The 2007 progress report on Turkey, for example, allocates more or less the same number of pages to the discussion of civil and political rights and economic and social rights (5 and 6.5 pages, respectively) under the heading of "Human Rights and Protection of Minorities." What is included under the economic and social rights sub-heading, however, largely corresponds to the adherence to the non-discrimination principle and addresses progress (or there lack of) with regard to the rights of women, disabled people, minorities, and internationally displaced persons, as well as regional gaps. Conventional economic and social rights, such as the right to social security, health and health care, employment, livable wages, are omitted; labor and property rights are discussed on the same single page; and education is addressed in relation to children's rights that are covered in slightly over a page. economic enterprises and social services, reducing government spending, liberalizing trade, ensuring labor flexibility, and enacting other measures that limit government control (Arat and Smith, 2007). Finally, democracy is defined as the following, according to guidelines covered by the Council of Europe:

- freedom and equality as fundamental human rights;

- popular sovereignty (government and government policies dependent on the will of the people);

- a set of political institutions whereby governmental decision-making depends on the will of the people, particularly a system of political representation by regularly elected parliaments; political parties constitute a core element of representation as they actively transform political preferences and interests into governmental programs and provide candidates for the offices responsible for carrying them out. Possible additional institutions include presidents, constitutional courts, etc., and there are as well, of course, the elements of direct democracy, such as forms of legislative initiative and referendum;

- an informal pattern of civil society initiatives, groups and organizations (pluralism) which formulate, aggregate and express a wide range of preferences, wishes and interests of the people and fuel public deliberations on the problems and issues of everyday life (Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, 2012).

Specifically, some of the important suggestions for measuring the effects of such institutions as the EU and the Council of Europe on human rights and democratization involve devising a policy outcome score sheet for relative success. Particularly, all of this information could be used to implement a series of approaches from both institutions to explain the potential of European organizations to promote the connection of human rights and democracy in Albania. Furthermore, the EU's role here can be revealed with the goal of achieving political (electoral legitimacy, fair justice systems, reducing corruption), economic (stable industries, tourism, reducing illegal activities involving the black market)

and social stability (improving minority rights, improving the status of grassroots organizations).

Since we are examining the effects of human rights and democratization, we will begin to explain how these structures have strived for the betterment of human rights efforts in recent years by emphasizing the overarching themes mentioned above within the realms of political, social and economic stability. Additionally, the subcategories mentioned under these three primary areas affect the EU and the Council of Europe in various ways. For example, in terms of Albania, writers such as Vaso and Aldrich are concerned with how the European Union affects the democratization process in brand-new member states, particularly Albania, with regard to human rights. Becoming an EU member is a multi-step process involving many parameters, not the least of which is improving overall standards, laws, and ensuring greater equality for all citizens. Economic factors also are a concern, as the EU membership is likely to benefit those who decide to join, bringing their economies into the fore with other, more established member states, for example democracy and human rights are what primarily concern the researcher here. The great challenge for states seeking membership is to set aside some of their own goals while accepting the demands of the EU towards full compliance in conjunction with overall democratic initiatives as defined by EU policies in place. Albania is one nation that has struggled under oppressive regimes influenced by the Soviet model during the Cold War, some of which ideas are still evident and which need to be adjusted towards democratic initiatives in order for the EU to be satisfied that this country is ready to move towards eventual membership. Proper development of social norms, reducing corruption, and strengthening a solid rule-of-law that stands on its own also remain areas in need of improvement, especially within the context of understanding how Southeastern Europe has developed differently from the rest of the continent in terms of coming from a slightly different set of cultural and historical influences, with respect to tying this into a greater vision that encompasses all of Europe as a whole (Vaso and Aldrich, 2008).

Although there are numerous institutions under the umbrella of the Council of Europe and the European Union, we will reference only a select few that are relevant to this article and their impact on democratization and human rights efforts. There are a number of such organizations, but they include among them, for example, the Parliamentary Assembly under the Council of Europe and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the Copenhagen Criteria, which both fall under the guise of the European Union (Arat and Smith, 2007). Institutions such as these have the type of impact that goes with the challenges of impending EU membership and the common issues that arise with newly-emerging economies after many years of isolation, stagnation and lack of solid, developed industries.

Thus, taking on such issues as human rights and democratization remain essential to improving the economic, political and social stability of Albania.

Albania's Industries: In this section, we seek to evaluate how the EU and Council of Europe interventions involved several institutions that advanced relations with organizations promoting human rights and democratization efforts in Albania. We will also examine how this impacted relations with EU and Council of Europe programming and how adopting such Western European practices towards modernization and tourism, in response to the influx of tourists and visitors from abroad, brought improvements to the economy overall. We also seek to explore how the potential for success exists within a structured Europe and identify how the European community's approach, in contrast to its actual policies, affected Albania in general. Several factors come to mind when examining Albania's industries. These include specific industries that directly impact the nation as a whole, such as tourism and mining. In fact, tourism and mining and/or developing natural resources, like bauxite and nickel, are essential to the development of human rights and democratization in Albania. These factors are important because contaminates seep into the groundwater and harms the local population or minority populations. There have been too many mining sites which leak waste products and seeps into groundwater, affecting the population. Mining waste is important and relates to environmental contamination. In turn, it affects the local environment and happens because of a lack of regulation, corruption, and payoffs. These two independent variables can be defined by the organizations that regulate them. The European Council on Tourism and Trade (under the EU) define tourism under the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism by World Tourism Organization as "the activity most frequently associated with rest and relaxation, sport and access to culture and nature" (1999). As part of its initiatives to promote ethical practices, in addition to contributing to a healthy environment, the ECTT highly recommends tourists to practice sustainable tourism under its guidelines, which remain essential to countries such as Albania that seek to join the EU as member states at some point in the near future (ECTT, 2012). Another critical part of Albania's economy is mining, which is regulated by the European Association of Mining Industries, Metal Ores & Industrial Minerals, BRGM, under the guidance of the European

Union, which defines a mine as the following: A technical (hence universal) definition of a mine includes all developments, structure and ore-extraction and-processing equipment, as well as all temporary and permanent storage dumps for materials and/or waste resulting from the exploitation and upgrading of a mineral resources…A mine is a raw-material production site that comprises the phases of ore extraction from the deposit to the concentration of the useful mineral (BRGM, 2001).

One of the areas of concern in this study is the issue of waste management from mines in Albania, which continues to be a topic which Albania must address as a membership condition to join the EU. For the purposes of this study, "waste" and "management are defined in the following way under the European Economic Community 1975 Council Directive on Waste:

(a) 'waste' shall mean any substance or object in the categories set out in Annex I which the holder discards or intends or is required to discard…

(b) 'management' shall mean the collection, transport, recovery and disposal of waste, including the supervision of such operations and after-care of disposal sites…

ANNEX I

Categories of Waste:

Q1 Production or consumption residues not otherwise specified below

Q2 Off-specification products

Q3 Products whose date for appropriate use has expired

Q4 Materials spilled, lost or having undergone other mishap, including any materials, equipment, etc., contaminated as a result of the mishap

Q5 Materials contaminated or soiled as a result of planned actions (e.g. residues from cleaning operations, packing materials, containers, etc.)

Q6 Unusable parts (e.g. reject batteries, exhausted catalysts, etc.)

Q7 Substances which no longer perform satisfactorily (e.g. contaminated acids, contaminated solvents, exhausted tempering salts, etc.)

Q8 Residues of industrial processes (e.g. slags, still bottoms, etc.)

Q9 Residues from pollution abatement processes (e.g. scrubber sludges, baghouse dusts, spent filters, etc.)

Q10 Machining/finishing residues (e.g. lathe turnings, mill scales, etc.)

Q11 Residues from raw materials extraction and processing (e.g. mining residues, oil field slops, etc.)

Q12 Adulterated materials (e.g. oils contaminated with PCBs, etc.)

Q13 Any materials, substances or products whose use has been banned by law

Q14 Products for which the holder has no further use (e.g. agricultural, household, office, commercial and shop discards, etc.)

Q15 Contaminated materials, substances or products resulting from remedial action with respect to land

Q16 Any materials, substances or products which are not contained in the above categories (Council of the European Communities, 1975).

In addition, several mining areas of concern are outlined in a UNEP report released in the early 2000s that have not been fully addressed (Peck and Zinke, 2006).

Under democratization and human rights, several institutions involved with these issues impact EU and Council of Europe programming in particular ways. We have mentioned institutions and guidelines such as ECTT, the Copenhagen Criteria, and the EU mining organization named above, for the EU to follow and for EU candidate and member states to model their environmental and economic policies around. These are issues that continue to affect human rights and democratization, for pollution gets into the groundwater and effects poor minority communities, for instance, and unauthorized dumping of waste or improperly regulated sites continue to be the result of corrupt business practices brought on by ill-enforced environmental policies. That is merely one example of how the political, social

and economic stability issues are linked together. The EU must continue to discover proper enforcement mechanisms for each of these areas or dictate consistent policy, which will be discussed ahead. However, as a whole, significant information exists on how travel and visitors push Albania to adapt Western European practices in many ways, such as the improvements that modernization and tourism bring to the economy overall. In turn, Albania's future is looking brighter on the horizon.

In fact, Transparency International (TI) has reported that Albania has made great strides in becoming a livable economy since the Communist regime's collapse in the early 1990s (Henley, 2009). Beforehand, the country was so politically repressive that seemingly any hint of opposition to laws was punishable by lengthy jail terms. However, now that free enterprise has moved in, technology is catching up, the economy has drastically improved, and the country is moving towards possible EU accession at some point in the future. The country is still listed as 95th out of 180 in a corruption index; however, this is still much better than before, and electricity is widely available, along with affordable automobiles, to the point that the country actually exports power to Greece (Henley, 2009).

On another note, the potential for success exists within a structured Europe and for the European community to act, in contrast to its actual policies, as stated above, since the EU and organizations like it must set an example of fair standards across the board and develop policy consistent with each member without imposing an undue burden on one hand for potential members and an easier path to membership on the other for other EU members-in-waiting.

Reducing Corruption, Enlargement Fatigue: Reducing political and legal corruption and having better accountability mechanisms for disposal of hazardous materials remain important factors to consider for EU membership for Albania. In particular, this is all tied together with tightening environmental regulations. Some other areas of improvement include investment and tourism, which have helped significantly. For example, in terms of coastal development, the country aims to build its economy through tourism along the coast. That attracts investment dollars and raises the capital for infrastructure and quality of life improvements for a percentage of the individuals working in jobs related to travel. All of these remain essential to reducing "enlargement fatigue" in the eyes of the Council of Europe and the EU. So far, the EU decided to extend Albania the right to accession talks about meeting with all members, provided that the nation increase rule of law, decrease corruption, increase independence of the judiciary, and have protections in place for the media (Euroactiv Albania, 2010). The bar has been raised for more recent member states as well, which makes permanent member status a more challenging process than in previous decades. In terms of combating illegitimate markets, without stable industries and political stability in Albania, there is liable to be more corruption. Specifically, for example, without tourism income, the population relies more heavily on smuggled goods, contraband trades, human trafficking, counterfeit products, and underground industries. This dynamic then compounds the corruption issues among many types of government officials on the take. For example, a recent IRDA survey indicated that corruption was still on the rise in

Albania. 91% of those surveyed believed Albania still had corruption in the government jobs, with the health profession being the worst. Most said obtaining court information was difficult, with a great deal also believing that the media did the most to expose corruption (SE Times, 2010). TI states that fighting corruption in Albania takes a collective effort, including politicians, the people, and grassroots groups. TI, at one point, met with Berisha to discuss anti-corruption initiatives in three areas, including political will and leadership, reforms made parallel to economic initiatives, and a civil society effort to pressure the state to make changes (Souza, 2010). Additionally, increasing electoral legitimacy remains an essential component of improving human rights, along with significant grassroots participation and involving all members of a population demographic into society. Hence, with increasing political stability comes the reduced chances of counterfeiting products, vote-buying, and pushes back the chances of having a black market full of illegitimate products or involvement by organized crime. With few stable industries in Albania, corruption remains more of a problem, compounded by the fact that the policies of both the Council of Europe and the EU hinder human rights and democratization efforts there. In fact, a 2006 study showed that corruption had been rampant in Albania at all levels; organized crime linked with elites and expanded outward to become savvier (Irrera, 2006). The EU and other law enforcement agencies believe the Balkan state is the most corrupt in the region. Organized crime has infiltrated many police and government offices, even customs and border agents to strike deals and circumvent laws (2006). Adding to the issue of organized crime is the concept of blood feuds between families that have gone on for decades. This idea goes back over five hundred years and originates in the isolated hills of northern Albania at a time when there were few laws of any kind, where the only form of political stability that existed was a feudal one put in place by local leaders and tribesmen of various villages and towns. This custom of killing the eldest male child (and possibly other male relatives thereafter) as a form of reparations or payment for crimes committed by one family against another mushroomed into an endless string of killings between families that spanned over generations and continues to this day, having spread to other parts of the country, including areas around the capital, Tirana (Freeman, 2010). This concept, which remained dormant under communism for a time but re-emerged after the breakup of the former Yugoslavia and the Iron Curtain in Eastern Europe fell, exacerbates the issue of already trying to present the country as a safe destination for tourists and has a negative effect on profits begat from those Albanians making their livelihood from the tourism industry in general (Bozgo et al., 2002).

Economic growth and democratic initiatives are also hampered by organized crime; even the Stability Pact did little to add to the stability of the country in general. An analysis of the political, economic, and social connections to organized crime are discussed. Additionally, without tourism income, the population tends to turn to the black market and underground industries, which doubly compounds corruption issues amongst government officials engaging in illegal tactics. For example, many of the issues of the black market's tie-in to organized crime are chronicled as common (though exaggerated) examples in the *Taken* movies, where Liam Neeson's character (Bryan Mills) is dispatched to Europe in

several work trips and battles an Albanian crime family that engages in human trafficking. After Neeson's character eliminates several members of the crime family, the concept of blood feuds is also taken to the extreme when the head of the Albanian family uses every means possible to eliminate Neeson and his family members. Though the movies are a bit stereotypical, crime, blood feuds, and the black market are all very real issues in several parts of Albania that contribute to Albania's current problems and are all pieces of the platform required for reform regarding Albania's entry into the European Union at some point (Alpion and Schwartz, 2012).

Increasing electoral legitimacy remains an essential component of improving human rights, along with significant grassroots participation. For example, because of political deadlock over two competing political parties disputing the 2010 elections, there was basically a political stalemate between the Democratic and the Socialist parties, who are accusing each other of fraud; the parliament in Albania had gotten to the point that laws had not been passed and members also went on a hunger strike (EU Mediators, 2010). The situation called for an emergency meeting in Strasbourg in which top EU mediators invited the two opposition groups to dinner to discuss a resolution. The consequences for non-compliance could be suspension from joining the EU (2010). Additionally, a strong, healthy activist movement is essential to improving society as a whole, one that involves all population demographic members in society. Albania, after so many years of isolation, is finally approaching the light of day in terms of fully developing its civil society, since the country was isolated for so many years under its dictatorship of the 1990s. The public call for improved electoral accountability is beginning to fully realize its potential with the addition of election monitors and free and fair elections in recent years, with varying political movements gaining steam without fear of government suppression.

In addition, increasing political stability remains critical to righting the ship of Albania's electoral system and brings certain benefits with it, such as allowing equal representation of minority groups and including all members of a population demographic. For instance, a stable, fair electoral system contributes to a strong economy and reduces the chance of counterfeiting products and the incentive to engage in such activities. In addition, it decreases the chances of graft, of politicians buying votes to get ahead. Political parties will have fewer reasons to engage in unethical behavior with such measures as well. For example, in recent years, the Albanian Socialists boycotted parliament for a period of time in protest of election results at one point, which exacerbated the EU as well, prompting EU Enlargement Commissioner Ollie Rehn to say that "resolving a dispute for both major parties in the parliament was critical to ensuring success" (EU Greenlights Albania, 2009). In addition, increasing minority participation, just as well, reduces civil unrest among traditionally underrepresented groups, builds up the development of civil society groups (such as NGOs) and decreases the chances of discriminatory policies being passed. Further scrutiny with impending EU membership also tightens overall standards and weakens the demand for black market products or organized crime involvement. Such activities as smuggling or human trafficking also remain under the microscope as a problem that will see

a reduction in activity as Albania begins to move towards EU membership and cooperation with the Council of Europe. Greater efforts should also be made by NGOs to combat not only the issues of organized crime, human trafficking, and the concept of long-running blood feuds between families, but to instill a sense of pride amongst all Albanians to address basic human rights so that any of these problem areas can be significantly reduced (Bozgo et al., 2002). It remains to be seen if Albanian standards will continue to be on a high level, as the pressure from the EU and the increasing burden of taking on new challenges only contributes to the idea that the EU is facing some sort of enlargement fatigue from the effects of managing a considerable number of nations.

Increasing Political Stability, Reducing Illegitimate Markets, and Reforming the Judiciary: Organized crime activities and the black market continue to cause problems, to the detriment of human rights and democratization efforts in Albania. In fact, increasing political stability in Albania leads to more legitimacy within human rights and democratization efforts, which we can quantify in specific detail through each of the measures taken by the Council of Europe and the EU over the past few decades.

The attempts to add political legitimacy and contributing to a fair judiciary draw positive results for a number of industries, as visitors stay away from countries without stable police service and from neighborhoods mired in abject poverty that sometimes reflects ethnic discrimination. Having adequate numbers of law enforcement sufficiently trained is essential, including strong court systems as well for an effective criminal justice system and protecting minority groups to assist with integration into society. This includes patrolling border areas, as Albania has been granted access to visa-free travel in the Schengen area of Europe with biometric passports, which require only fingerprints and a photo ID (Castle and Dempsey, 2010). This is a big step for Albania in the right direction, which previously was denied this privilege in past times and means that the country is progressing towards reducing corruption. Along with other European countries, Albania having access to this area will allow large advantages for various states' citizens eligible for this status. It was anticipated that Albania would have been able to have most restrictions lifted for eligibility by the fall of 2010. The other criteria left for Albania are to address some immigration issues involving returnees' legal status and tightening measures to combat organized crime (Bosnia, Albania Visa-Free Travel, 2010). The state is fighting organized crime better than in the past and increasing border security. The visa system had proved ineffective, since people found ways around it, but the passport strategy seemed to be more efficient (Castle and Dempsey, 2010). This is also evidence of the enlargement fatigue the EU has been facing as it looks into the prospect of future members, requiring a more difficult process than before to ensure that potential member states clear certain hurdles before consideration is made. Developing a strong military and helping immigrants make a smooth transition into society without fear of reprisal are also critical.

In general, increased political stability brings certain benefits and benefits include reducing the chances of counterfeit products. There is less motivation for engaging in such affairs if the political system contains a stronger accountability mechanism, and this

atmosphere brings forth economic incentives that create a positive environment for emerging markets and overseas investors. For example, Albania has improved to some degree, according to a 2008 IMF report, in reducing financial risks for investment, but its levels of corruption have increased twofold (Gjergi, 2008). The country reports gains in having a better business climate for investors, but it still remains quite a corrupt country, with only a 3-4% GDP growth (2008). It had done better with securing investments than other European and some EU countries, but it still has a problem with lack of proper enforcement of laws and lack of accountability for high-level politicians. Vote buying must become a thing of the past for Albania to advance ahead as well. The political parties have begun to develop methods for reducing the chances of bribery, and the crackdown on enforcement of such violations has brought hope of more legitimate elections on the horizon.

Albania still has work to do in terms of decreasing the diffusing the black market and organized crime involvement. The country is rife with a culture of illegitimate products on the market that must be curtailed to some extent. This would include reducing incentives to sell black market products in general. For example, Albania is facing major hurdles in business investment. Entrepreneurs are not able to successfully grow their businesses legally as well as they do illegally. The UNDP presented a 2008 report which explains this and the fact that corruption prevents businesses from expanding, and that corruption by political elites and having a fair set of laws would benefit business development (UNDP, 2008). These include policy recommendations to combat corruption and cronyism, along with transparency in the legal process to ensure a better environment for economic growth (2008). Stifling black market demand would interfere with the ambitions of organized crime to expand their empire.

Reforming the judiciary also remains a primary concern for due process and legitimizing the courts. Albania's 2009 lustration law could violate the rule of law because it bans former prosecutors, judicial appointments, or people who worked for the secret police during the 1944-90 communist regimes from future government employment (Koci, 2009). The law was passed by the ruling party but boycotted by the opposition, and it makes at least 28 constitutional breaches, as well as violating human rights, according to one Member of Parliament. The law sets up a verifying authority to investigate people's credentials and may remove people from office who do not commit crimes, expiring at the end of 2014. The lustration law may also be subject to abuse, with the EU also expressing concern about its ability to establish an independent judiciary. The Albanian lustration law could be abused by using it to fire those in acts of revenge against government officials. It purges those who were employed under the former Communist regime, including current politicians and justices (Koci, 2009). It would basically eliminate half of Albania's Supreme and Constitutional courts. The Council of Europe feels it violates human rights and the rule of law (2009). Critics say it is unconstitutional and allows firings without due process.

Part of the remaining remnants of the Communist legacy are that a repression of political ideologies is simply a harkening back to the days of Communism, when other ideologies or

religion in general were not allowed; perhaps this newer idea of limiting a specific ideology in government is a backlash against a recent history of an oppressive regime that did damage politically and economically to the state. However, what is necessary now is to accept various ideologies and reduce corruption; the country's determination to refuse aid from others in the face of increasing self-reliance helped the nation sustain the drive to survive on its own and to build on a model introduced by Marxist-Leninist ideology to reduce inequalities amongst the populace in terms of education ("…Certain accomplishments such as education and health care were more evident than economic ones…Agricultural employment fell from more than 80 percent in 1938 to 55 percent in 1989") (Rugg, 1994). However, the lasting result was that the regime, though steeped in Communist ideology, relied too heavily on the state and let the economic development of the nation go by the wayside, leading to such current issues as high electricity and food prices (Hope, 2008). This also translated to a limitation in the diversity of industries, such as the fact that "upward mobility from blue-collar to white-collar worker was less evident…because of the limited emphasis on retail and service sectors" (Rugg, 1994).

In addition, Albania's state model of self-determination failed to address the importance of maintaining alliances abroad and moving towards cooperation with other international organizations, such as the European Union or NATO (Hope, 2008). Gaining membership into large entities such as these are the key to Albania's future economic, political, and social development to catch up with the economies of Western Europe, for example. Relying on a single-party model also reduced opportunities for healthy democratic or political competition in order for parties to be encouraged to push forth political reforms, which we see in such legislation as banning one particular party ideology. In essence, what we see is that "stifling control of political and economic activity" and "dependence on a self-reliant system that isolated the country economically and technologically" provides "a lesson in the dangers of a country on a narrow nationalistic line without accommodating relations," buoyed by the fact that the "presence of one million concrete bunkers, built in the 1980s as defense against foreign invasion, not only wasted resources but…symbolized the nationalistic attitude. For the future, opportunities exist, but reform will require more decentralized, coordinated decision-making" (Rugg, 1994). To avoid being stuck in the past, Albania will have to bite the bullet and think about what it can do to transform itself into a nation more likely to be involved in multinational efforts in the future, for which membership in the EU, NATO, etc. involves stabilizing any lingering issues involved within its own domestic affairs. Thus, what we see is that without stable industries and political stability in Albania, there is liable to be more corruption. Specifically, for example, without tourism income, the population turns to underground, shady business practices and illegitimate industries. In turn, government officials resort to bribery and other forms of graft to get ahead. Electoral legitimacy is, through developing a stronger civil society and legal system, should remain a primary goal of Albania for better cooperation with the Council of Europe and the EU. For example, the 2009 Albanian parliamentary elections were meant to be a challenging road to free and fair elections in the region, which has not uncommonly seen political violence in past campaigns. Rama and Berisha both

promised reform, yet corruption has marred both sides. The Gerdec tragedy is one hot issue that could have been a factor in this election, which was an ammunition depot blast where 26 people died (Luta, 2009). Berisha went up for re-election, while Rama was the new opponent (2009). Fair, democratic elections, in turn, translates over into political stability through measures to stability the currency and to increase incentive for foreign investment, which keep away undesirables such as gangsters from having influence on legitimate businesses and imposing their will through the black market. In addition, fair rule of law in the courts will allow the EU to observe that Albania is complying with basic rights for the accused and for proper due process procedures.

Conclusion: This research posed the question, "What difference do European institutions make for human rights and democracy in Albania, and how well have these institutions worked to improve human rights in Albania over the past few decades?" It utilized several themes: specifically, political, economic, and social stability, connected in order to explain the EU's role in promoting democracy and human rights and to explain the European community's role in promoting democracy and human right in Albania. Also, as mentioned in the opening of this paper, democratization and human rights are important concepts for Albania since human rights and democratization provide an outlet for which the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government, they are integral to effective work on poverty alleviation and conflict prevention and resolution, and essential to the acceptance among the international community about the centrality of human rights and their importance in democracy and development. For Albania, the EU and Council of Europe issues within human rights and democratization have led to more improvements in overall standards and have assisted improving the political stability, reducing illegitimate markets, and reformed the Judiciary. Many programs were impacted specifically from EU and Council of Europe influence along the lines of following the democratization and human rights trends and the country's status in terms of involvement by both of these major European institutions. The potential for success also existed here within a structured Europe by cataloging the programs, regulations and counting the proportional effectiveness on improving human rights and democratization there. In addition, specific topics were identified within three or more European participation categories in Albania that involved social, economic, and political stability. For example, we already see promise in the fact that Albania recently decided to join the EU innovation and competitiveness program, which will help stimulate the economy's growth in various ways and drive innovation. The EC uses this program to assist small-to-medium businesses in expanding their entrepreneurship opportunities and helps Albania move closer to EU integration (Albania Joins EU Innovation, 2008). Good business practices and various resources will be widely available to Albania from EU programs. It will also help sustain growth and increase work opportunities. The CIP program particularly benefits the many small businesses in Albania, promoting entrepreneurial ideas, energy efficiency, and sustainable development (2008).

Throughout the chapter, we followed democratization, human rights trends and the status of the country in terms of involvement with the Council of Europe and the EU. We also

examined factors affecting European participation involving social, economic and political stability. We investigated various levels of European participation in the process of Albania joining the EU. Albania is still searching for true democracy two decades after its communist regime fell. It is making positive steps towards satisfying the EU's demands, but challenges still in the areas of rule of law, a fair judiciary, legitimate elections, a media not subject to outside influence, and corruption are still problems. The 2009 elections called for a recount and protest by the 2 opposition party, which carried on an extended parliamentary boycott (FRIDE, 2010). Full

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29. On a final note, we can conclude that these overarching themes connecting instances of social, political and economic stability in Albania explain the European community's role in promoting democracy and human rights, leading to positive change overall, with the end result being Albania's successful incorporation into the EU, once all of its past issues are resolved.