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Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| The Relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility and Stock Performance in Pharmaceutical Markets | 3 |
| The Impact of Pre-recorded Video Length, Provision of Captioning on the Interactivity and Effectiveness of Learning During the Covid-19 Restriction: Students' Perceived Experience | 4 |
| HOW TO IDENTIFY A CONSUMER THROUGH SCREEN: How did Covid-19 and Russia's War in Ukraine Changed the Profile of Modern Consumer? | 5 |
| Does the Manager Majoring in Finance-related Fields Perform Better in the Chinese Mutual Fund Market?..... | 6 |
| The Impact of Board with Overseas Experience on the Firm Performance in China..... | 7 |
| Forecasting House Prices in Albania with the Deep Learning LSTM Network | 8 |
| Sustainable Marketing Practice: A Fundamental Change or Business as Usual? | 9 |
| Green Hydrogen Renewable Energy Based Society for Sustainable Economic Development- Challenges and Perspectives | 10 |
| Factors Impacting NextGen Involvement into the Parents' Business Using Open Coding as an Initial Stage of the Qualitative Research | 11 |
| Quality Management and Higher Institution..... | 12 |
| Sunk Cost Effect and Framing | 13 |
| Artificial Neural Network Model Comparisons: Forecasting Emergency Medical Service Demand.. | 14 |
| Synthesis of Literature on the Role of Education in Precision Agriculture Technology Adoption among Farmers..... | 15 |
| Government Export Financing Programmes and Export Performance: Evidence from Non-oil Exporters in Nigeria | 16 |
| Virtual Dark Tourism: An Exploration of Motivations and Narratives through the Lenses of The Russo-Ukrainian Conflict | 17 |
| Single Parenthood: A Sociological Research of the Experiences of Divorced Mothers | 18 |
| Talkback Discourse on the Internet following Violence against Bedouin Waitresses from the Perspective of the Backlash Mechanism | 19 |
| Recycling of Ash and Slag Waste from Kazakhstan Coal Power Plants for a Potential Use in the Production of Construction Materials..... | 20 |
| Physico-chemical Properties of Polymer Composite Materials | 25 |
| Types and Sources of Pollution of Water Resources..... | 31 |
| Contested Identities: is Albanian Nationalism Essentially 'Primordial' or is It the Outcomes of Modernity and Industrialisation? | 39 |

The Relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility and Stock Performance in Pharmaceutical Markets

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Abstract

Much research exists on the relationship between CSR and stock market performance. However, for the pharmaceutical industry, as one of the most important industries to the people, CSR ratings should have a more pronounced impact on them. Due to the gap in this area, this study examines the relationship between CSR rating indices and stock market performance within the Chinese pharmaceutical industry. I use a panel data set containing CSR rating data for 259 pharmaceutical industry companies from 2010 to 2020 and related financial indicators for each company to assess the interaction between CSR and stock market performance. Using Stata to examine the interaction among multiple dimensions, I finally found a positive relationship between CSR and stock ratings, and COVID-19 strengthens this positive relationship. Also, I found that the relationship between CSR and stock ratings is negatively affected by firm size and the nature of property rights but positively affected by the corporate structure. I think my research can help future researchers pay attention to relevant research in this field and help Chinese enterprises to understand that, in addition to blindly pursuing high production efficiency and sales volume, moderate attention to CSR is also an effective way to prompt the company's stock performance.

Keywords corporate social responsibility; stock performance; pharmaceutical industry.

The Impact of Pre-recorded Video Length, Provision of Captioning on the Interactivity and Effectiveness of Learning During the Covid-19 Restriction: Students' Perceived Experience

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Abstract

During the unprecedented pandemic time, Covid-19, both students and academics at any level of education were literally isolated at home, and the learning activities were sole via a computer or smartphone. Various LIT (learning interactive tools) were adopted swiftly to facilitate online teaching to overcome the challenges of keeping the uninterrupted flow of the academic calendar. During the first two years of strict lockdown, the main aim of online teaching was to ensure pedagogical imperative. At the higher education level, mostly for undergraduate students, maintaining the quality of teaching and providing timely feedback on their assessments was the biggest concern. In terms of teaching, besides online provision, a pre-recorded lecture delivery was adopted in various universities around the world. This paper explores the effectiveness of pre-recorded lectures during the pandemic, and whether this format can be used parallelly with classroom teaching in the future. A case study approach has been adopted in collecting data, mainly primary data, from one of the British universities' international partnership campuses in Qatar.

HOW TO IDENTIFY A CONSUMER THROUGH SCREEN: How did Covid-19 and Russia's War in Ukraine Changed the Profile of Modern Consumer?

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This article is part of a PhD thesis on the modern consumer, which aims to identify and describe the changes that have occurred to the consumer as a result of global crises (Covid-19 pandemic, Russia's war in Ukraine and the global climate crisis). If the object of the study is the consumer, the subject of the study is the context – the global crises that not only affect but also transform the consumer. Whether this transformation takes place through overcoming crises or adapting to the situation created by crises and what crises take away – these questions will be in the centre to this paper.

The paper is based on following studies:

- Structured notes from the author's trip to Ukraine in December 2022, where she participated in panel discussions in Kiev and Lviv on the impact of various crises (Covid-19, war, economic fluctuations) on the entertainment industry (music events, festivals and nightlife in general), also visited war-affected cities – Irpin, Borodyanka, Buch, Kherson, Mykolaiv, met with representatives of various organisations, including representatives of various voluntary organisations and heads of local authorities.
- Results of a survey of practitioners (researching consumers, creating services or products for consumers, serving consumers, teaching about consumers); what professionals consider to be the crises that have most affected and changed consumers (fieldwork: 08.02.–24.02.2023).
- Results of a consumer survey (fieldwork: 23.02.–03.03.2023) on consumers' feelings, thoughts and attitudes about being a consumer, as well as an assessment of the impact of crises.

Key words: modern consumer, virtual consumer, consumer identity, identification

Jel Classification: M21, M29

Does the Manager Majoring in Finance-related Fields Perform Better in the Chinese Mutual Fund Market?

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Abstract

This paper examines an unexplored field regarding the relationship between fund managers' academic background and mutual fund excess return. The sample consists of the net asset value return and other fund characters of the actively managed funds in the Chinese mutual fund market,

3,713 mutual fund managers' academic backgrounds. Fama-French three-factor, Carhart four-factor, and Fama-French five-factor models are applied to calculate mutual funds' excess return. After running multiple regressions, I apply random effect, subperiod and subsample test, interaction term test, and 2SLS regression to validate and strengthen the findings. This paper discovers fund managers majoring in science, technology, math, engineering (STEM), and management have comparative advantages in generating excess returns. This relationship is evident during the bearish market period but eliminated in the bull market. Professional certificate ownership acts as a mediating factor that reduces the negative impact brought out by academic background. The endogeneity of fund managers' academic background is proved by an instrumental variable: *oversea_degree*. This paper's findings remind future potential fund managers in the finance field to be equipped with diversified techniques and to be proactive learners in order to keep their competency.

Keywords: academic background · fund manager · mutual fund performance · Chinese mutual fund market

JEL Classification: G11 · G12 · G23

The Impact of Board with Overseas Experience on the Firm Performance in China

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Abstract

With the rapid development of China's economy, the surge in overseas talents has aroused wide concern. This study explores the impact of boards' overseas experience on firm performance in China. We use multiple regression to analyze 2,032 listed companies in China from 2011 to 2021. Through a series of analyses, we find that boards' overseas experience can improve firm performance. In addition, we subdivide the overseas background of directors and find out that boards' overseas work experience is more conducive to firm performance than overseas study experience. The conclusions remain consistent by replacing ROE with ROA and EPS and adding control variables. Then we verify that the nonlinear quadratic relationship of this experiment is not significant. In the Granger causality test, we conclude that there is a causal relationship between the overseas background of directors and corporate performance. In economic globalization, this paper provides empirical evidence for the positive impact of Chinese boards' overseas experience on firm performance and supplements such research.

Keywords: Overseas experience, Board of directors , Firm performance, China

Forecasting House Prices in Albania with the Deep Learning LSTM Network

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Abstract

This article investigates the role of economic, financial and demographic indicators in forecasting house prices in Albania. The pool of variables is drawn from empirical studies for advanced and developing countries. To test their importance, we employ the long short-term memory network from the machine learning techniques. As the time span of observations is rather limited, the specification of models is maintained to be parsimonious and sufficient to capture the most important dynamics. As such, we compare the performance of a univariate network with models containing the most related variables such as GDP and actual rental, and then augment them with bank loans and interest rates, demand from non-residents, unemployment rate, urban population, cost of construction and area of building permits. The forecast ability is evaluated during the 2018-2022 period for horizons at 1, 4, 8 and 12 quarters ahead. Preliminary results suggest that multivariate, theory-driven models can help improve upon forecasts generated from the univariate network. Apart from GDP and rentals, costs of construction and financial indicators are some additional variables in which forecasters may have confidence on when predicting residential house prices in Albania.

Keywords: House prices, Machine Learning, LSTM model, Albania.

Disclaim: This research article is considered as a preliminary work that aims at stimulating debate and critical comments. It expresses the views of the authors and does not necessarily represent those of the institutions where they work. The authors are grateful to comments and suggestions received from participants at the "Istanbul Annual International Multidisciplinary Conference on Economics, Business, Technology and Social Sciences - 2023", organized by the European Institute for Research and Development, Istanbul, Türkiye, in May 13-14, 2023.

Sustainable Marketing Practice: A Fundamental Change or Business as Usual?

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Abstract

The aim of this exploratory paper is to review the literature on sustainable marketing with a focus on global environmental threats and the realities of current business practices around the world. The review critically addressed the triple core directive of sustainable marketing, based on economic, social and environmental performance, and addressed the need for better sustainable consumer behavior as well as corporate practices around the world. This paper is a desk research-based that uses an exploratory approach to conduct a critical literature review and analysis of relevant studies, followed by implications and concluding observations.

The analysis revealed a weakness in sustainable marketing communications, such as greenwashing, and highlighted the importance of transparent sustainability reporting by companies and their role in corporate social responsibility. The concluding remarks indicated that many companies around the world continued to cause massive damage to the environment, with little attention for the impact of their business operations on society. The paper called on policy makers, regulators and environmental experts worldwide to take significant action to eliminate unethical and irresponsible business practices, while at the same time strengthening efforts to engage in sustainable consumption behavior by consumers. The unique view of sustainability adopted in this paper should not only enhance the overall image of the business in the market, but should also contribute to a better practice of sustainable marketing with respect to social, economic and environmental responsibility.

Keywords: Sustainable marketing, Sustainable consumption, Environmental concerns, Transparent sustainability reporting, Greenwashing.

Green Hydrogen Renewable Energy Based Society for Sustainable Economic Development-Challenges and Perspectives

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Abstract

The contemporary industry is mainly based on fossil fuels to be exhausted in near future. It causes environment pollution and greenhouse effect. During the last century the CO₂ concentration increased 20%, raising average temperature on Earth. It means undesirable climate changes, biodiversity disorder and natural disasters. The development of alternative power sources is needed.

United Nations had recognized problem and global actions have already taken. European Union established main targets until 2030- Climate and Energy Package. The Paris Agreement (2015) adopted by 196 Parties from all over the world facilitated low-carbon solutions. Zero-carbon solutions are increasing in economy, especially the power and transport sectors.

“The global climate fight will be won or lost in this crucial decade – on our watch. So let’s fight together– and let's win” (A. Guterres, UN General Secretary-November 2022).

Thus, development of hydrogen production and fuel cells as zero-emission technologies is needed, to achieve sustainability and circular economy. Hydrogen is high efficiency and environmental friendly fuel. It is produced by water electrolysis, industrial procedure processed in alkaline solution, at 80°C. The main disadvantage is still high energy consumption (~ 5kWh m⁻³ H₂). The hydrogen fuel is used in fuel cells, while oxidative agent is oxygen from air. Many researchers' efforts were done to make progress in this area during past decades. State-of-the-art catalysts are noble metals (carbon supported Platinum) – still expensive for large-scale commercial use. In this research novel solutions for fuel cells catalysts based on low loading precious metals were investigated. Higher efficiency and durability were achieved if compared to commercial Pt/C. Comparative study on Platinum and Palladium based catalysts was presented. Challenges and perspectives were discussed in terms of technological, social and financial issues. Trading and prices of noble metals were discussed, as well.

Keywords: Renewable energy; Sustainable economic development; Hydrogen production; Fuel cells; Zero-emission.

Factors Impacting NextGen Involvement into the Parents' Business Using Open Coding as an Initial Stage of the Qualitative Research

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Abstract

The transfer of a business to the next generation is a very important issue entailing several different social and economic influences (Schiefer et.al 2019).

The topic of securing successful business transfers is viable for an economy and now it is rapidly gaining attention among European policy makers (Wildt et.al. 2021).

The child involvement initiation stage is very important in the succession process.

However, there is a lack of studies in the existing literature, that address the issues of initiating the involvement of a child in the activities of parents' companies.

The purpose of our study was to determine what factors impact parents-owners decision about their child involvement in the business (SMEs).

The objectives of our study are to determine factors impacting parents-owners decision about their children involvement in the business, what share of those involved, stayed in their parents' companies, and what share left and to identify the main reasons for the children leaving the parents' companies.

To answer the research questions, we conducted semi-structured interviews with majority shareholders of SMEs. At the initial stage of the qualitative research, using open coding of the grounded theory, we have revealed the main factor groups, impacting owners decision about NextGen involvement, percentage of respondents/parents decided to involve and not to involve their children in their business, children percentage, involved in the business and left the company and percentage of children, that continue working in the parent's companies as well the main reasons why children left their parents' companies.

Keywords: family business, business transfer, NextGen involvement, succession

Quality Management and Higher Institution

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Abstract

The paper deals with quality management theory as the vital part of management science. The paper inquires of how students perceive the quality of higher institution where they study. Therefore, the paper evaluates the management of the selected higher institution based on students (stakeholders) opinions and experiences. The primary purpose of the article is to analyse and suggest existing methods of quality management theory for evaluating quality of higher education institutions from the students'. The evaluation was carried out with questionnaire which was shared among Bachelor and Master students. The benefit of the article is not only of academic interest and application of the theory itself, rather it should have fundamental practical reason for the management of institutions offering higher education. To support the quality management theory, the article is enriched by PMI standards stemming from PMI body of knowledge.

Sunk Cost Effect and Framing

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Abstract

Behavioral economics is an important branch in a combination of psychology, sociology, and economics, and it has affected decision making for many years. In this paper we present the relationship between two behavioral economic phenomena --- sunk cost effect defined as an expense already made that is unreturnable and is irrelevant to current decision making, and a similar phenomenon called framing, the principle that our choices are affected by the way they are framed. In this paper a survey (n=120) was used to present 3 scenarios to participants, each with a different level of investment of sunk costs; as a second step a framing effect, family status, was added to each scenario. We show that the influence framing exerts on the sunk cost effect is large, and that the specific framings we chose affect women more than men. We also propose that framing can reduce the effect of sunk cost in the decision-making process, therefore we recommend focusing on dealing with it. It is also observed that sunk cost is affected by the individual internal and external commitments as presented in the scenarios.

Keywords: behavioral economics, sunk cost, framing

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Artificial Neural Network Model Comparisons: Forecasting Emergency Medical Service Demand

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Demand for ambulances has a randomness and a seasonality component to its pattern. Any advancement in the accuracy of models that predict the incidents will allow Emergency Medical Services (EMS) managers the option of redeploying their fleet to compensate. Huge advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) and more specifically artificial neural networks (ANNs) have opened up the possibility of many exciting improvements to forecasting EMS demand. Numerous models have been developed to help EMS managers with the redeployment of their resources, ambulances. Specifically, they optimize the locations and the redeployments to maximize coverage. These models are only as good as the forecasted demand data that goes into them, and many of these forecasting models are reserved for more strategic planning and not tactical day to day use. The input needed for redeployment models usually requires data at a finer granularity in space and time. There are relatively few forecasting models which try to predict ambulance calls at different temporal and spatial granularities.

In previous research using an Artificial Neural Network framework one specific activation function was employed to test the accuracy of using ANNs to forecast demand. The sigmoid activation function was used. New ANN frameworks will be developed using Binary Step, Linear, as well as nonlinear activation functions such as Hyperbolic Tangent and many of the Rectified Linear Unit (ReLU) functions. Specifically, EMS data will be fed into the ANNs to determine the effect each function commands on forecast accuracy. Hundreds of thousands of EMS calls, their location, and their time stamps that have already been collected, will be the input to these new models to determine if time and location forecast for emergency services can be improved.

Keywords: Neural Networks (ANN), Emergency Medical Service (EMS), Forecasting

Synthesis of Literature on the Role of Education in Precision Agriculture Technology Adoption among Farmers

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Abstract

Sustainable farming is becoming increasingly important and precision agriculture (PA) technology provides a solution to sustainability concerns. However, there are concerns about low levels of adoption, therefore we need to understand how farmers make adoption decisions.

There is a wealth of research regarding PA technology adoption amongst farmers and the factors influencing adoption, in particular farmer characteristics such as education. It is generally believed that education has a positive impact on technology adoption. However, it is not clear what type and level of education is necessary to facilitate technology adoption among farmers and the extent to which education interventions are effective in promoting technology adoption across different regions and contexts.

This research synthesizes the literature on the role of education in PA technology adoption among farmers. The findings of this research will provide valuable insights into how education can influence the adoption and effective use of new technologies. These insights can help inform policy and practice aimed at promoting technology adoption as well. They can also be used by Higher Education institutions for curriculum development, pedagogy, research, and partnership with industry stakeholders in promoting technology in PA.

Key Words: Education, Technology Adoption, Precision Agriculture

Government Export Financing Programmes and Export Performance: Evidence from Non-oil Exporters in Nigeria

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Abstract

The prolonged glut in the global oil market resulting in unpredictable oil prices is propelling oil-dependent countries to diversify their export base. Yet, research has demonstrated that inadequate access to export financing impedes emerging economies' growth goals and exports. It is widely agreed that government aid plays a vital role in developed economies by promoting international trade. Yet, the influence of government funding assistance programmes in developing or emerging economies is far less visible. This study seeks to fill a gap in the literature by investigating how government export finance programmes affect non-oil export performance in Nigeria, using non-oil exporter SMEs as the unit of analysis. It focuses on the government's financing assistance provided through the Nigeria Export-Import Bank (NEXIM) and the Bank of Industry (BOI), utilising survey data acquired from non-oil exporting SMEs and supplemental data from NEXIM, BOI, and Nigeria Export Promotion Council (NEPC). We used 241 valid responses from a sample of 339 non-oil exporters registered with the NEPC in the analysis. We conducted a simple linear regression analysis with SPSS 27 to test the proposed hypothesis. The findings show that the federal government's credit facilities offered through development banks explained a considerable amount of the variance in SMEs' non-oil export performance ($R = .549$, $R^2 = .302$, $F(1,239) = 103.162$, $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, financing facilities supplied by the federal government through development banks also strongly predicted the performance of SMEs in non-oil exports ($\beta = .311$, $t(239) = 10.162$, $p < 0.05$). The findings also highlight the need for enhanced government export funding initiatives to assist SMEs in emerging economies in launching and growing their export businesses, particularly in mono-product based countries.

Keywords: Export financing; Government support programmes; Export promotion policies; Export performance

Virtual Dark Tourism: An Exploration of Motivations and Narratives through the Lenses of The Russo-Ukrainian Conflict

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On February 24, 2022, Russia launched a military operation against Ukraine revealing to the whole world a latent conflict that has been raging since 2014 around the treatment of Russianspeaking minorities living in the east and south of Ukraine. This war reminded the world that Europe is not immune to the return of geopolitical conflicts on its lands, and that the east-west confrontation is still present through the permanent expansion of NATO seen by Moscow as a military threat that seeks to encircle Russia and weaken its circle of influence (EICHLER., 2021). Despite this dramatic situation, some bloggers and tourists visit the sites impacted by this conflict, we then speak of "Dark tourism". It can be defined as "the presentation and consumption of real and commodified death and disaster sites." (McDaniel, 2018).

To understand the motivations and the type of content shared online by these "dark tourist vloggers", we thought it would be wise to proceed via a qualitative online study (Netnography). We have identified channels of influencers on Youtube who visited Ukraine in 2022, then we studied a representative sample of the content shared by these tourism influencers. The verbatims/comments of more than 40 videos were transcribed and analyzed. The preliminary results demonstrate that these travelogues are of a descriptive nature covering the different cities and traces of the conflict (essentially informative news about the local daily life) in the main cities like Kyiv, Irpin, Mariupol. Also, the information shared generates an immersive and emotional connection that creates empathy among viewers and echoes the cultivation theory as it shows that these bloggers mainly focus on the cities covered by mainstream media mirroring the later narratives which make them look more authentic (A. V. Seaton & Lennon, 2004).

Keywords: Dark Tourism, Cultivation Theory, Tourism, Netnography.

Single Parenthood: A Sociological Research of the Experiences of Divorced Mothers

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Abstract

Modern society is faced with an increasing divorce rate. The process of divorce itself, as well as life afterwards, has an impact on all members, including children and adults. Adjusting to the new conditions is therefore difficult. At the same time, some people face various problems in this process, such as stress, more obligations, or stigmatization by society. For this very reason, the aim of this paper was to investigate the everyday experiences of divorced mothers. Accordingly, their experiences with the divorce process, their children's behavior during the process, their coping after the divorce, and the obligations they face on a daily basis were examined. The paper presents the results of a survey conducted in 2021, which involved a semi-structured interview with a sample of ten participants. The results show that most of the participants highlighted divorce mainly because of their husband's cheating and character differences, and that this period was very stressful and difficult for them. Half of the participants noted changes in the children's behavior during the divorce process, such as anxiety and withdrawal, which they tried to alleviate through conversation. Nevertheless, the children did not blame anyone for their parents' divorce. At the same time, some participants' obligations to their children increased after the divorce, while for others the situation remained the same because their ex-partners did not care too much about the children even during the marriage. Since all participants are employed, they managed to balance children and work obligations with the help of their families. For some of them, the divorce affected their social life, some were labeled, while others did not have negative experiences in their environment. Although they believe that the children would accept their new marriage, most of the participants do not see themselves in a second marriage.

Keywords: single parenthood, divorced mothers, divorce, experiences, children

Talkback Discourse on the Internet following Violence against Bedouin Waitresses from the Perspective of the Backlash Mechanism

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The Bedouin community in Israel is characterized as a religious, traditional, and patriarchal society that opposes progress, especially when it comes to women. The study follows a shooting incident at a cafe in Rahat, the largest Bedouin city, where young Bedouin women worked as waitresses. The event was framed in the media as a protest by young Bedouins against the employment of women in the late hours. The talkbacks assigned these youths the moniker "modesty guards." The phenomenon of resistance and blocking the development of new social currents is described in the study as a backlash mechanism.

The study is based on 916 talkbacks that appeared on leading Hebrew online news sites. We analyzed the responses posted using categorical classification and online discourse analysis. We found that the talkback writers' attitude toward the modesty guards can be classified into five categories: (a) expressing support for the Bedouin women who went to work; (b) suggesting ways to deal with the "modesty guard" that harms women's freedom to work; (c) blaming the Bedouin tradition and education for blocking the development and advancement of women; (d) comparison with Jewish religious women; and (e) criticism of the media and the police for failing to protect Bedouin women from violence. The study demonstrates reactions in the online talkback discourse against the backlash mechanism that operates in a violent and dangerous manner to curb changes and developments in a traditional society.

Keywords: backlash, talkbacks, Bedouins in the Negev, qualitative research, discourse analysis

Recycling of Ash and Slag Waste from Kazakhstan Coal Power Plants for a Potential Use in the Production of Construction Materials

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Abstract

In Kazakhstan, coal combustion produces approximately 19 million tons of ash and ash and slag mixtures each year. Over 300 million tons of waste have accumulated in ash dumps to date. Although most ash is captured by filters, approximately 250 million tons of fine aerosols enter the atmosphere annually through Thermal Power Plant emissions. These aerosols can serve as nuclei for condensation and precipitation formation, leading to respiratory diseases in humans and other organisms. Therefore, preventing the release of ash-slag material into the atmosphere is a crucial step in reducing air pollution in cities.

One of the most valuable components of fly ash is porous particles-microspheres - a light fraction of fly ash, which is a finely dispersed loose powder, consisting of hollow thin-walled particles of spherical shape, aluminosilicate composition, with diameter of several tens or hundreds of microns.

Chemical activity is an important property of ashes, which determines their use as independent binders or as a component of complex binders. Experiments on studying the properties of cement pastes and hardened composites have shown that cement with the recommended additives in contrast to cements without these additives has a higher strength.

The use of industrial wastes in the production of building materials, which can be considered as potential resources of additional cementitious material, not only expands the scope of application of cement and solves the problem of waste disposal, but also gives the materials special valuable properties, which are difficult to achieve on the basis of cement and ceramics.

Keywords: ash and slag waste, construction materials, microspheres

Introduction

In the Republic of Kazakhstan, the annual output of ash and ash and slag mixtures from coal combustion is approximately 19 million tons, and in ash dumps to date, more than 300 million

tons of waste is accumulated. Although the ash is mainly captured by various industrial filters, about 250 million tons of fine aerosols enter the atmosphere annually in the form of TPP (Thermal power plant) emissions. The latter are capable of significantly altering the balance of solar radiation near the Earth's surface. They also comprise the nuclei of condensation for water vapor and precipitation formation; and getting into the respiratory organs of humans and other organisms, cause various respiratory diseases. Unlike other industries, such as ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, the flue emissions of modern thermal power plants are carried out through a small number of very high pipes, more than 180 m high. Therefore, pollutants are dispersed in the vast space of the lower troposphere. In the areas of influence of different thermal power plants, it has been established that in the nearest zone with a radius of 12-15 km, depending on the height of the pipe, 35 to 60% of the emitted ash falls out. Fuel ashes and slags are the products of thermochemical and phase transformations of inorganic fuel components and largely consist of minerals of the host rocks. The predominant minerals present in ash and slag materials of thermal power plants are silicates. First of all, these are meta- and orthosilicates, as well as aluminates, ferrites, alumoferrites, dehydrated clay minerals; in significant quantities there are oxides, such as quartz, corundum, alumina, calcium, magnesium oxides, etc. Secondary minerals such as calcite, portlandite, iron hydroxides, etc. may occur in ash dumps as a result of hydrochemical processes. Ash and slags are a complex system, the properties of which depend on the type of fuel and its combustion mode, boiler design and many other factors. This determines the need for comprehensive studies of the composition and properties of the mineral portion of the different coals burnt in power plants in Kazakhstan, since the main reason for the lack of ash and slag use in the national economy is the poor state of research of ash and slag as raw materials [1-2].

Methodology

Chemical and mineral-phase composition, structure and properties of ash-and-slag materials (ASM) depend on the composition of the mineral part of a fuel, its calorific value, combustion mode, method of their trapping and removal, place of selection from the dumps. At high temperatures (1200-1600°C) of fuel combustion, mineral impurities undergo changes; complex physical and chemical processes take place in which chemically bound water of silicates and aluminosilicates is released, carbonates decompose, and there are reactions in the solid phase, melting, crystallization, silicate formation, glass formation, and others. Therefore, ashes and slags from thermal power plants have a complex chemical and mineralogical composition.

Chemical composition of ASM from combustion of Kazakhstan coals is represented mainly by SiO_2 and Al_2O_3 . In addition, the oxides also include Fe_2O_3 , CaO , MgO , Na_2O , K_2O , TiO_2 , SO_3 , etc (Table 1).

At present GOST 25818-91 [3] and GOST 25592-2019 [4] defined requirements for the chemical composition of ash-and-slag mixtures used for the production of various types of concrete and mortars. The content of oxides - CaO , MgO , SO_3 , Na_2O and K_2O is normalized: calcium oxide CaO - 10%, to ensure that the volume changes during hardening, free CaO - 5%;

- magnesium oxide MgO - no more than 5%;

- the upper limit of sulfur and sulfuric acid compounds in conversion to SO_3 on the requirements of sulfate resistance - 3-6% (depending on the type of the original fuel)

- the total content of alkaline oxides Na_2O and K_2O - 1,5-3% (depending on the type of fuel burned) to avoid deformation during their reaction with aggregates.

At the same time, there is a separation both by chemical composition and by phase. The smallest ash fractions have the maximum content of spherical glassy particles. The larger the ash grains, the higher the content of aggregated, rough, porous particles. Hydraulic ash and slag

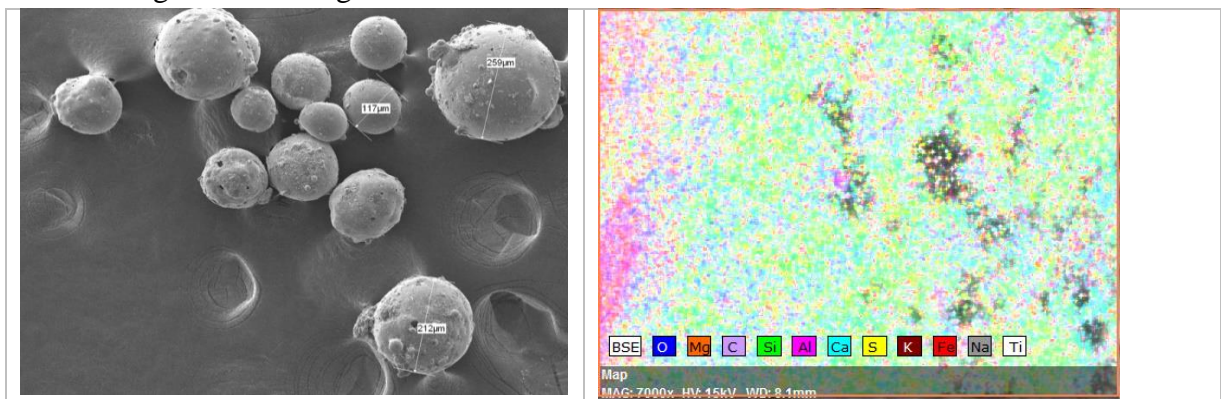
removal systems direct polydisperse slag-ash mixtures to the dumps. In the vicinity of the pulp outlet, the slag zone of the dump is formed, in which the particles larger than 0.25 mm prevail, while particles finer than 0.25 mm dominate at a distance. Depending on the grain, chemical, and phase composition, ash is determined by its bulk density, which can range from 0,6 to 1,3 g/cm³. Specific gravity (true density) of ash ranges from 1,75 to 3,5 g/cm³, being on the average 2,1-2,4 g/cm³.

Chemical analysis of aluminosilicate hollow microspheres is given in Table 1.

Table 1 - Chemical analysis of aluminosilicate hollow microspheres

| Element | Element content % | Oxide | Oxide content, % |
|---------|-------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Na | 0,45 | Na ₂ O | 0,68 |
| Mg | 0,40 | MgO | 0,78 |
| Al | 12,33 | Al ₂ O ₃ | 30,10 |
| Si | 20,23 | SiO ₂ | 58,21 |
| K | 1,87 | K ₂ O | 4,22 |
| Ca | 0,47 | CaO, | 1,26 |
| Ti | 0,25 | TiO ₂ | 0,96 |
| Fe | 0,99 | Fe ₂ O ₃ | 3,79 |

One of the most valuable components of fly ash is porous particles known as microspheres, or cenospheres. Microspheres are a light fraction of fly ash, which is a finely dispersed, loose powder consisting of hollow, thin-walled particles with a spherical shape and an aluminosilicate composition. They have a diameter of several tens or hundreds of microns (Figure 1). At power plants, where ash wastes are removed in the form of water slurry, microspheres, having a density less than 1 g/cm³, float to the surface of water basins of ash dumps and remain there for a long time in the form of "foam layers" of different thicknesses. In the USA, European Union, as well as in a number of other countries, a certain industry has been created to utilize ash cenospheres in various industrial applications. They are most often used as fillers for various composite materials based on organic and inorganic binders.



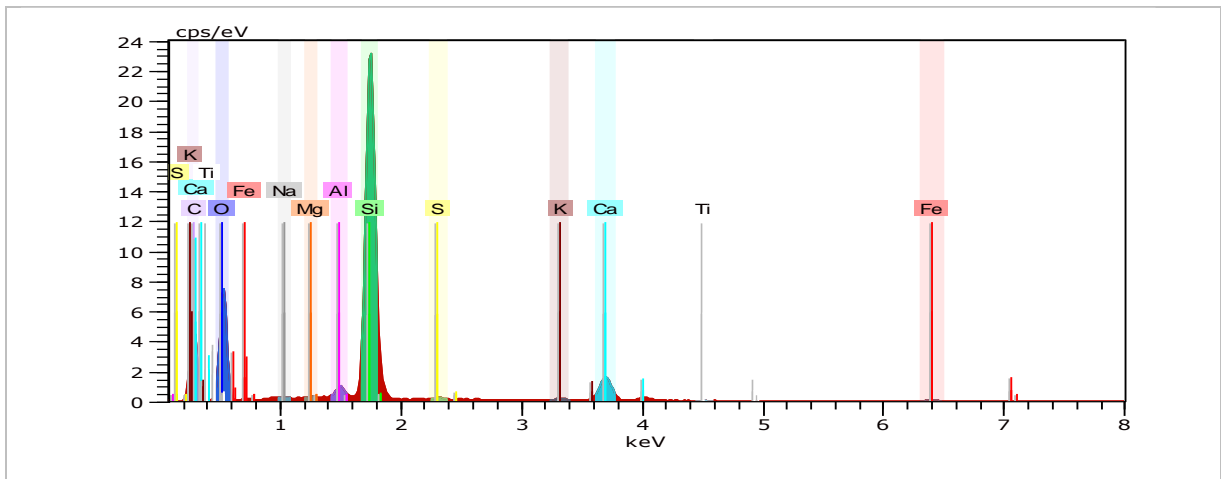


Figure 1 - Phase composition of aluminosilicate hollow microspheres

However, analyzing publications on the problem of ash cenosphere utilization, as well as examining the activity of cenosphere manufacturing enterprises, allows us to determine the potential for development of this technically promising and ecologically sound industry. Currently, there is no organized information available about the resources and quality indicators of ash cenospheres from power plants. Manufacturing enterprises do not control a significant portion of the main properties of cenospheres, apparently due to a lack of established control methods. There is also no classification of ash cenospheres that corresponds to technical parameters of cenospheres and areas of their application. Researchers of ash cenospheres rarely investigate issues related to cenosphere formation, and the lack of information about the basic physical and chemical regularities influencing the formation of the hollow sphere introduces an element of randomness into the disposal activities and hinders the possibility of controlling the processes of cenosphere formation in the fly ash. These circumstances highlight the relevance of the conducted research.

In connection with the aforementioned problems, the need to develop regulatory documentation on the integrated use of ASM becomes obvious. Currently, Kazakhstan is in the stage of developing a national standard ST RK "Waste. Requirements for ash and slag waste recycling." In Russia, there are a number of standards governing the use of ash and slag waste for the production of construction materials, such as GOST 25592-2019 [4], which defines the requirements for ash and slag waste as raw materials for the production of concrete, and GOST R 57789-2017 [5], which provides for the use of ash and slag for the production of artificial porous aggregates. In foreign practice, the existing normative documents cover a wider area of ash-and-slag mixtures application. In China, where about 70% of ASM is utilized, a number of standards for the use of these materials in various industries have been developed. For example, for aluminum oxide extraction [6], use in road construction [7], and in agriculture [8]. In the USA, there are standards for the use of ASM in the production of construction materials [9,10], as well as in agriculture [11]. In Japan, almost 100% of ASM is used. This is due to the high population density and small amount of resources. As in other countries, these wastes are mainly used for the production of construction materials. The composition and properties of ASM are regulated by standards, such as [12,13].

Conclusion

Known technological solutions currently do not solve the problem of increasing the strength of cement stone. Its development is relevant and will allow applying fly ash as the basis of composite materials. Knowing the basic processes which can provide cement stone hardening and

directionally designing compositions of composite binders, providing intensification of these processes, it is possible to achieve not only stabilization of cement stone strength, but also its increase. The use of industrial waste in the production of building materials, which can be considered as potential sources of additional cementitious material, not only expands the scope of cement application and solves the problem of waste disposal but also imparts special valuable properties to the materials that are difficult to achieve based on Portland cement and ceramics.

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Physico-chemical Properties of Polymer Composite Materials

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Abstract

The paper presents the results of studies of composite materials based on epoxy resin. Samples are made of epoxy resin ED 20 with the addition of 2.5-10 wt.% microspheres. The structure and sizes of fine filler particles are determined. The resulting compositions were tested for impact strength and tensile strength. Samples with additions of 10% microspheres showed higher results in impact strength. The rational content as an additive is 5 wt.% microspheres, since they achieve higher physical and mechanical characteristics of epoxy composites: tensile strength increases by 9% and tensile modulus of samples with microsphere additives increases by 21%.

Keywords: epoxy resin, microspheres, filled composite material, impact strength, tensile strength.

Introduction

The filling of epoxy resins with industrial waste, which has become widespread in recent years, makes it possible to control the technological and physical and mechanical properties of polymer composite materials in a wide range. Polymer compositions, the main filler of which are hollow microspheres, also called spheroplastics (or syntaxes), are widely used in aviation, automotive and shipbuilding, oil, electronics industries and other fields of science and technology. Good adhesion of hollow glass microspheres to polymeric binders makes it possible to create structures with low density and a wide range of physical and mechanical characteristics [1–3].

Studies to determine the quality of microspheres from the ash of Kazakh thermal power plants have shown that due to a number of properties they can be used in various industries. A

hollow aluminosilicate microsphere is a valuable product formed as a result of coal combustion in boilers of thermal power plants [4].

Many studies have shown that when fly ash is added to an epoxy composite, tensile strength increases. The fly ash filler for obtaining a polymeric material provides an improvement in the mechanical properties of polymer composites compared to polymer composites with a conventional filler or without any additives [5].

At different times, specialists from England, India, and the United States studied microspheres from fly ash, and to date, the results of their research have been developments on the use of microspheres as secondary raw materials [6].

The microspheres effectively increase the bonding strength of carbon cloth and resin, improving the ability of friction materials to reduce friction and anti-wear properties [7-8].

The aim of the work is to study the physical and mechanical properties of polymeric binders (epoxy resin ED-20) and additives (hollow aluminosilicate microsphere).

Materials and methods

Epoxy resin ED-20 (GOST 10587-84) was used as a binder for the resulting compositions. Along with high heat resistance, ED-20 has significant brittleness, which can be reduced by introducing special modifiers and hardeners into the compositions. Polyethylenepolyamine (PEPA) (TU 2413-010-75678843-2012) was used as a hardener. Designed for curing epoxy resins at room and low temperatures, in conditions of high humidity. The appearance of the hardener is a liquid from light yellow to dark brown without mechanical impurities.

Microspheres were used to fill polymer compositions - these are powders of hollow glass microspheres, which are a light free-flowing powder, the particle size of which ranges from 6 to 235 microns, which is formed as part of slag ash when coal is burned at power plants. .

Epoxy compositions filled with microspheres were obtained in the following modes:

- preliminary dosing of ED 20;
- dosing microspheres as a nanofiller and its further introduction into the epoxy oligomer in the amount of 2.5-10 wt.%;
- introduction of PEPA in the ratio of resin:hardener (1:10) and mixing of the composition.

The finished mixture was poured into molds in the form of bars 4*10*80 mm in size and left to solidify for a day at a temperature of 20-25°C. The control sample was made without the addition of filler. To determine the tensile strength, the samples were made in the form of spatulas.

After curing, drying in an oven (ShS-80-01MK SPU) $\tau = 24 \pm 0.1$ N, T = 90 C - 1 hour; 120 C - 1 hour;

Slow cooling to room temperature.

The chemical and elemental composition was determined on a PANalytical X-ray fluorescence spectrometer, model Axios Max (Rh 2.4 kW).

The microstructure of the filler was characterized by scanning electron microscopy TM3030 (Hitachi).

The particle size of the fillers was determined on a Mastersizer 3000 laser granulometer with a HydroMV attachment (120 ml) using water as a dispersion medium.

The phase composition of the filler was determined by X-ray diffraction on a smartLAB X-ray diffractometer manufactured by Rigaku Corporation. The X-ray source is an X-ray tube CuK α (1.54059). The tube current and voltage are set to 50 mA and 40 kV respectively. A one-dimensional detector (D/teXUltra, Rigaku) with a K β filter was used. The measurements were carried out using the stepped scanning method, provided that the range of measurement angles 2

$\theta = 5-90^\circ$, step width ($\delta 2\theta$) = 0.1° and scanning speed = $2^\circ/\text{min}$. The phases were identified by comparing the obtained data with a reference database, the most comprehensive of which is maintained by the International Center for Diffraction Data (ICDD).

Mechanical testing of polymer compositions for breaking stress in tension, modulus of elasticity in tension and bending (GOST 9550-81), breaking stress in compression (GOST 4648-71) was carried out on samples in the form of a double-sided blade with dimensions according to GOST 11262-80. The tests were carried out on a universal testing machine WDW-5E. The impact strength of the samples was determined on a KMM-M pendulum impact tester using the Charpy method according to (GOST 4647-2015).

Results and its discussion

The study of the chemical composition of the microsphere showed that it is characterized by a high content of Al_2O_3 - 12.2%, the content of SiO_2 is 24.8%, Fe_2O_3 - 2.3%, and also contains small impurities of oxides Ti, P, K, Ca, Na (table 1, fig.1).

Table 1 - Chemical composition of the microsphere

| Element | Concentration |
|---------|---------------|
| Na | 0,127 |
| Al | 12,277 |
| Si | 24,812 |
| P | 0,116 |
| K | 0,706 |
| Ca | 0,857 |
| Ti | 0,910 |
| V | 210,0 |
| Mn | 356,9 |
| Fe | 2,328 |
| Sr | 713,4 |
| Zr | 417,9 |

Microspheres are used as a filler for homogeneous plastics. Rigidity, modulus of elasticity of materials increases.

Microspheres are a light fraction of fly ash, which is a fine loose powder, consisting of hollow thin-walled particles of a spherical shape and aluminosilicate composition. The fractional composition of microspheres is characterized by a bimodal distribution and is represented by particles from 0.1 to 100 μm with an average particle size of 2–3 μm and 20–40 μm , which is also confirmed by SEM data (Fig. 1).

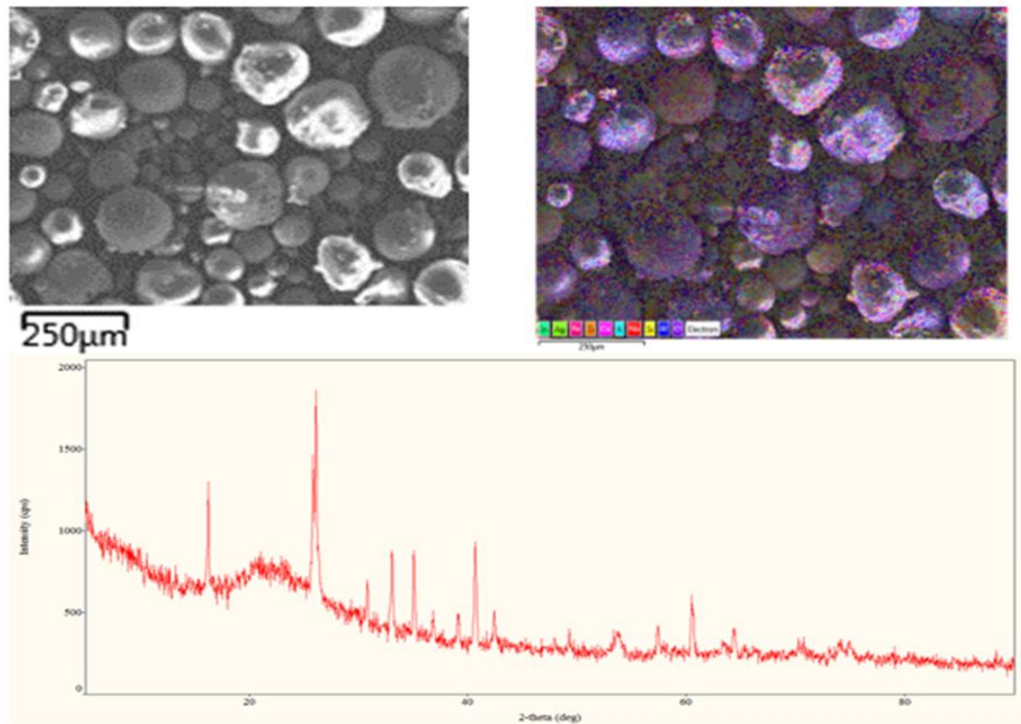


Figure 1 - Phase composition of microspheres, x100 magnification

According to X-ray phase analysis, the phase composition of microspheres is represented by Aluminum Silicon Oxide ($Al_2 (Al_{2.588} Si_{1.412}) O_{9.706}$) - 97% and Quartz ($Si O_2$) - 3% (Fig. 5).

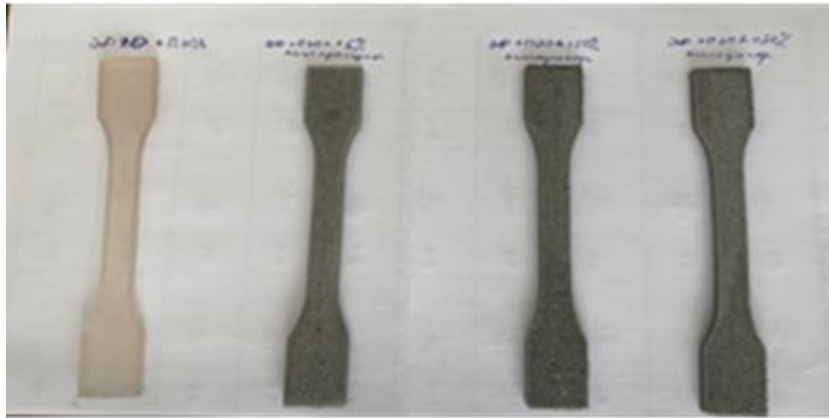
One of the possible areas of application of the developed compositions is agricultural facilities, the automotive industry, where these materials can be subjected to mechanical tests, so the polymer compositions were tested in tension.

Mechanical testing of polymer compositions for tensile stress, tensile modulus is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 - Tensile strength and tensile strength of polymer compositions with additives

| The composition of the composition | Tensile strength, MPa | Tensile modulus, MPa |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| ED -20+PEPA | 22 | 1611 |
| Microsphere 2% | 22 | 1915 |
| Microsphere 5 % | 24 | 1943 |
| Microsphere 10% | 16 | 1928 |
| Microsphere 20% | 20 | 2020 |

Mechanical testing of polymer compositions for tensile stress was carried out on samples in the form of a double-sided blade (Fig. 2).



Picture 2 - Samples in the form of a double-sided blade for mechanical testing

To control the quality and evaluate the behavior of samples from a polymer composition, under the action of impact stresses and to assess the fragility or toughness of the samples, impact strength tests were performed. The impact strength results of composite materials are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 - Impact strength of composite materials

| The composition of the composition | Impact energy, J | Impact strength, J/cm ² |
|------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|
| ED -20+PEPA | | |
| ED + Microsphere 2% | 0,213 | 0,664 |
| ED + Microsphere 5 % | 0,205 | 0,641 |
| ED + Microsphere 10% | 5,252 | 16,411 |
| ED + Microsphere 15% | 5,183 | 16,198 |

Conclusion

The results obtained indicate that the most rational content as an additive is 5 wt. % microspheres, since they achieve higher physical and mechanical characteristics of epoxy compositions: the tensile strength increases by 9%, and the elastic modulus of samples with the addition of microspheres increases by 21%.

Samples with additions of 10% microspheres showed higher results in impact strength.

It should be noted that the addition of a microsphere filler to the epoxy polymer contributes to the fact that the filled composite materials acquire good physical and mechanical properties.

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Types and Sources of Pollution of Water Resources

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Abstract

We divide water into drinking, mineral, industrial, technical and thermal- energetic types according to its use and purpose. Drinking water must comply with sanitary requirements and norms according to organoleptic devices and physical and chemical properties. Mineral water - must comply with the norms due to some components having therapeutic properties. Industrial water must fulfill its normative requirements by being used in the industrial field. Technical water should be suitable for use in the field of agriculture, household, and irrigation, and the normative requirements should be met. Heat-energy water is used in the national economy, and it consists of thermal and energy water.

Water is a filter-accumulator of all types of pollutants entering the environment. This is explained by the fact that it has the property of dissolving compounds of mineral and gaseous water and regular water circulation. Environmentally clean, pure, non-toxic water is vital for the normal life activity of humans, animals and other living beings.

According to statistics, more than 420 km³ of waste water per year around the world is 7 thousand km³ with formation – more than 1.5 times of the total water in the rivers of the CIS countries – makes drinking water unfit. This may cause danger on facing a drinkable water shortage of population in the world recently.

Chemical pollutants enter water basins mainly with wastewater from non- ferrous and ferrous metallurgy, oil, gas, chemical, stone, coal, pulp and paper and forest materials processing industries and make them unusable. Waste water from the chemical, electric power, woodworking and machine-building industries plays a huge role in the pollution of water sources. Chlorine compounds, phenols, and chloride-containing substances have a strong lethal-toxic effect on organisms when mixed with water. Heavy metals - lead, cadmium, mercury, nickel, copper, selenium, chromium, tin, etc. water mixed with ingredients causes poisoning in humans, animals and other living beings. Thus, the mixing of selenium with water causes liver diseases in people, the mixing of mercury with the nervous system, and the mixing of cadmium with kidney diseases.

Pollution of the World's ocean waters and other water basins with oil and oil products is one of the most dangerous environmental problems facing humanity today. So, mixing even the smallest amount of oil and its products in drinking water gives it a bad, unpleasant smell. Mixing one ton of oil with water creates a special layer that covers the water surface in an area of 2.6 km² as a result, the flood of light, photosynthesis and oxygen supply of water is getting weak and there is a great danger to the lives of living beings.

There are various sources of water pollution. Water sources are mainly oil and its products, industrial and transport waste, sewage, soil erosion, domestic waste, construction and forest materials, hydrocarbons, SAM, chlorides, heavy metals, radioactive substances, sulfates, ammonium salts, iron salts, phenols, methanol, mineral oils, organic acids, diethylene glycol,

acids, alkalis, carbon dioxide, hydrogen sulfide, clay particles, etc. may become contaminated by being thrown into water and mixed with it.

How can we help reduce water pollution?

Normally, the biggest culprit of water pollution is our excessive consumption, because the production of all kinds of goods involves a large consumption of water and its pollution. For example, **hundreds of dyes and highly polluting substances are used to make clothes, just like shoes.**

Water pollution

In this work, natural water sources, their pollution, as well as their pollutants and causes of pollution and topics such as how to prevent pollution can be discussed.

Water is divided into drinking, mineral, industrial, technical and thermal energy types according to its use and purpose. Drinking water must meet the sanitary and hygienic requirements and comply with the norms according to its organoleptic indicators and physical and chemical properties. Mineral water - must comply with the norms according to the components in its composition, having therapeutic properties. Industrial water must meet its regulatory requirements by being used in the industrial field. Technical water should be suitable for use in the field of agriculture, household, and irrigation and should meet regulatory requirements. Thermal and energetic water consist of thermal and energetic water being used in the national economy. [1]

The hydrosphere is considered as a filter-accumulator of all types of pollutants entering the natural environment. The main factor that ensures this is that water has the ability to dissolve most of the chemical compounds in mineral and gaseous form, and the water cycle occurs regularly in nature. As a result of the water circulation in nature, the biogenic cycle of all chemical compounds is created, the effect of toxic and harmful substances weakens, their concentration decreases, in a word, chemical migration occurs. Ecologically clean, pure, non-toxic water ensures the normal life activity of humans, animals and other living beings.

Hydrosphere pollution sources are divided into the following types according to their origin:

- metallurgical and energy industry waste water;
- waste water of agriculture, livestock farms and processing enterprises;
- household waste water;
- sewage - waste water of cities and settlements;
- drainage water of irrigated lands;
- technogenic pollution;
- atmospheric deposits - rains.

According to statistics, more than 420 km³ of waste water per year around the world is 7 thousand km³ with formation – more than 1.5 times of the total water in the rivers of the CIS

countries – makes drinking water unfit. This may cause danger on facing a drinkable water shortage of population in the world recently.

Chemical pollutants enter water bodies mainly with wastewater from non-ferrous and ferrous metallurgy, oil, gas, chemical, stone, coal, cellulose and paper and forest materials processing industries and make them unusable. Waste water from the chemical, electric power, woodworking and machine-building industries plays a huge role in the pollution of water sources. Mixing even a small amount of multicore hydrocarbons - benzene, xylene, toluene - into water poisons and destroys aquatic organisms, or slows down their normal reproduction and development. It is also dangerous to mix surfactants used during oil exploitation with water in order to increase oil production [2-3].

Chlorine-containing organic compounds, phenols, chlorides have a strong toxic effect on organisms when mixed with water. Heavy metals include lead, cadmium, mercury, nickel, copper, selenium, chromium, tin, etc. mixed drinking water causes poisoning in humans, animals and other living things. For instance, the mixing of selenium with water causes liver diseases, the mixing of mercury causes the nervous system, and the mixing of cadmium causes kidney diseases in people.

Table 1. Natural environment with heavy metals polluting industries.

| № | Field names | Cd | Cr | Cu | Hg | Pb | Ni | Sn | Zn |
|---|--------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | Cellulose - paper industry | | + | + | + | + | + | | + |
| 2 | Mining industry | + | + | | + | + | | + | + |
| 3 | Chlorine and alkali production | + | + | | + | + | | + | + |
| 4 | Fertilizer production | + | + | + | + | + | + | | + |
| 5 | Refinement of oil | + | + | + | | + | + | | + |
| 6 | Steel production | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + |
| 7 | Nonferrous metallurgy | | + | + | + | + | | | + |
| 8 | Auto and aviation industries | + | + | + | + | + | | + | + |
| 9 | Glass, cement, ceramics | | + | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| 10 | Textile industry | | + | | | | | | |
| 11 | Leather processing industry | | + | | | | | | |
| 12 | Steam-power plants | | + | | | | | | + |

Pollution of the world's ocean water and other water bodies with oil and oil products is one of the most dangerous environmental problems faced by mankind in the XXI century. In particular, mixing even the smallest amount of oil and its products in drinking water gives bad, unpleasant smell, and when their amount in water is 0.1-0.2 mgdm³, it tastes oil after cooking fish. Mixing one ton of oil in water creates a special layer that covers the surface of the water in an area of 2.6 km², as a result of which the light flood, the living things are destroyed because of photosynthesis and oxygen supply of the water are weakened. The main reason for mixing of oil and its products with water is accidents and negligence of workers in oil extraction wells, pipelines, ships, and tankers during production. [4]

Wars and ethnic conflicts also play a special role in the pollution of the World Ocean and other water bodies. For example, during the war in January-February 1991, 1.2 million t of oil was spilled to the Persian Bay. During that war, 470 tankers were hit by missiles and aerial bombs in the Persian Bay, 156 of them were seriously damaged and a large amount of oil was spilled into the sea. Up to half of oil and its products are transported from one area to another by tankers. Tankers are filled with water when they return after carrying oil to the intended country, and again when the oil is transported, this ballast water is emptied and oil residues are poured into the sea with it. Thus, a tanker with a water capacity of 30,000 tons pours 300 tons of fuel oil into the sea during each trip and pollutes its water. [5]

There are various sources of water pollution. Water sources can be polluted mainly by oil and its products, industrial enterprises and transport waste, sewage, soil erosion, domestic waste, construction and forest materials, hydrocarbons, SAM, chlorides, heavy metals, radioactive substances, sulfates, ammonium salts, iron salts, phenols, methanol, mineral oils, organic acids, diethylene glycol, acids, alkalis, carbon dioxide, hydrogen sulfide, clay particles, etc. by being thrown into water and mixed with it. When the water flowing from the places where animals graze, from the medicated and fertilized fields, forests, gardens, plantations, and streets is poured into rivers and lakes, it pollutes them. There are various pathogens, toxic chemicals, compounds of heavy metals, etc. in such water. The quality of water is also adversely affected by the discharge of wood materials cut in rich forests in trace elements, especially disinfected firewood, and remaining in the water for a long time. Wood materials rot if left in water for a long time, depleting oxygen and reducing water quality. Due to the production and use of surfactants (SAM), water is more polluted with a group of substances (alkyl sulfate, sulfanol, OP-7, Op-10, some detergents, disinfectants, etc.). Laundries, textile, wool-leather enterprises use such substances a lot. The amount of synthetic active substances is rather high in the water used in these enterprises (100-200 mg/l). [6]

Synthetic surfactants (SSAM). SSAM is a large group of compounds that fall into different classes and differ in their structure. These compounds can be adsorbed on the phase separation surface and thereby the surface energy can be reduced. Depending on the properties of SSAM when they are dissolved in water, they are divided into anion-active (the active center is an anion), cation-active (the active center of the molecule is a cation), completely non-ionized ampholyte and non- neonogens.

Anionic SSAM is ionized by the generation of oppositely charged organic ions in aqueous solution. The most widely used are salts of sulfur esters (sulfates) and salts of sulfoacids (sulfonates) from SSAM. The radical R can be alkyl, alkylaryl, alkylnaphthyl and has a double bond with the functional group.

Cationic SSAM is ionized by the presence of positively charged organic ions in water. These include quaternary ammonium salts, which are open-chain hydrocarbon radicals containing 12-18 carbon atoms; methyl, ethyl or benzyl radicals; includes chlorine, bromine, iodine or methyl and ethyl sulfate precipitate. Depending on the environmental conditions, ampholyte SSAM are ionized in different ways in water – they show cationic properties in acidic environments, and anionic ones in alkaline environments.

Nonionic SSAM is a high molecular weight compound that does not form ions in water.

SSAM can enter water bodies in different ways - through household waste (use of synthetic detergents) and industrial waste water (textile, petroleum, chemical industry, production of synthetic rubbers), as well as agriculture (pesticides). The reason for their decrease is biochemical oxidation, sorption by bottom sediments and suspended compounds. Biochemical oxidation of SSAM depends on their chemical structure and environmental conditions. From a hygienic point of view, the disadvantage of SAM is its foaming property. SSAM are not considered highly toxic substances. At 5-15 mg/dm³, fish lose their mucous membranes, and higher levels may cause bleeding in the gills. WPH limit of SSAM is 0.5 mg/dm³. [7]

Polyacrylamide. Polyacrylamide is a solid amorphous white or highly transparent, odorless, water-soluble substance. The molar mass can be as high as 5,500,000. Polyacrylamide is used as a flocculent in wastewater clarification, coagulant in metallurgy, as a dispersant, release agent. It is stored in the waste water of sulfated cellulose plants and enrichment factories. In water, polyacrylamide is hydrolyzed to the ammonium salt of polyacrylic acid. Its WPH limit is 2 mg/dm³.

Resinous substances. Many plants secrete resinous substances of complex composition. The resin secreted by conifers (pine, fir) is very harmful for fish and plankton representatives. Resinous substances can enter the water due to hydrolysis industry, during deforestation. The WPH is below 2 mg/dm³.

Tannin agents (tannins). Many plants contain phenolic compounds - tanning agents. They enter surface waters during forest runoff, as well as during runoff from the hydrolysis industry (cellulose-paper and textile industries). WPH 10 mg/dm³. [8]

Water soluble sulfated lignin. Lignin is a compound of high molecular aromatic nature. There are three types of lignin: lignin of coniferous wood, deciduous wood and herbaceous

plants. The common structure of all types is phenylpropane. Its diversity is its combination with different groups. Sulfated lignin in the dissolved form falls into the waste water of the cellulose and paper industry, into the surface water. The main property of lignin is its tendency to undergo a condensation reaction. In natural water, lignin decomposes in 200 days. During the decomposition of lignin, its small toxic compounds (phenol, methanol, carbonic acids) are formed. Its WPH limit is 5 mg/dm^3 .

Chlorine compounds. Chlorine compounds belong to supercotoxic substances. They differ in their excellent biological activity, they spread to areas that are sharply different from their original location, and they can have a negative effect on living organisms in the form of micro compounds. Chlorine substances include polychlorinated dioxins, dibenzofuran, biphenyl, as well as chlorinated pesticides.

Dioxins are well soluble in organic solvents, but practically insoluble in water. Another important property of dioxins is their ability to adhere to soil, soil particles, and bottom sediments, which allows them to accumulate in complex with organic matter, migrate, and enter air, water, and food products. But the danger of dioxins is higher during the cumulative effect. Currently, the presence of dioxin in food products, air and drinking water is prohibited. But this is practically impossible due to the presence of xenobiotics in large quantities in the environment. Therefore, the ways of dioxins entering the human body and their released concentrations were determined by the environmental protection and sanitary-hygienic services of many developed countries. [9]

Chlorinated biphenyls (trichlorodiphenyl, dichlorodiphenyl). Chlorinated biphenyls enter natural water mainly due to the discharge of industrial wastewater into rivers. They accumulate in silty sediments of water intake ($50\text{-}500 \text{ mg/dm}^3$ in rivers).

Chlorinated biphenyls enter the soil through the application of fertilizers. Their amount decreases due to evaporation and biotransformation (half-life is 5 years).

Chlorine substances are almost everywhere. They are resistant to environmental conditions. Chlorinated biphenyls are highly toxic compounds that damage the liver and kidneys. They activate microsomal cells of the liver. With an increase in the amount of chlorine, an increase in the latter property occurs in the chlorobiphenyl molecule. Chlorobiphenyls have embryotoxic properties. The reason for their formation is the formation of polychlorodibenzofuran and polychlorodibenzodioxins. They gradually accumulate in the body.

Furfural. Furfural enters natural water with waste water from chemical plants (it is the main raw material in organic synthesis). Furfural is a stable substance. In addition to inhalation, furfural enters the body through the skin. Its entry into the human body causes irritation of the skin layer. WPH is 1.0 mg/dm^3 .

Caprolactam. Caprolactam is well soluble in water, polymerizes with the formation of polyamide mixture. Caprolactam is used in the production of poly-ε-caproamide. WPH is $1,0 \text{ mg/dm}^3$.

Cyclohexanone. This compound enters the water due to the forest chemical industry, production of caprolactam and plastic. 1 mg/dm^3 gives smell to water. The toxic amount for

fish is 1-100 mg/dm³. Cyclohexanone is a narcotic substance with an irritating effect. WPH is 0.2 mg/dm³. [10]

Cyclohexanone oxime. This substance is an intermediate product in the production of caprolactam. At a solidity of 7800 mg/dm³, it produces a strange smell in the water, which does not last long. It destroys the structure of hemoglobin; it is not considered a drug. The WPH is 1 mg/dm³.

Cyanides. Cyanide compounds enter the surface waters from waste waters of electroplating workshops, ore enrichment factories, gold extraction industrial gas and coke chemical plants, ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, gas generator stations.

Radonides (thiocyanates). Inorganic radonides are salts of thiocyanic acid. Thiocyanates enter surface water through waste water of coke-chemical plants, mining and metallurgical enterprises. The formation of thiocyanates is also possible in the production of fertilizers. WPH- is 0.1-0.15 mg/dm³. The permissible amount of thiocyanates in wastewater used for irrigation of agricultural land is 2 mg/dm³.

Strontium. The source of Sr in natural water is mountain rocks. Its amount is more in gibbous sediments. The low solidity of Sr in natural water is explained by the low solubility of its sulfate compounds (the solubility of SrSO₄ at 180⁰ C is 114 mg/dm³).

The solidity of Sr in freshwater is relatively low. It is expressed 1mg/dm³ and in micrograms per meter. It is also found in regions where the solidity of this ion is high in water. Although it is close to Ca in terms of its chemical properties, Sr is significantly different from it in terms of its biological effects. The excess amount of this element in the soil, water and food products cause "strontium" disease in humans and animals - deformation of the joints, as well as the cessation of coloring. WPH- is 7mg/dm³ [11]

How can we help reduce water pollution?

Normally, the biggest culprit of water pollution is our excessive consumption, because the production of all kinds of goods involves a large consumption of water and its pollution. For example, **clothes, shoes, etc. hundreds of dyes and highly polluting substances are used to make it.** [12]

Much of the pollution is intensive agriculture, which requires pesticides, and consumes large amounts of water and cause pollutants to flow into waterways. In addition, the use of these pesticides and fertilizers pollutes the soil and aquifers. By consuming organic products, we can contribute to reducing pollution, thus we can reduce the products produced by intensive agriculture. Another activity that consumes and pollutes water is paper bleaching. The consumption of recycled paper contributes to less water pollution. [13]

Some waste: For example, plastic bags remain in the water. These go to the sea and stay there for a long time until they rot. This can be avoided by reducing the use of plastic bags and placing those that are no longer useful in the yellow bin for further treatment and recycling. [14]

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Contested Identities: is Albanian Nationalism Essentially ‘Primordial’ or is It the Outcomes of Modernity and Industrialisation?

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Abstract

The paper attempts to analyse the features of Albanian nationalism since its inception in the second half of the 19th century. The theoretical framework draws from the main theories of nationalism. The different schools of thought attempt to provide an explanation on the nature and origin of the nations. Primordialism considers that ‘nations’ are natural, rooted in the human nature and exist outside time. The ethnic and national relations precede any other social relation that human beings establish among themselves. Modernism claims that nations and nationalism are inherently modern and products of capitalism, industrialism, bureaucracy, mass communication and secularism and that they have emerged in the last two hundred years. Ethnosymbolism which emerged as a critique to Modernist Approach claims that people have a variety of collective identities, from family and gender to class, religious and ethnic affiliations. Human beings choose and construct their identities, which are never static. According to this approach, nationalists reconstructed the nation out of pre-existing ethnic ties and traditions. The nationalist movement in Albania emerged in the second half of the 19th century. As all movements that aim at building a nation state and separating from the Ottoman Empire, it featured itself as a primordialist nationalist movement. However, it displays the same features even after almost two centuries and at a time when Albania attempts to integrate itself in the European Union. With the help of discourse analysis as a methodology, the paper investigates the strategies used by the Albanian political, social and cultural elite to construct the Albanian identity after the collapse of communism to conclude that regardless of the change in the context where it takes place and the challenges that the country face, the discourse in the post-communist is similar with the nationalist discourse of the 19th century, when the nationalist movements originated.

Key words: nation and nationalism, primordialism, ethnosymbolism, modernism, national interest

I. Introduction

Albania got its independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1912. Its efforts to achieve this started in the mid-19th century which is the period of the modern states’ formation. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there were significant attempts to modernize the political, economic, and social structures in various countries across the world. Albania was no exception to this trend and made efforts to build a modern state similar to those of Western Europe. These efforts included the creation of political parties and a parliament, which lasted until 1928 when the country became a monarchy. Along with the political reforms, there were also attempts to conduct an agricultural reform, which aimed to improve land ownership and productivity. Additionally, education was a priority, and there were endeavors to establish a modern

education system modeled after those in the Western countries. The Albanian government adopted legislation from Western countries to improve various aspects of society, including laws on commerce, banking, and industry, which helped to lay the foundations for the country's economic growth in the years to come. Despite facing many challenges, these efforts contributed significantly to Albania's modernization, setting the stage for future development and progress.

In order to understand the discourse of the political and cultural elites of Albania in their efforts to build the nation state it is important to understand what nation is. Nations are considered the source of legitimacy for states, while "Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent" (Gellner, 1983, 1). However, nationalism is important not only for its political mission of sheltering the nation into a state but also because it influences people's lives and minds by shaping their identities and, thus, their understanding of the world and the role these people should play in it (Billing in Ozkirimli, 2000, 3).

Nationalism can be traced to the end of the eighteenth century. In fact, "the history of Europe from 1789 to 1945 is synonymous with the growth and development of modern nations" (Baycroft in Ozkirimli, 2000, 12). In general, scholars agree that the French Revolution constitutes the momentum of the genesis of nationalism because "it founded the new political order on the principle that the people constituted a nation and that the nation, in turn, was the sole source of political legitimacy" (Dunkerley, 2002, 50).

An analysis of the European nations would require, first and foremost, a definition of "nation." Considering that there are different schools of thought on nationalism and that scholars have different and often opposing ideas on the meaning of the nation, this becomes a difficult task to accomplish. Therefore, we will attempt to present the main schools of thought on the nation and nationalism, as well as critiques of these schools. Primordialism considers nations as rooted in human nature, while modernism argues that nations are a product of modernism and industrialization. The third approach, ethnosymbolism, considers that while modern nations are a product of modernism, they are nonetheless built on a past that cannot be neglected. Ethnicities are important, and indeed they have played an important role and provided the ground on which modern nations are built.

The paper is organized in two parts. The first part is a literature review of the theories of nationalism. The second part analyses the nationalist discourse of the political and cultural elites in Albania. The contention here is that, regardless of the challenges the country has faced and the regardless the foreign enemies, the nationalist discourse has been constant. It blames the Ottoman Empire for the exclusion of Albanian from the West and against this backdrop, and within the domestic sphere, everyone who is considered as the opponent is attacked as an 'oriental' who similarly with the Ottomans is keeping the country behind.

II. Literature Review: From Primordialism to Ethnosymbllism, the main school of thoughts of nations and nationalism.

The literature on nations and nationalism is vast indeed. However, this vast literature can be grouped in three main schools: primordialism, modernism and ethnosymbllism. In the following sections will be provided a short summary with their main contentions in order then to understand the features of the Albanian Nationalism.

II.1 Primordialism

The primordialist approach toward the nation considers the "nation" as natural and rooted in human nature. Ethnic and national relations are essential and precede any other social relation that human beings might establish among themselves. According to primordialists, the nation "exists in nature, outside time. It is one of the 'givens' of human existence" (Smith 1993, 20). Primordialists claim that "nations and ethnic communities are the natural units of history and integral elements of human experiences" (Smith 2007, 12). Primordialism is the earliest approach to the nation. It is divided into three streams: the Naturalist Approach, the Sociobiological Approach, and the Culturalist Approach as follows:

II.1.1. Primordialist discourse: the Naturalist Approach

In 1785, J.G. von Herder spoke of the nation as an enlarged family, as a product of nature with a specific and particular character which it could maintain for thousands of years. Herder considered "people" as a natural growth like a family, which ought to be homogeneous. Moreover, Herder considered that state and nation should have congruent borders (Zimmern 1939, 164-165). Three decades later, Fichte addressed the Germans with an article on the special quality of the German people. He wrote: "Men are formed by language far more than language is formed by men...The Germans speak a language which has been alive ever since it first issued from the force of nature..." (170,173). Similar ideas could be traced in the discourse of G. Mazzini, who in his 1859 address "To the Young Men of Italy" spoke of the country as a mission, a common duty, a dream, as "that line in God's design" (178). For Mazzini, the country is a predestined place on earth which belongs to only one nation, because it is "a stone upon which is written an Italian name" (178).

A critique of this approach could be that of Ernest Renan, who in 1882 wrote his now-famous paper "What is a Nation?" where he declares that "Nations...are a fairly recent phenomenon in history" (in Zimmern 1939, 187) and that "The modern nation is...the historic consequence of a series of facts converging towards the same point" (191). For Renan, nothing natural is innate in nations. Ethnographic considerations have played no role in the formation of modern nations. He points out that France, Germany, and the British Isles are not composed of homogeneous ethnicities but rather are a mixture of Celtic, Iberic, Germanic, and Slavs (these last ones only in Germany). Italy, as well is a mixture of Gauls, Etruscans, Pelasgians, and Greeks. For Renan, race, language, culture, geography, and common interests cannot serve as categories to define a nation. Race is anterior to culture and language and therefore they "were not born" together and as such cannot define a nation. Language too is not an inherent "given" in one's nation: "In Prussia, where nothing but German is now spoken, Russian was spoken a few centuries ago". According to him, "languages are historical formations" (199). Nor can religion provide a satisfactory base for a modern nationality, because the religion practiced in ancient Athens was different from that practiced in Sparta (even though they belonged to the same nation) and then changed after the Roman Empire conquest and again after the Orthodox Byzantine Empire Conquest. Renan comments that "a man can be a Frenchman, an Englishman, or a German, and at the same time a Catholic, a Protestant, or a Jew, or practice no form of worship at all" (201).

II.1.2. Sociobiological Approach

The main scholar of the Sociobiological Approach is Pierre Van den Berghe, who claims that kin selection, or mating with relatives, is a powerful cement of sociality in humans. According

to him, humans are social beings and as such have primordial instincts of group belonging. For Van den Berghe, ethnicity and nation are extensions of kinship. To recognize the members of a nation, criteria such as language, religion, customs, dress, haircut, and skin color are used. Cultural elements such as myths of the common origin are convincing only when there are physical similarities among the people and when they have lived together for a long time (Ozkirimli, 2000, pp. 70-73).

II.1.3. The Culturalist Approach

The leading exponents of this approach are Eduard Shils and Clifford Geertz. Eduard Shils is considered to be the first to employ the term when, in the article 'Primordial, Personal, Sacred and Civil Ties' written in 1957, he argues that "the strength of the attachments one feels for her/his family members does not stem from interaction, but from 'a certain ineffable significance...attributed to the tie of blood'" (Ozkirimli, 2000, p. 65). Clifford Geertz uses a similar definition when he considers primordial attachment as one that stems from 'givens' such as the particular religious community where one was born, the particular language or dialect of a language that he or she speaks, and the social practices that this particular community exercises. However, it is worth mentioning that both Shils and Geertz do not consider that the objects of ethnic attachments are really 'given' or primordial, but rather they are assumed to be as such by individuals (Ozkirimli, 2000, p. 72).

II.1.4. Critiques of Sociobiological and Culturalist Approaches

Both the sociobiological and culturalist approaches have been criticized for their failure to consider sociological and historical factors. Sociobiology cannot explain the genetic, biological, and cultural diversity of some ancient ethnic groups. Anthony D. Smith uses the example of the Greeks, where there were significant distinctions in social, religious, and political life between the Ionians, Aeolians, Boeotians, and Dorians, who were all considered part of the Hellenic community (1991, 47). Moreover, modern Greeks are a genetic combination of Helens with Albanians, Slavs, and Avars due to the massive influx of these groups between the late sixth and eighth centuries AD (28-29). In terms of culture, they experienced a complete eradication of their polytheist memory of ancient Greece when the Christian Orthodox religion took hold.

Regarding cultural primordialism, the "givens" used to underpin this theory are changeable. Eugen Weber points out that up until the late nineteenth century, only a quarter of those living in France spoke standard French (Dunkerley, 2002, 46). Renan's arguments are also valid in this case.

II.2 Modernism and Ethnosymbolism

Modernism and Ethnosymbolism are analyzed together because Ethnosymbolism has emerged as a critique of modernism. There is vast literature on the modernism of nations. In general, scholars of modernism agree that nations and nationalism are inherently modern and that they have emerged in the last two hundred years. Furthermore, a nation is considered to be a product of capitalism, industrialism, bureaucracy, mass communication, and secularism. Lastly, ethnicity is considered to be a resource and instrument of elites in their struggles for power (Smith, 1996, 29). Below we will explore in more detail the thoughts of Tom Nairn, Benedict Anderson, and Eric Hobsbawm, who are representatives of two different approaches to

modernism: Economic Transformation and Social/Cultural Transformation. These will then be analyzed based on the critique that Anthony D. Smith, the leading scholar of ethnosymbolism, makes of their work.

II.2.1. Economic Transformation

According to Nairn, nations and nationalism are consequences of the uneven development of countries since the end of the eighteenth century. Nationalism was born in the countries colonized by Western Europe, which at the time had initiated capitalist development and accumulated capital. The gap created between the core and the periphery (Nairn is influenced by the Dependency Theory of Andre Gunder Frank) led the elites of the dominated countries to invite the masses into politics so that they could become independent and have their own factories, schools, and parliaments. Nationalist movements in Europe emerged as a reaction to what happened in the periphery (Ozkerimli, 2000, p. 89-90).

Scholars such as Breuilly and Smith criticize Nairn's theory because it doesn't fit the facts. Nationalism originated in Europe before it established colonies overseas, and it cannot be explained by economic exploitation or backwardness. Orridge notes that the uneven development theory cannot explain the rise of nationalism in areas where there is no such unevenness, such as in the Balkan countries where nationalist movements emerged in the 19th century despite there being no uneven development between the core region of the Ottoman Empire and these countries (in Ozkerimli, 2000, p. 93).

II.2.2. Social Cultural Transformation: Imagined Communities

Moving on to Social Cultural Transformation, Benedict Anderson posits that nations are cultural artifacts that were created as a result of historical forces in the late 18th century. He argues that nations are imagined political communities that are both inherently limited and sovereign (1991, 6). Anderson explains that this imagined community came to life when two cultural communities - religious and the dynasty - declined (16-19). This decline was due to geographical discoveries (the dynasty) and the rise in importance of vernacular languages through print capitalism, which caused the decline of religious literature and language (Latin) (19-36). The idea of past generations, as well as the coming ones, became possible through a change in the conception of time, which is no longer perceived as Messianic time, but rather measured by the clock and calendar that make it possible to imagine the nation moving calendarically through "homogeneous empty time" up and down history (24-36). Nationalist ideology can be disseminated through mass media, the educational system, and administrative regulations, which experienced rapid expansion in the mid-19th century and opened the gates to a great number of people from different social origins (75-76, 114-115). Anderson believes that nationalism emerged due to cultural transformations that converged with modernism in the late 18th century.

II.2.3 Political Transformation

According to Hobsbawm, the modern nation is a product of specific historical circumstances in which invention and "social engineering" play an important role. Traditions, considered as facts that prove the ancestry of a nation, are merely products of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries (1988, 1). For Hobsbawm, "invented traditions" are a set of practices of a symbolic nature that "seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which

automatically implies continuity with the past" (1988, 1). These "invented traditions" seek to establish continuity with a past that has already been forgotten due to breaks occurring in the lives of people, such as revolutions, epidemics, wars, etc. For him, such continuity is factitious (1988, 2).

The invention of traditions happened at a time when old social categories were disintegrated, and the masses entered into the political scene. Therefore, their activism became a concern of the state, which "defined the largest state on which crucial activism determining human lives as subjects and citizens were played out" (1988, 264). The population was now entitled to influence or change the government of the state. During the period 1848-1905, extensive manhood suffrage was operating in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom (1988, 267). In these circumstances, the dominant group considered it imperative to ensure the loyalty, obedience, and cooperation of the people, or its legitimacy in their eyes (1988, 264-265). The legitimacy was no longer Divine; it had to come from the people. These invented traditions had a political aim: to create the "nation" that could provide social cohesion, legitimacy of institutions and authority, and socialization by inculcating beliefs, value systems, and systems of conventions (1988, 9). The invention of traditions and as a consequence of the nation was reached through the development of primary education imbued with nationalist discourse, the invention of public ceremonies, and mass production of monuments (1988, 271-272).

Hugh Trevor-Roper, in his essay "The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland," points out that the Highland culture of Scotland is an invention because "the Highlanders of Scotland did not form a distinct people. They were simply the overflow of Ireland" (1988, 15). While now the Scotsmen have their traditional dress (the kilt), which they dress in traditional events and when celebrating their national identity, they don't know that this dress is modern and cannot prove the antiquity they claim because it is merely dated in the middle of the eighteenth century (1988, 15-23). But most importantly, the literature and history of Celtic Scotland are creations of James and John Macpherson in the late eighteenth century (1988, 16-19). This is but one example of an "invented tradition." Hobsbawm brings other examples from the German, French, and British case, such as Bastille Day (in France), May Day throughout Europe, which, from a political movement for the rights of the workers, became transformed into "a highly charged festival and rite" (1988, 285), or sports activities such as the International and the Olympic Games, Cup Finale, and Tour de France. They were all events that could bring masses together and create cohesion among them while creating political bonds with the state, which was the organizer of them. Hobsbawm concludes: "Nations do not make states and nationalism but the other way round" (1997, 9).

Anthony D. Smith is the founder of Ethnosymbolism which as a school of thought emerged as a critique to modernism. He argues that nationalism contribute to the reconstruction of the nation out of pre-existing ethnic ties and traditions by reviving an older communal style. Neither print-capitalism nor invented tradition can fully explain why so many people are willing to die for their nation. Additionally, nationalism succeeded in places like Serbia or Ukraine, where there was little to no capitalism or industry in the nineteenth century. Smith questions how one can disentangle the elements of pure invention from those of rediscovery, revival, or reconstruction of pre-existing elements. Furthermore, he believes that any revival of an old tradition or the rehabilitation of broken links with the past doesn't mean that these links are factitious. The fact that a tradition is adapted to a new social context is nothing new

and certainly not an indicator of fabrication, because traditions have always changed. There is no period where they have been fixed and unchanged for an extended period of time. Smith also argues that manipulations of the past cannot succeed beyond the immediate moment, especially in Europe, where links with the past are close and traceable. Furthermore, any attempt to construct or invent traditions would be to look at the history of one's community and not to appropriate or annex the past of another community. Nationalists didn't invent traditions out of nothing; rather, they selected from the vast choice of myths, symbols, memories, and traditions of a given community (1993, 13-17, 19-23).

This summary is necessary to understand the features of the Albanian nationalist discourse. The analysis takes

III. Albanian Nationalist Discourse

The period from 1878 (Albanian League of Prizren) to 1912 (Declaration of Independence) was marked by the articulation of the idea of the nation as ancient and rooted deep down the history of civilizations. The Renaissance adherents aimed to establish a modern national state modeled after the advanced national states of Western Europe. They drew on the late 19th-century European discourses on the division of humanity into races and nations to achieve this goal. To contrast with the Orientalist stereotype of the "despotic Turk," the Albanians were portrayed as the oldest and purest European nation, eager to escape Asian barbarism. The cultural and political elites developed a self-Orientalism, as modernization in Albania was framed along a West-East axis since the late 19th century. During the Renaissance, Albanian nationalists saw their task as a continuation of Skanderbeg's efforts to maintain Albanian national freedom and protect Europe from Asiatic barbarians. The Albanian uprising acted as a barrier against the Turks' aggression, protecting Europe and thus paving the way for the Enlightenment period (Sulstarova, 2012)

The reason for Albania's lack of development and progress in comparison to Western Europe for many centuries is often attributed to the Ottoman period, which is seen as the most "Oriental" part of Albania's history. As a result, this period has become the benchmark against which subsequent Albanian history is judged.

Interestingly, even the Communist period from 1945 to 1989, which could arguably be seen as a time of rapid modernization for Albania, is also considered to be part of the "East." The Turks, Russians, Chinese, and Albanian communists are all seen as having contributed to the country's detachment from Western Europe and its integration into the Eastern world. This view suggests that the legacy of Albania's historical experiences has continued to shape its cultural identity and national aspirations well into the modern era (2007, 2009).

The Albanian Orientalist Discourse is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that has been shaped by a range of historical, cultural, and political factors. One of the key features of this discourse is an emphasis on Islam as a new danger, reflecting the global atmosphere created after 9/11 and the "war on terror." In Albania, this has been manifested in a growing sense of unease about the role of Islam in Albanian society and its potential to undermine the country's secular and democratic values.

At the heart of this discourse is the idea that Islam has assumed the role of the new "Other," a term used to describe groups or individuals who are seen as fundamentally different or alien to mainstream society. In the case of Albania, this has led to a situation where the public rituals and practices of Islam are often considered as strange, exotic, "Asiatic," ignorant,

and backward. For some, they are even seen as a possible bridge for bringing terrorism to Europe. The discourse around Islam in Albania has also been shaped by wider global trends, particularly the idea of the "clash of civilizations." This concept, popularized by Samuel Huntington in the 1990s, suggests that the world is divided into distinct cultural and religious blocs that are inherently incompatible with one another. In this view, Islam is seen as pulling Albania toward the East, away from its Western European roots and values.

III. 2 Orientalism and Orientalisation of the Nationalist Discourse

Before proceeding with the analysis of the Albanian nationalist discourse it is important to understand what is meant with orientalism, since it is a very important concept used by the Albanian cultural and political elites. According to Said (1978), orientalism is a trend that represents the lens through which Western writers, policymakers, and the general public have interpreted and characterized the societies of the Middle East as "the Orient." For Said, orientalism is not an accurate portrayal of these societies or their inhabitants. Instead, it is a construct of the Western imagination that assumes a fundamentally distinct, exotic, perilous, unchanging, and "other" East - an idea that was a crucial intellectual pillar of European imperialism and that persists to have significant ramifications for contemporary global politics.

Ussama Makdisi (2002) coined another important concept: Ottoman Orientalism or Self Orientalism which refers to the usage of orientalism as a concept not necessarily linked with what is understood with the literal meaning of orientalism but rather the one which recreates the cultural or civilizational hierarchies. In his words "in an age of Western-dominated modernity, every nation creates its own Orient" (p.768). In addition to the Ottoman orientalism coined by Makdisi, we have also the "domestic Orientalism" (Buchowski, 2006). The word oriental is used domestically to stigmatize specific groups such as peasants, religious communities and the like. These categories are labelled as oriental thus depicting them as groups which hinder the modernization of the country and its orientation towards the West.

In the Albanian nationalist discourse the features depicting the orient and the oriental are as follows: the oriental person and culture in general is un-changing and static. The oriental is corrupted, cruel, savage, cunning, treacherous and pervert. The portraying of the oriental with all the above-mentioned characteristics has been consistent in the Albanian literature post-independence and in the political discourse that emerged after this critical moment and continued during communism and post-communism (Sulstarova, 2007). This anti-orientalist discourse is built having as a backdrop a primordialist approach. Thus, in the poem *History of Skanderbeg* (1898) of the 19th century the author Naim Frashëri depicts the Ottoman empire as a savage beast that coming from Asia with a cunning tongue, cruel eyes, satanic heart, which killed and impoverished the bright civilization of Albania, which sacrificed itself for the protection of Europe.

This discourse continued throughout the 20th century, regardless of the turbulent times the country have gone through. While the enemies have been different, the discourse has been the same: the enemy had to be depicted as oriental and therefore cruel and savage and as a threat to the national identity of the country. Thus we find the same features in the work of Faik Konica "Four Tales from Zululand" (1922), Branko Merxhani (1932), Fan Noli's speeches and literary works, Mitrush Kuteli etc, which all belong to the pre-communist period. The same is true for the communist period. For a more detailed account please read Sulstarova 2012 who

has analysed the work of Ismail Kadare, the most prominent author of the literature of the socialist realms.

However, this discourse preserved its characteristics even after the collapse of the communist system in 1990. Even though the political, economic and social conditions were not the same, the public discourse in Albania, being it political or cultural, preserved the same features. Albanian political leaders proclaimed the EU integration of Albania as the main goal, as an undisputable goal or in the words of Kajsiu (2006, p.7) as the telos of its historical progress. The EU integration was and is still discussed within an identitarian framework: Albania is in Europe, its national identity is European and as such it belongs to Europe and deserve to enter EU. Perhaps, this is the time where the concept of the oriental and orientalism are used with a more vivid force and frequency than before. This is of course linked with the increasing power of the media: TV, print and digital platforms which have never had this huge outreach to people as much as now. With the help of the countless information channels it is easier to multiply the effects of one's discourse.

In this framework the rhetoric of Albania's EU integration, even though the process itself is political, is conducted within the identitarian frame. Thus Pirro Misha, an Albanian intellectual in the public space as far as 1997 commented that the presence of a significant Muslim population in Albania may not be advantageous for integration into Europe, particularly given the aggressive and anti-Western image presented by certain Islamist groups in the Mediterranean area (p.99). Ismail Kadare pursued his line of writings from communism even in the post-communist period. Thus, in his work "The Albanians in Search of a New Destiny" (2001, p.12) he writes: "It was during Renaissance that Skanderbeg emerged from obscurity and gained his splendour as the carrier of Europeanization". Mustafa Nano is another opinionist/ essayist who is very active in the public domain. In his words the foundation fathers of Albania have always seen Albania as a laik European country. In his public outings he calls for 'hiding' traces of Islam, such as praying, from the public places.

IV. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to analyse the Albanian nationalist discourse since its inception in the mid-19th century. While not pretending to be exhaustive, especially taking into consideration the long time it has taken to analysis, this conference paper could serve as a starting point for analysing in more details this nationalist discourse. The Albanian nationalist rhetoric has its beginning in the mid 19th century. In this phase it is characterised by primordialism and it is constructed around the concept of orientalism. Albania is depicted as a country which has suffered from the Ottoman Empire invasion and while gaining its independence it should do its best to find its European roots and get rid of any oriental elements. This rhetoric remained the same even after the country proclaimed its independence, during the 1st World War, during the period between the wars and during communism.

With the collapse of the communist system, a great part of the public discourse changed, to be in line with the new reality, but the oriental remained an important element of the public rhetoric. The figure of the oriental remained a permanent feature of the nationalist discourse. It was used to attack the enemy in the domestic domain, using thus the self-orientalism and it was used to justify the failings in the political and economic domain by attributing the lack of integration of Albania into EU to Albania's oriental past and the presence of the Orientals (the Muslim community) in country. In doing so, the political and cultural elites preserved a

primordialist approach which seeks the root of the country deep down the history and make references to a glorious past. Therefore, the Albanian nationalist discourse is primarily primordialist and hasn't changed regardless of the many critical moments in the history of the country.

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