

## **Political influence in primary education texts (1946-1986) affecting pupils' personality development**

**Ermira Alija**

*University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Shkodra, Republic of Albania*

**Migena Selcetaj**

*University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Shkodra, Republic of Albania*

### **Abstract**

*Dictatorships are established and strengthened by imposing themselves on society. One of the tools they use to do this is school, along with textbooks as a means of information and mass spiritual nourishment. This paper aims to analyse the period of communist dictatorship in Albania and its way to influence the individual with an ideology in the function of politics yet to the detriment of the individual as a personality. The research is focused on the primary school reading books of 1946-1986. The passages connected directly with the political content, the parts that had genuine political concepts in the title or in content, were selected to complete this research. A significant number of these short stories, the types, the tendencies of their extension, the object, the nature, and their possibilities of influence were examined as the main materials of the study. During the research, the way textbook readings can influence to paralyze the quest for inner freedom and finding individuality were outlined. Thus, the school as an educational institution can be used to depersonalize the individual in function of the interests of social and political groups. The results showed that any society, including contemporary, could carry ideological influences, so the following*

*article might increase the awareness on the texts used in school and on their interpretation.*

**Keywords:** *elementary school, readings, dictatorship, communism, political context*

## **Introduction**

Albania was a one-party country from 1944 to 1991, and the Party's postulate for school was expressed in one of these sayings: "The Party constantly advises young and elder to go to school, to learn. Due to the care of the party, the school in our country has become like a second life for the people, as a daily nourishment. There is no one in Albania, big or small, woman or man, illiterate young or old, who does not want to learn. This is a great success for the party, which has opened wide perspectives to the people and convinced them that without knowledge, without learning, the right results cannot be achieved, socialism cannot be built, so schools are widespread everywhere around the country". From this postulate, it can be seen that the desire of the people for education was in many cases dictated by the propaganda of the Party (Stephens 2021).

There was no discussion at all about the intellectual elite formed in 1920s-1940s outside Albania, mainly in Western countries. Whereas the school was a limited tool that served the socialist establishment. As for the teachers, it was stated: "If you do a Marxist-Leninist methodical work, the party will not rebuke you, but it will praise you. On the other hand, it will scold you, if there is anarchy in the implementation of the program, i.e., if there is tendency of anyone to do as they like in the implementation of the school curriculum, or anyone who is not preoccupied with the great problem of educating children" and "We fight and

reject decadent bourgeois culture and art that are foreign to socialism, whereas we appreciate and use everything progressive, democratic and revolutionary, which is seen with the critical eye of the proletarian ideology”. As previously stated, the school was under political pressure and one of the most important elements of the school curriculum therein was the textbook. Reading texts are among the most important textbooks that affect the formation of pupils in Primary Education (Weiss 2020).

Z. Pavlović et al. (2019) examined the relationship between education, values and political ideological preferences in the Balkan region, particularly in the former Yugoslavia. The results support Stubager's concept to some extent, indicating that there is a positive correlation between higher levels of education and the propensity to vote for liberal political parties in the region. This refutes the prevailing view that socialist education inculcates exclusively authoritarian values. Nevertheless, the potential political benefits of education may be limited by other circumstances, including the existence of slight polarization among political elites and other structural cleavages.

M. Obrenovic (2020) researched the contentious issue of history textbooks in the former Yugoslavia, with a particular focus on the attempts of Serbia and Republika Srpska to harmonize their curricula. The study highlights the differences in the portrayal of important historical events, such as the Balkan conflicts and the Srebrenica tragedy, in Serbian teaching materials. While textbooks recognize war crimes, they refrain from classifying these events as genocide, which contradicts the decisions of international courts. Also, the study emphasizes the importance of ensuring that educational resources are consistent with court decisions in order to offer an accurate perspective on the events that occurred during the war and to

facilitate the reconciliation process. The author argues that the teaching of modern history should cultivate empathy and understanding rather than perpetuate societal divisions. Nevertheless, providing impartial and comprehensive history education in post-war communities is a complex and difficult task that requires focused reform efforts.

In Albania, people continue to discuss the negative role of the socialist dictatorship in all areas of life. They talk about the punishments, tortures, murders that were committed against the writers who dared to write differently from what the dictatorship said (Hajdari 2010). G. Meta quotes: "The trauma of communism is a trauma within the family, from our people (Meta 2019). Of course, this requires studies, to what extent it has influenced people and what are the signs of this trauma today in our society, but the truth is that this trauma has not been treated, it has even been avoided and silenced". It is important to focus more on how the literature was changed during the dictatorship. Indeed, few specific studies on textbooks and the role they played in the formation of the pupil's personality, have been carried out during the dictatorship while it is known that "the stories the child hears and the narrations in which they participate play a significant role in the organization of experience in the representation of the world" (La Marca et al. 2019; Shust 2017).

Texts and their authors were very carefully selected by the dictatorship to best serve the ideology of the dictatorship in schools. This can be exemplified by the piece entitled "New Textbook" which quotes: "How joyfully I opened my new textbook, today it will tell me how our brave partisans fought for the heroes of our people building the prosperity of the country under the leadership of our beloved Party. I also will learn day by day, to become a valuable person for the people and

the country” (Reading 2, 1963). In the preface of the book “History of Albanian literature of socialist realism”, it is stated: “The work highlights the leading role of the Party in the development and enrichment of Albanian literature during the socialist realism, the struggle it has taken to make art at the service of the workers; a militant art, inspired by the ideals of socialism and communism” (History of Albanian 1985). For this reason, it was important to observe what the school reading texts consisted of during the years of the dictatorship. By understanding that, the society can become more aware and can better understand the forms of power and dictate in schools through the selection of texts and the consequences accordingly (Vlieghe & Zamojski 2020; Nykonenko 2019).

There are many studies on how the book is undoubtedly the most precious treasure to enrich the inner world of a human being, especially to cultivate values of knowledge and citizenship (Takovski 2020). But for children, its importance increases even more. Reading has a direct impact on the mental development of the child, it fosters personality and social development. It is the book that stimulates the child’s imagination and makes their mind more creative and active. Children’s literature is valuable in providing an opportunity to respond to literature, as well as cultural knowledge, emotional intelligence and creativity, social and personality development, and literature history to students across generations (Golanko & Kosmala 2020).

As previously stated, the school was under political pressure, and one of the most important elements of the school curriculum under this pressure was the textbook. Reading text affect the development of the pupils in primary education (Shvardak & Ustych 2016). The objective of the study is to explore how the political influence appeared in the textbooks of the readings in Elementary School, and how

powerful were these in affecting a pupil's personality (nowadays these pupils are adults with their own families).

### **Methods and materials**

This research utilizes a historical approach drawing on qualitative analysis (Kuckartz 2019) of textbook content from 1946-1986 in communist Albania. Historical research aims to reconstruct and interpret past events and ideas to gain insight into present circumstances. Using this lens, the study examines primary school reading textbooks as artifacts that provide a window into the communist regime's ideological influence on education. Primary reading textbooks for grades 1-4 were purposively selected as the data source based on the study's focus on political content aimed at early childhood indoctrination. Textbooks represented the entirety of sanctioned educational materials, as alternative publications were prohibited under the authoritarian system.

Data collection involved a comprehensive review (Kuckartz 2019) of all reading textbook editions published during the period of interest. Detailed notes were taken on each textbook, cataloguing the introduction of political themes, modification of content across editions, and instances of politicization. Data gathering spanned approximately 6 months. A qualitative descriptive methodology guided data analysis. Political passages were identified and described based on typology. Extracts were categorized according to dominant themes reflecting the imposition of communist ideology:

1. Glorification of the ruling Party and leader.
2. Politicization of school activities and figures.
3. Manipulation of family roles and values.

4. Distortion of historical narratives.
5. Portrayal of social life through a political lens.

Passages within each theme were analysed in depth to surface how textbook content potentially shaped students' worldview, values, and perception of the regime. Descriptive codes were applied to extract key attributes, concepts, and ideological messages embedded in the texts. The descriptive approach elucidates the mechanisms of political indoctrination operative in Albania's educational curriculum under authoritarian rule.

## **Results**

### **The passages dedicated to the ruling Party and its leader Enver Hoxha and the constant modification of different topics, in function of politicization**

After the liberation of Albania in 1944, it was an increasing tendency, until it becomes a general characteristic in the late 1960s, to start the books of all grades with a part dedicated to the Party or the communist leader Enver Hoxha, or both. These extracts differ from grade to grade but have the same spirit and ideology: they glorify Enver Hoxha's Party. The same applies for the parts dedicated to the leader Enver Hoxha. It is stated to him: "You lead us, you teach us". The poems "I love comrade Enver" and "I write songs for Enver Hoxha through all my life" speak the language of children who express love and gratitude for what the Party and Enver do day and night for them. Reading the poems and textbooks like "You love us very much", "You think about us", "You work day and night", "For us you work", "And we at school, "We will learn", "Uncle Enver", "May we cherish you", it can be noticed that every element of personality in the child-character who sings to Enver Hoxha or the Party is ignored. For the authors of the textbooks, it

was important that the book opened with the child's physical perception of the figure or name of Enver's Party. This recurring phenomenon from grade to grade in Primary Education had the potential to impose on the child a hierarchy of values. So even ranking was a form of ideologizing. These types of passages, in addition to the introduction of the books, are also included along the content of the text. There are cases when the passage has another title, and it seems that it has no political concept, such as "My heart", but during the reading the text, it becomes clear that the symbol of the heart is associated with the Party and Enver. Even if the passage is dedicated to the homeland at the poem "Our Homeland Today", again the homeland is seen as an achievement of the Party. The Homeland is conceived with the Eagle-eyed Party that boldly leads and as a result it is politicized as a concept (Le & Nguyen 2021).

Looking at the successive publications of the same grade, it can be noticed that there are cases where the same theme and content are repeated, but with different modifications. For example: in the reading texts of the 1st grade, there is a poem entitled "March", which has political connotations: students march, they do not walk, or go on a trip, but march dressed as soldiers and sing about the homeland. In the next edition of "Reading 1" the poem "March" has been replaced with a didactic text "Marching", which has numerous and more direct political connotations: trumpet, trumpeter, flagbearer, platoon commander, pillar, partisan songs, the order given by the commander. Likewise, the passage "A story for our teachers" has a subject similar to the "Best Gift" (Reading 1 1969; Reading 2 1969). In both texts the content is politicized through external party references for evaluations. The difference is that in the first text the politicization occurs with one sentence, while in the second it is introduced in the whole conception of the passage. Another text "Spring" is seen as related to the cooperative (as a socialist



concept), while the passage in the previous text is “Spring is Coming” and has no term nor any other political connotation (Reading 1 1969). The fact that an author of the poem is replaced, with a didactic passage with the same content but without the name of the author is an opportunity for content manipulation. A major of Primary Education readings, whether they include poems, short stories, sketches, or tales, don’t have any authors (Pulina 2020). In some publications, it is written: “Collected, processed, and edited by a group of authors”, whose names are never given. On the other hand, this way of writing texts is also speculation with the individuality of writing as a style limiting it. Taking in consideration the examples, the intervention and the modification done are conscious and intentional. This can also be seen in the passage “My book will tell me how the partisans fought for the heroes of our people, for the construction under the leadership of the Party” (Reading 2 1963). The political modification has also been made at some valuable pedagogical topics, which are not seen in later publications (Hobbs 2020).

The deliberate inclusion of sections praising the party and Enver Hoxha in Albanian textbooks from the late 1960s onwards indicates a deliberate attempt to inculcate communist ideology in students. The recurring themes and changes in later editions indicate a deliberate adjustment of content to reinforce political ideas. The education system was used to promote party goals by politicizing innocuous subjects and suppressing personal creativity, resulting in the imposition of a hierarchical value structure and limiting students' freedom of thought and speech.

### **Ideologically compromising the main figures and activities of the school**

In the successive publications with the school theme, it is noticed that the school as an institution begins to be politicized, as a place where the members of the Council also go. It can be noticed even in the textbook “The New School”, where a

building is identified with the work of the Party (Reading 1 1948). "It is our school...built this year...The beloved party...has donated it to us". At the same time, the teacher as a figure is also politicized. This can be noticed by comparing the poem "Beloved Teacher" with passages in the later editions, such as "My Teacher", "Sokol's Teacher", "Artan's teacher", "A Story for our teachers", "To My Teacher" and "The best gift" (Reading 1 1969; Reading 2 1963; Reading 1969). The text reading in the 1963 edition has no words and no political connotations. The other passages in the following publications present examples of politicized teachers: the teacher who wants to volunteer in the mountains in the name of the Party's ideal; the teacher who talks to the pupils about the Party of socialism and teaches them to love school, parents, friends, Albania, the Party and Comrade Enver. Beyond general pathetic parts in these passages, it is noted that in the description of teachers, there is no place for individual characteristics. Their description is conducted through the real stories and socio-political structures. Other passages that present the activities of the school, such as "At the monolith", "Children's drawings" and "Marching", focus on objects, which are identified with the guidance of the Party (Reading 1 1969). For example, the section "Children's drawings" does not care about children as individuals nor about their individual reflections, but presents the words of the teacher (occupying more than 3/4 of the passage) that guide pupils to observe the objects made by the Party. Likewise, in the passage "Feast of the sparklers", the celebration occurs because: "First graders would be accepted as sparklers.... They put the red star on their chest...". The text idealizes the consciousness of the group, by ignoring personal identity. In the Dictionary of today's Albanian language the word "yllkë" (sparkler) is explained: "Children in a group of five of preschool age in kindergartens, run by an educator, as a form of organizing children before they become primary school pupils (fatosë)" (Dictionary of contemporary Albanian 1980).

Meanwhile at the Dictionary of contemporary Albanian language “fatos” is explained as: “Elementary school student up to the age of nine, before joining the pioneer organization”, while the word “pioneer” is explained as: “Member of the organization that includes children from the age of ten to fifteen years and is run by the Youth Albanian Working Union” (Dictionary of today`s Albanian 1984). In a poem “The Pioneer” there are words such as: “I am a pioneer, I am a pioneer, I am honoured by this name” (Reading 1 1948). In another passage “The Pioneer’s behavior” the little boy Gezim finds a wallet with money and gives it to the woman who had lost it, is called pioneering behaviour (Reading 2 1963). The woman who takes the wallet does not ask the boy’s name. She thanks him with the words: “Thank you, dear pioneer”. Also, in the passage “We are pioneers” the woman who is helped by the children asks them who they are, and they answer: “We are pioneers” (Reading 2 1963). Also in the passages: “Clean and plant the garden” the good actions are associated with the consciousness of the group of pioneers, primary school pupils and sparklers (Reading 2 1969).

The deliberate introduction of communist ideology into some areas of school life, including the physical infrastructure and the image of teachers and students, is evident in the politicization of the education system in later publications. The emphasis on group identification rather than personal qualities emphasizes the party's goal of encouraging loyalty and adherence to its principles. The educational environment is used as a weapon to shape the new generation in accordance with the communist regime's program, emphasizing party loyalty and group consciousness in textbooks and texts. This process leads to a decrease in individualism and critical thinking, promoting ideological conformism.

### **Politically compromising the main figures and the main activities of the family**

In the late 1960s, texts with political connotations for the family in the first and second grades, with titles such as “The tornitor mother”, “Mother became a brigadier” and “The weaver mother” are common. For example, the passage “The tornitor mother” has replaced the passage of the mother in previous editions of 1967 “My mother, to mother”, which had no political connotations (Reading 1 1969). The new version emphasized the role of a mother doing a job that previously was not conducted by women and the fact that this opportunity was given to her by the Party. The text uses the phrase: “Today the Albanian woman is happy”. Happiness is motivated politically, not internally. Other topics are also politicized, such as the holiday of March 8 and it is stated in the following texts: “The grandmother”, “Gift for 8 March”, “8 March”, “8 March is celebrated”, “Feast in family” (Reading 2 1969). In the text reading “Grandmother Vera”, the character of the grandmother is the mother of the killed partisan, now retired, who goes to voluntary work and says: “Lucky me, lucky Albania”. Whereas “The Grandmother” is the character who tells about Skanderbeg, the partisans, Enver Hoxha, and the Party. Also, at the text “Feast of March 8” is associated to the gift for Mother Party, with the love that women have for Enver’s Party, which they express with the songs they sing at the celebration for them. In another passage, it is shown how Lindita’s mother is going to sing at the Gjirokastra Folklore Festival. The children kiss her goodbye by singing the new song about Uncle Enver and the title of the piece is: “Sing for us too”.

In the text reading “Feast in family” it is shown how the new couple become parents and tell their parents that they will no longer celebrate religious holidays in their family (Reading 2 1969). Also, in the section “Joy in the family” it is shown that there is a celebration in Teuta’s family, as the secretary of the Party

organization would come to give his father the Labor Medal. Teuta's grandmother says: "The simple worker has never been more honored than today". Even in this passage, it is the representative of the Party who is praised, while the grandmother introduces her son to the working class and gives credit to the Party for this opportunity. Details about the individuality of the man receiving the medal are almost completely missing. At the section: "Pioneers and Grandmother Filja" shows how pioneer children go to different families to collect copper vessels (Reading 1 1969). Grandma Filja gives it to them with eyes that glow with happiness, as she knows they would take them to melt down to make copper wires for electrification. The history of those dishes at home, the emotional connection with them, the work spent to make them etc., are ignored.

The manipulation of family relations in Albania's educational materials of the late 1960s demonstrates a conscious attempt to integrate communist doctrine into everyday life. By emphasizing women's participation in often male-dominated spheres and celebrating political events such as March 8, family stories are intertwined with devotion to the party and admiration for Enver Hoxha's leadership. The individuality of family members is overshadowed by the dominant narrative of endorsement of the party and socialist progress, illustrating the regime's extensive control over personal and family identity.

### **Political manipulation and compromise of history**

The most important historical topic and the most extensive in terms of the number of passages in each publication is the topic of the National Liberation War. With the great number of passages, it is imposed on students as an absolute period. The Albanian liberation war of the Second World War is glorified and used to elevate the Party as its leader. At the poems "The Great Feast" and "A War with the

Fascists” the contents emphasize the importance of the Party’s contribution to the people during the liberation war. In the passage “Memories of a veteran” a character who was indifferent to the war and was not a communist, before being killed by the fascists, says: “Long live the Party” (Reading 2 1963). Even when talking about important historical and influential figures in the Communist Party, such as Qemal Stafa, Vojo Kushi and Perlat Rexhepi, they are described as the representatives of the Party and Enver. In the parts “A pair of shoes” and “A short story about a man with one arm” the partisans, without exception, appear human, patient, sacrificial, loving people, brave, victorious, etc. Partisan characters are admired and protected by the people. At the poem “The Wisdom of Lule” Lulja, a little girl, hides the footprints of the wounded partisan. Thus, is created the cult of the partisan. They are also shown as soldiers to spread education and knowledge to comrades. This can be noticed in particular in textbooks “Partisan’s school” and “Partisan teacher” (Reading 2 1969). Partisan families are described with sympathy and special status after liberation.

The frequent presence in Albanian teaching materials of sections praising the national liberation war and the Communist Party indicates a deliberate attempt to instil in students an understanding of the heroic sacrifice of the partisans and the leadership of the party. Historical figures are portrayed mainly as symbols of the party, emphasizing its importance in the liberation struggle. The poem portrays the partisans as heroic and self-sacrificing individuals, which creates an iconic admiration for their activities and sacrifices, reinforcing the legitimacy and influence of the party in post-war Albanian society.

### **Politically compromising the elements of social life**

In Albania, a good part of the intellectuals did not join the Communist Party. Whereas in the text there are only passages as for example “For the patriotic teacher” where it is presented that the intellectuals chose to side with the communists. The historical truth in Albania is that there were individuals from wealthy families who became communists. In the passage “My Beautiful Village” it is shown that the reconstruction of the village is done by the partisans who liberate the village and rebuild it (Reading 3 1946).

From the titles of the parts that were printed as a cycle: “Suffering”, “The Factory Owner”, “Village Life”, “The Landlord”, “The Liberation War”, the following can be noticed: the first part presents the suffering of a working family, where the owner does not respond to the worker’s illness, the second part shows that after the death of the husband, the mother begs the owner to help raise the children, but he refuses with contempt; the third part shows that the mother decides to take her 9-year-old son to the village to work in agriculture; the fourth part shows how the child is disappointed by the greed of the landlord, who does not even let him collect wild pears; the fifth part tells about the war and the boy who becomes a partisan and the last part which also has the representative title of the passage “The Day Came” shows that after the war the power, the lands and the factories belongs to the people and the boy lives happily with his family. With this idea there are other passages, “Our Classmate” with character like Miri the orphan, who worked night and day and now under the new regime lead by the Party has continued the University and works in Cerrik, fulfilled and happy (Reading 2 1969).

Every achievement and every change of people and places is seen as a contribution of the Party: “Our Neighbourhood”, “To Cerrik”, “How much the village has

changed”, “My city”, “The new village”, “The village of Myzeqe is flourishing today”. Neither individual and intellectual contributions nor the Albanian traditions are brought up (Reading 1 1969; Reading 4 1960). There are phrases like “the village with the lights of the Party”, “thank you Party” etc. In the passage “The Hut” it is clearly stated that the place has been preserved as it was to show how the villagers used to live, unlike today that they live happily, thanks to the Party and Enver. The village is compared to the cooperative as a socialist concept and all its well-being is related to this notion “My Village” and “In the fields of the cooperative” (Reading 3 1958). The same idea is repeated in the textbook “Tractors in the agricultural cooperative”, where the focus is on the arrival of new tractors in the cooperative. In all these passages the progress of the village is seen because of the nationalization of the land by the Party that created the cooperatives that now work with new tractors. This vision is observed even in the textbooks such as “The head of the cooperative” and “Spring came again”. It is noticed that even the hydropower plants and factories are called “Enver Hoxha” in “The light of the Party”, “Stalin” and “A visit to Koman” (Reading 4 1960).

In the context of a successful society, there are also parts in the texts where the Albanian army is anathemized. This is seen as a continuation of the Partisan War led by Enver and the Party “Our Army” and “To the Army”. The army of the Albanian state as an institution is ignored and annihilated over the years. The relation of man to construction and work is linked to the banners of the Party Congress. The volunteers, invincible even in extreme weather, who did snow clearing, said: “Party, we kept our word”. The success of the work is identified with the instructions of the Leadership and the joy of Enver. The theme of the passage “Letter to the stonemasons” is a letter of Enver to the stonemasons and



their extraordinary enthusiasm to be in the attention of the leader; no details are described about the work of the stonemasons, its type or value.

There are many pathetic passages whose theme is the revival of Albania (of the city, of the village, of the army, of national roads, etc.), which is described because of the work of the Party “Who woke up Albanian” and “To the Homeland”.

Everything that happens is described as a manifestation of the new lifestyle: “We are creating the new life”. Other textbooks that reflect the new life are “Work and amusement in the path of youth” and “A new life in Malesi”. The new life is not seen as continuation of the previous generations, but as a reconstruction, related to the power of the workers and the symbol of the pickaxe that destroyed the past part which does not agree with the people and the perspective of the Party.

Reconstruction is transmitted to the pupils as a rigid, narrow, and denatured concept, connected with pathetic socialist slogans: “We are no longer slaves...but we are in power...that power is ours today...long live workers” (Reading 3 1946).

One may not know how exactly these texts, with these characteristics and this ideology, have influenced the pupils dialogue with themselves or their orientation to mutual interaction. This ideology influenced them to be identified with an unreal existence imposed as reality building a false consciousness that has attempted to become their authentic consciousness (Sivers 2018). It should be admitted that research in social psychology has found empirical evidence supporting the idea that the influences experienced during early youth leave a deep imprint on the values, beliefs, and preferences of individuals in adulthood (Cunha & Heckman 2007; Heckman 2011; Heckman et al. 2013; Gertler et al. 2014). How has much this fact affected them, is hard to judge; neither can be said exactly how those readings have tried to identify children with the crowd and how it has affected

them and how much this social consciousness has affected the child as an individual. It is clear that humanity is always under the threat of dictatorships of many kinds. Today the discussion is about the technical development of the means of violence given that rampant violence is the man who creates himself (Arendt 2015). Teacher should be aware of the textbooks as they influence the imagination of the pupil's knowledge about themselves and the world, self-esteem and self-concept.

Albanian educational literature during this period was highly politicized and sought to influence historical narratives, societal values, and individual identity on the basis of communist ideology. Textbooks aimed to shape public consciousness in accordance with the Party's program by glorifying the sacrifice of partisans, exalting the Party leadership, and portraying social progress as a result of the Party's activities. The long-term effects of ideological indoctrination on individual consciousness and societal norms are complex and varied, underscoring the continued importance of critical analysis and awareness in educational programs.

## **Discussion**

The issue of political influence on primary education was characterized by relevance in the late 20th and in the early 21st century. Currently, this is a crisis for the post-Soviet states, which have not yet fully established a democratic order in society (Sichkarenko 2023; Otari et al. 2024). There is no single approach to solving this issue in scientific doctrine. This is expressed in the diversity of positions of researchers who studied it. For example, S. Stephens noted that the implementation of political influence should be carried out point by point for each stratum of the population (Stephens 2021). Children and adolescents are among its most vulnerable subjects, as they cannot have a clearly formed personal position.

Based on this, they easily perceive the information provided to them by various materials, including textbooks in schools. As a result of the implementation of political propaganda through educational texts, the political leadership of the state is able to manipulate the youngest citizens. This aspect is important, because during political influence on children, it is important not only to provide them with ideological materials and information, but also to develop a distorted worldview. The expressed position is relevant, since much attention is always paid to the younger generation. This is due to the fact that the future of the state rests with these individuals, so such actions are held in order to promote the propaganda ideas of the political leadership, as well as to support it in the future (Doszhan 2023).

A similar opinion is expressed by J. Weiss, who to a greater extent analysed the psychological structure of the consciousness of school children and the peculiarities of their perception of political subtexts (Weiss 2020). She also concluded that educational tools such as textbooks were key to carrying out propaganda and political influence on schoolchildren. The researcher establishes why exactly such a tool is used by the parties and the state leadership. In her opinion, this is due to the possibility of a direct influence on children's understanding and vision of everyday phenomena. In this way, political influence is carried out unobtrusively, that is, imperceptibly, including even for adults. Moreover, classical phenomena and things appear in the minds of children from a completely different angle. As a result, without the use of coercion and other methods, the political leadership re-educates people, which allows for its attraction of a huge support in the future. The described position echoes the results obtained in the present research. This shows that the texts of primary education are a driving force in the way of deformation of society and exercise of political influence. In

addition, there is a deformation of the process of the formation of the child's personality as a result of the formation of a particular social position in his mind (De Lue and Dale 2021; Jameson 2020).

J. Vlieghe and P. Zamojski (2020) analysed various literary collections of the last century, which allowed for classification of them and for tracing certain patterns. He drew attention to the fact that there are texts in the titles of which political slogans are directly recorded, as well as those where there is no mention of them. However, the analysis of the content of such works shows that in both the first and second categories there is a heroization of the political party and its representatives (Ordeshook 2020). Thus, the concept of getting an education does not involve the general development of the child as an individual, but the development of only their position and attitude towards the current political regime. Approaches to the educational process are biased towards identifying the greatest advantages and achievements of the party. In addition, such school texts are aimed at establishing the cult of the party and developing children's motivation to join it in the future (Grajcevci & Shala 2021; Zajda 2022). The described opinion is partially true, since not all educational texts are aimed exclusively at revealing the achievements of the party. Therefore, it is advisable to systematically analyse this issue and identify its structural elements in the relationship (Donnell 2020; Ognjenovic & Jozelic 2020).

Fundamentally different are the opinions of K. Le and M. Nguyen (2021), who claim that political influence on schoolchildren is ineffective. The researcher believes that at such an age, individuals cannot consciously relate to politics and any of its manifestations. All possible measures to manipulate young people are ineffective because they are aimed at a short-term effect. He noted that it is

impossible to spread political propaganda and impose a certain ideology at the expense of educational texts. Such a position does not correspond to the ideas expressed in this research, which in fact proved the exact opposite. Therefore, the given opinion needs additional analysis and study, because at the moment it is categorical, which significantly narrows its scope (Donbavand & Hoskins 2021; Ober 2021).

In turn, T. Cardle et al. noted that political propaganda in primary school is aimed at forming children's respect and awe for the party (Cardle et al. 2022). Thus, the approaches used for this do not involve schoolchildren participating in a party or doing any work. The main goal in the process of political influence based on educational texts is the acquisition of love and gratitude for the political regime and all its leading subjects. This position is somewhat controversial, as it significantly limits the understanding and scope of political influence that can be exerted through education, especially in primary school.

The discussion makes it possible to confirm that the positions regarding the expediency and possibility of exerting political influence on schoolchildren with the help of educational tools are quite different. This shows that the discussed issue remains debatable, but not negligible, despite the fact that over time it loses its relevance, because with the development of democratic institutions in society, the amount of political propaganda regarding children and other categories of the population is significantly reduced.

## **Conclusions**

An understanding of the methods of political influence and ideological control in an authoritarian communist state can be gained through a historical review of Albanian elementary school textbooks from 1946 to 1986. The analysis of reading materials demonstrates a deliberate effort to indoctrinate students by politicizing the field of education. The deliberate exaltation of the ruling party and its leader Enver Hoxha in certain places and recurring motifs created a hierarchical structure in which the government was highly respected. The phenomenon of politicization of educational activities and individuals such as teachers and students gave more emphasis to group identity rather than individualism, which limited personal growth and development. The intertwining of communist theory with private life led to the manipulation of family roles and narratives, resulting in the erosion of individual identity. In addition, the party-centered portrayal of historical events created a heroic and unquestioning storyline that reaffirmed the party's authority. The portrayal of social life solely from a political perspective restricted freedom of thought and speech.

These results show how the dictatorship used textbooks as a tool to influence students' worldviews, encouraging conformity and obedience instead of developing critical thinking and independence. The study demonstrates that textbooks were deliberately created for the purpose of political indoctrination, which undermined the independent intellectual and ethical development of young people. In order to prevent bias and ensure balance, accuracy and diversity of opinion, it is imperative that education authorities scrutinize textbooks. In addition, teachers should critically analyse teaching materials to identify instances of propaganda and promote an atmosphere of open debate. In addition, students can be taught critical

thinking skills so that they can scrutinize fundamental assumptions and identify political motives in texts.

One of the most important aspects of mitigating authoritarian indoctrination is adherence to democratic principles such as pluralism, individual freedoms, and active citizen participation. Further research is needed to examine the long-term effects of political socialization in childhood, which is facilitated by educational interventions. The study emphasizes the key importance of education in the development and integration of individuals, highlighting the need for informed policies and practices that enable students to influence their lives and their communities. Maintaining a critical consciousness is necessary to mitigate the potential exploitation of education for ideological purposes that run counter to human rights and democratic participation.

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### **Author and Correspondence Details**

**Dr. Ermira Alija** is a Lecturer at the Department of Literature, and **Dr. Migena Selcetaj** is a Lecturer at the Department of Arts, University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Shkodra, Republic of Albania.

Contact: [alijaermira17@gmail.com](mailto:alijaermira17@gmail.com) / [migenaselcetaj@proton.me](mailto:migenaselcetaj@proton.me)