

Public and private Albanian universities: the admission process and the factors considering by students in choosing between them

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Abstract

The main aim of this paper is to analyze the admission process in public and private Albanian Universities. Another aim is to identify the factors considering by students perspective in choosing between a public and private university in Albania. The first analyse is qualitative and quantitative, while the latter one is only quantitative. The quantitative analyse is based on a questionnaire with 8 articles. The questionnaire is with self-report, completed by 179 students of the first year of schooling (May, 2018), attending the Public Universities of Tirana and Shkodra. Regarding the first aim, the actual admission process in institutions of Albanian higher education is centralised, penalize students' candidates and doesn't allow flexibility in designing admission politics. Regarding the second one, from the answers, 69.8% choose a public university, while 30.2% in different condition will choose a private university. These numbers change in dependence from the faculty and location; in both cases of choosing between a private and public university, the first reason listed is the professionalism, but however must be emphasised the slightly differences in meaning on "professionalism" when refer one or other university; the second reasons goes for the low tuition fees in public universities, which is replaced with "good infrastructure" in

private universities; the reliability is the third reason in both cases; in opposite with the general opinion, the tradition and history of public university is listed in the fourth place. Finding of the differences between private and public universities from the perspective of students is a good start to draft and make better educational politics in higher education.

Key words: admission process; public and private universities; students; factors and choices;

1. Introduction

1.1. Or "*Two rooms and one kitchen*"

27 years after the fall of communist regime, Albania continues to be in search of its right path toward normalisation. In very economical aspects, the country is poorer than was in 1990s: we had fabrics, while today we are "proud" with only some *fason-s* ??? that produce shoes and clothes for the foreign European trades, and a lot of call centres; we had specialists and professionals, today the young professionals are learning German or English language to employee in the above trades.

One of the things that the communist regime offered a little for its citizens was the space. The living space was very limited: a usual Albanian family, with more than 5 members, lived in a flat, with two rooms and one kitchen (no more than 60 meters square). The outer space was limited, too, but what was more limited, was the space of thinking: we had only one philosophy. The walls were everywhere.

After the 1990s, we have more space to live and more space to move, but the space of our vision is the one expanded less. It results very difficult to move from the previous state of "two rooms and one kitchen". Even in the sector of higher education. Today, the walls are still everywhere, only than invisible.

1.2. *A brief history of admission process in higher education in Albania*

During the communist regime, the selection of candidate students was based on two variables, ranked here according to the importance: 1. the ideological background of the candidate's family; 2. the average note of the high secondary school. If the first one satisfied the standards of time, was a good start to ask for a study place in higher education, while the satisfaction of both were premises for excellence and then the candidates

won the right to attend the most successful universities programmes, so those that offered the higher status in society (the concept of labour market was unknown - in the final phase, unemployment was zero, or unknown and unacceptable as a phenomena). The check control was made by the Executive Committee of City (municipality of nowadays), in collaboration with the Education Directory of the City. Judging by the standards of these days, the right for equal access to higher education was deformed, because the selection, instead to refer the qualities and abilities of students, refers mainly those ones of family - for example the level of faithful for the regime.

After the 1990s, the admission process in higher education system has changed several times, thanks to the new political developments.

At the first years of 1990s, the state universities continued to be the only provider of higher education, but the number of application was much larger than the places offered. The faith toward regime variable was not applied anymore! So, theoretically all have the equal access to higher education regarding this variable. But there was a disproportional between the request for enrolment and the available study places that the state universities could offer. In these conditions, was applied, firstly, the competition scheme, based on a standardized test (some years was required, in addition, the average grade from the high school, too), organised by proper universities. Some free quotas were available, mostly, for the sons and daughters of those politically punished by the former regime. At the end of 1990s, after almost one decade, the corruption of university professors was one of the most main claims that replaced the competition scheme near universities, with a new one near the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youths (MoESY) (through its agencies and mechanisms), based only on average grades from the high secondary school (the previous level of education). But with this very easy choice, the corruption only changed "home": from universities, moved toward the offices of MoESY. This scheme was, too, an effort to regain the absent control over the process of acceptance in universities, a philosophy inherited from the former regime.

The result was always the same: a large number of students were unable to enrol in the first-choice University and, the worst case, were remain without the possibility to attend a university program at all.

But the opening of many private universities influenced, somehow, the liberalisation of this process. It's important to emphasize that the country

had no tradition with this kind of institutions. Meanwhile, the uncontrolled growth of number of private universities, the inability of the MoESY to monitor them and "fake university diplomas" reported by media, were some of the main reasons that changed the scheme of admission process again. The most known case is the graduation of the son of the Italy's right-wing Northern League leader, Umberto Bossi, by a private Albanian university "Kristal", without any minimal knowledge of Albanian Language and without any records that ever attended this Albanian university¹ (today closed by the MoESY).

But year after year, in nowadays, private universities are more secure and more competitive in the trade of higher education. The situation is more stabile, while seems that everything is turned in a competition for more students.

However, state universities (known as public universities with the status changed) continued to have the higher number of applications and the higher number of enrolled students, too.

Actually, the selection of candidate-students is a centralised process supervised by the Albanian MoESY, according to a central scheme that allocates the candidates in all available private and public universities. Universities' participation in this scheme, for both, private and public, is obligatory.

According to MoESY, the scheme is based on the "Merit-preference" principle: the best students choice first and so on; while it can be described, shortly, in this way: every student that attends the last year of high secondary school has the right to register and apply electronically, through the portal e-Albania, which works from 08.00 a.m-16.00 p.m. for a certain period of year. The students have to go through different steps within the following deadlines. The application is opened only for those that have the average grade over 6 (out of 10). From the list, they can choose up to 10 Bachelor Programmes, ranking from one (most desired) to 10 (less desired), offered by public or private universities; both kind of these universities are part of the same list. An agency, under the control of MoESY, makes the selection, based on an algorithm that has only one variable - the weighted grade, produced by the average grade of the previous level of education

¹ Likmeta, Besar (May, 04, 2012) in Balkan Insight "Albanian University Quizzed Over Bossi Diploma". Retrieved October, 11, 2018) in <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/the-trout-s-albanian-diploma-raises-eyebrows>.

and grades of some standardized tests, known as "State Matura", while each of grades has a weight, related to the importance that has for the chosen university program. The selection process goes through some rounds; each of these rounds repeats itself, again and again, with the same numbers of winners but less and less available-university-places - something like "Russian matryoshka".

This scheme has been subject of a large public attention and debate. Media has criticized for the low success rate. "For university" movement has been very active against this scheme. The author of this paper has been critical, too (media MAPO, Ballkan Web)².

2. Literature review

Camara *et al* (2005:15) ask the very difficult question: We have to reward students for their work up to the point they file their college applications, or to select students who will do their best at a particular college or university in future? For the cited authors, admission process is not only the standardized test *per se*, but the purpose of the entire process itself. For Zimdars (2016), when a selective university admits one applicant and rejects another one, it inadvertently makes a statement about what it considers to be fair way to choose among applicants. Michael Nettles suggest greater attention should be given to examining college admission criteria and asks whether "college and university admissions policy [are] sufficiently flexible to admit talented students from a variety of racial/ethnic and socioeconomic status backgrounds who demonstrate merit in a variety of ways". (U.S. Department of Education, 1998: 10) Individual colleges and universities have also advanced the student access movement by establishing either flexible or open admissions policies. The consequence of these policies is that every citizen with the requisite high school diploma is provided a place somewhere in a college or university... (U.S. Department of Education, 1998:36) David Lavin and David Hyllegard (Ibid), carefully examines the impact of what they call the most ambitious effort ever made to promote equality of opportunity in American higher

² Nathanaili, V. (18.08.2017). Why Ministry of Education and Sports (MAS) has to change the enrolment approach to universities (Pse MAS duhet të ndryshojë qasjen e regjistrimit për në universitet) <http://www.balkanweb.com/site/pse-mas-duhet-te-ndryshoje-qasjen-e-regjistrimit-per-universitet/>

education, the open-admissions experiment at the City University of New York (CUNY).

From every perspective, open admissions was a success: graduation rates in low-income and minority communities soared; the students who participated in the program earned much more than those who did not; and many of the negative impacts of cumulative disadvantage were overcome. The authors conclude that all these benefits came without sacrificing academic standards.³

France model of admission process compared with Albanian model one

The admission model used in Albania is very similar with the one used in France regarding the technicalities, but almost opposite regarding the philosophy. In both systems we have the same scheme, which works based on an algorithm, and start the evaluation and ranking from the grades of previous levels of education. But "French high school graduates are guaranteed a public university place regardless of their grades"⁴, while "Albanian high school graduates are not guaranteed a public university place regardless of their grades". In France, is always the alternative to attend a private university, in Albanian this alternative is not available for all candidates, because the system requires the fulfilment of a certain weighted average grade and serve as a sufficient and necessary condition to win the right to study, the same conditions that is applied for the public universities, too: the average grade of upper school must be more than 6 and in particular, for those that would like to attend teacher program universities, the average grade must be 7 or more. If a student has an average grade less than 6 (out of 10), he/she can not apply for any university program at all.

Below is the summary box, created by "Frys, Lucien and Staat, Christian (2016), University admission practices – France, MiP Country Profile 23 and adapted for the purpose of this study.⁵ From box, are taken only some cells that make differences between two countries and have importance for this study:

³ U.S. Department of Education (1998).

⁴ Retrived on: <https://www.thelocal.fr/20171030/university-admissions-heres-whats-set-to-change-in-france> (30.03.2018).

⁵ Retrived on: <http://www.matching-in-practice.eu/university-admission-practices-france/> (11.05.2018).

Summary box: France and Albania

	France	Albania
Stated objectives of admissions policy	Centralize information about studies and admissions, optimize the allocation of students according to their preferences and the available slots, and guarantee a fair process for all students.	Centralize information about studies and admissions, optimize the allocation of students according to their preferences and the available slots, and guarantee a fair process for all students.
Who's in charge of admissions?	The clearinghouse APB (voluntary participation) and the programs.	Agency of Acceptance at the Institutions of Higher Education (APRIAL) (obligatory participation for private and public universities) and the programs
Available capacity	State universities have a legal obligation to accept all candidates from their district who hold a baccalauréat (<i>Source: Articles L612-3 D612-9 code de l'éducation nationale</i>). Other institutions can restrict access according to capacity.	State universities don't have any legal obligation to accept all candidates from their district who hold a certain diploma (we don't have this kind of diploma). Restrict access according only to the capacity.
Matching procedure	An undisclosed matching algorithm is applied three times with manual rounds in between where students can temporarily or definitively accept offers.	An undisclosed matching algorithm is applied four - five times with manual rounds in between where students can definitively accept offers.
Priorities and quotas	Selective programs use either state-determined criteria or criteria chosen by the institution itself.	All programs use, firstly, the state-determined criteria of the weighted average grade higher than 6 (out of 10); then selective programs, can

	Non-selective programs use geographical priorities.	determine other criteria, based on the results of different subjects of the upper school; it's not clear if the algorithm use any geographical priorities.
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Source: Frys, Lucien and Staat, Christian (2016), University admission practices – France, MiP Country Profile 23 (modified by the author, according to the aims of this paper).

The paradox of choice

a) The shake of fees

Actually, in Albania, citing Zimdars (2018: 8), we have a "flat" higher education structure. No one from the universities can be called elite. They can be classified, regarding the status, in 2 main groups: public universities (or former state-universities) and private universities. This difference in status defines some other differences too, but in this study, the interest is limited to the amounts of fees required to attend each of them. The fees to attend a university are very different. In a public university, the fee goes up to 300 euro/year, while in a private university, the fees goes up to 1000-3000 euro/year.

b) Too many choices can make you unhappy

One of the concerns that rise from the Albanian Admission Process is the very high number of choices in admission process. In country, is very popular the idea that this is a very big step ahead from the time of communist regime, when you have to declare three out of three preferences at the time of application for university. This large number of choices nowadays changes the possibility in absurdity, because the candidate-students, in fear that could lose the option to study, make choices not in the base of talent and desire, but of the probability of winning. This Schwartz idea, referring in Anderson work (2016: 88), could be explain in this way: the West, is obsessed with maximizing choice, because maximizing choice is the way to maximize freedom. But too many choices can make unhappy.

3. Methodology and methods

3.1. The admission process in public and private Albanian Universities

Researching question: *How fair is the admission-process in Albanian Universities?*

a) Qualitative analyse

First of all, of course, is very difficult to evaluate the fairness. Always is the fear of been subjective - the fairness is relative. So, it's important emphasising that this evaluation is qualitative, as well as that other scholars could use other kind of analyses, or other dimensions of evaluation. So, been clear about, in this study, to evaluate the fairness is used the check-control of the system, and 4 factors are taken in consideration, and are evaluated as important, too: the dimensions of merit, the philosophy of system itself, how compatible is the system with the documents of MoESY and the link between the first choice students and the program that is attending in reality. The first three factors are evaluated qualitatively and are representing in table 1 (below); some other arguments are listed separately. The fourth one is evaluated quantitatively and is part of a questionnaire, fulfilled with self report by students (*Evaluating the link of first-choice with attendance*).

Table 1: Check-control of different dimensions of admission-process

Keys	It may be fair, if..	Actually
1. merit	... merit is seen as multidimensional.	This admission-process reduces the merit in only one achievement dimensions - grades from the previous level of education.
		This admission-process doesn't take in consideration the performance of high schools: the grades of different schools in different cities are not the same. So, it's very difficult to be the best in the best high school of Tirana and very easy in another, for example in a private high school in a small city. Further, MoESY make a ranking, every year, for schools based on performance: schools with higher performance and those with other lower. This means the quality

		provided by different schools is not the same.
2. philosophy	... encourage different social groups	This admission-process doesn't encourage minorities groups, or groups that have a low social status, which usually are not very supportive for their children regarding school performance, reflected in low grades.
	... Albanian high school graduates are not guaranteed a public university place regardless of their grades	This admission-process doesn't make room for each student in public universities.
	... the algorithm is applied for the public universities only, in order to give the right all the citizens to be part of public education system.	This admission-process put the sign of equal between universities with different status and/or mission. So, under the stress of fear that can lose the chance to win a place in university, the choice is made for pragmatic reasons and often must result very hard for the pockets of families. The system is unable to give information about the financial fees, which in a near future could be transformed in a barrier.
		In this admission-process, the private universities are involved in scheme on obligatory base.
3. compatible with the doc.s	...it is based on the mission, objectives and policy of Albanian Educational System	This admission-process is against the statement of MoESY: "the outcomes of high school are serving as evidence for finishing it, not as entry conditions for university".
		This admission-process is against the mission of Agency of Acceptance at the Institutions of Higher Education (APRIAL), which has in focus the acceptance in public sector of higher education.

Other arguments:

1. It requires very much time, money and energy, from both: the candidate-students and MoESY, because the large number of rounds.
2. The domains of access, identified according to the U.S. Department of Education (Table 2, adapted by author, too), offer a good scanning of situation from another perspective and it is not inspiring.

Table 2: Domains of access

The actual Albanian admission system in higher education					
Financial	Geographical	Cultural	Performance	Goals	Involvement
Unable to give information and often serve as barrier	N/A	N/A	Reduced in 1 variable: grades from the previous level of education	N/A	N/A

Source: U.S. Department of Education (adapted by the author)

3. Evaluation of some features regarding the actual admission process (Table 3; Source: U.S. Department of Education, adapted by author) offer the same not inspiring situation.

Table 3: Evaluation of some features regarding the actual admission process

Conditions		Points of entry		Merit - Preference	
Only prior to entry	No following the entry	One	Reduce the participation in enrolment	Merit has only one dimension: grade	Preference satisfied only for a doubt group of best.

Source: U.S. Department of Education (adapted by the author)

b) Quantitative analyse

Evaluating the link of first-choice with attendance

Researching question: *How much students are attending the first-choice Bachelor Program in a public university?*

This part of study has quantitative nature and is based on a questionnaire. Data analyses are based on descriptive analyses (SPSS). The questionnaire is fulfilled by 179 students (161 female), randomly chosen, from three public (former state) universities. All the students were attending the 2017-2018 academic years, freshmen, after 7 months of studying (Table 4). In Tirana, the questionnaire is administrated by the author, while in Shkodra by Professor Lediana Xhakollari, but in both cases analysed by the author.

Table 4: Participation of students in questionnaire and the program that are attending

Attending:	Attending Bach Program in:				Total
	Law (F)	Business administ. (F)	Social Worker (F)	Psychology (F)	
Faculty of Law, UoT	57 (51)	0	0	0	57
Faculty of Economics, UoT	0	60 (53)	0	0	60
Faculty of Educational Sciences, UoSh	0	0	32 (29)	30 (28)	62
Total	57 (51)	60 (53)	32 (29)	30 (28)	179

To analyze the link between the first choice and the program that are attending, the students was asked to fulfilled the empty space in item 6 of questionnaire: My first- Bachelor Program choice, for which I applied in the first round of application, was (name of program) _____. In the Table 5 are the results *vs.* the program that are attending, while in the Table 6 are in detail they choices. In the Table 6 you can find students' first choice *vs.* the program that is attending, while in Table 7 is listed the number of round of enrolled in university.

Table 5: Students' first choice *vs.* attending certain Bach Program

		Does this Bach Program, was your first choice?		Total
		Yes	No	
Attending, actually, BCh program in:	Law (Tirana University)	39	18	57
	Business administration (Tirana University)	15	45	60
	Social worker (Shkodra University)	18	14	32
	Psychology (Shkodra University)	21	9	30
Total		93	86	179

Table 6: Students' first choice, for each of Bach Program taken in consideration

		The Bach Program that they are attending							
		Law ↓		Business administration ↓		Social worker ↓		Psychology ↓	
The first choice of students was:	Law	39	68.4%	3	5.0%	1	3.1%	1	3.3%
	Medicine	5	8.8%	9	15.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Economic	5	8.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Construction & Mechanic engineering	3	5.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Architecture	1	1.8%	1	1.7%	0	0.0%	1	3.3%
	Psychology	1	1.8%	0	0.0%	1	3.1%	21	70.0%
	Finance	0	0.0%	6	26.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Economics	0	0.0%	2	3.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Laboratory Technician	0	0.0%	2	3.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Business administration	1	1.8%	5	25.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Nursery	1	1.8%	3	5.0%	4	12.5%	0	0.0%
	Math & informatics engineer	0	0.0%	1	1.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Informatics economics	0	0.0%	3	5.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

Mathematic	0	0.0%	1	1.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Foreign languages	0	0.0%	1	1.7%	3	9.4%	0	0.0%
Telecommunication	0	0.0%	1	1.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Informatics	0	0.0%	1	1.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Biology	0	0.0%	1	1.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Social & political science	1	1.8%	0	0.0%	2	6.3%	0	0.0%
Social worker	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	18	56.3%	2	6.7%
Physic education	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	9.4%	1	3.3%
Preschool education	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	10.0%
Literature & language	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	3.3%
Total	57	100%	60	100%	32	100%	30	100%

Table 7: The number of round when the student is enrolled

Attending:	The number of round when the student is enrolled in a certain program									
	I		II		III		IV		Other	Total
Faculty of Law, UoT: <i>Law Program</i>	40	39%	14	25%	1	7%	20.0%	1	1.0%	57
Faculty of Economics, UoT: <i>Business administration program</i>	30	29%	18	33%	10	71%	40.0%	0	0.0%	60
Faculty of Education Sciences, UoSh: <i>both, Social Worker & Psychology Program</i>	33	32%	23	42%	3	21%	40.0%	1	50.0%	62
Total	103	100%	55	100%	14	100%	100%	2	100.0%	179

3.2. Factors considering by students perspective in choosing between a public and private university in Albania

Researching question: what factors do students take in consideration in choosing between a private or public university?

To have an answer for this question, students were asked to fulfil 2 items:

- a) *Item:* Between a public and private university, you will choose (choose one): Public Private
- b) *Item:* Could you please list some reasons (up to 3 reasons, please write in narrative way)? a. ____ b. __ c. ____

All students' affirmations were clustered in five main reasons: professionalism, amount of the tuition fee, reliability, tradition & history, good infrastructure. Table 8 shows the results of choosing between a public university and a private one, while the Table 9 gives the frequency, percent and valid & cumulative percent of reasons for choosing between a public or private university, from the perspective of students that are attending a public university.

Table 8: Choosing between a private and public university

The preference:	Private or public?		Total
	Public	Private	
Faculty of Law, UoT	52	5	57
Faculty of Economics, UoT	38	22	60
Faculty of Education Sciences, UoSh	35	27	62
Total	125	54	179

Table 9: Frequency, percent and valid & cumulative percent of reasons for choosing between a public or private university

Reasons for choice	Public university	Private university
	Students, total 179	
	125 (69.8 %)	54 (30.2 %)
1. professionalism	88 (out of 125) / 70.4 %	35 (out of 54) / 64.8 %
2. low tuition fee	77 (out of 125) / 61.6 %	N/A
3. reliability	55 (out of 125) / 44%	14 (out of 54) / 26%
4. tradition, history	6 (out of 125) / 4.8 %	8 (out of 54) / 14.8%
5. good infrastructure		25 (out of 54) / 46.3%

From the questionnaire, when the students choose between the public and private university, they list different reasons for the same category. Below the interpretation of the students are and what they mean:

- "professionalism in public university", they mean: quality, the professors are correct and very committed, the school is based on merit, the students are very competitive with each-other, correct evaluation, opportunity for all;
- "professionalism in private university", they mean: advanced techniques in teaching and effectiveness, more possibility to be involved in different projects and activities, the grade is correct, the students are treated as future colleagues, a fair report of number of students for professor, the administration is more committed.
- "Reliability in public university ", they mean: the diploma is evaluated in the market labour, reputation, effectiveness, accreditation, correctness, discipline and feel good.
- "Reliability in private university ", they mean: stronger collaboration between foreign institutions of higher education, less stress, more information about the labour market, more fairness, the students needs fulfilled more correctly, the students rights are taken in consideration, the diploma taken in a private university is known abroad,
- "Tradition, history", they mean: in our country the public (or private) university has a good reputation.

From the informal talks with students, in general, they don't forget to add the corruption in public universities and the easy exams in private universities. For example, during the selection process, universities secretary offices can create a waiting list, which is fulfilled round after round, but students reported that the public university offices often don't make public those lists, which is an adding stress in finding the right place at public universities.

Because the costs are a line that divides private from public universities in Albanian reality, Table 10 represents another clustering of the answers, regarding the place that costs occupies in the list of students reasons for choosing between those both.

Table 10: The place of costs in the students reasons list for choosing between

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	The low tuition fee listed as the only reason	7	3.9	3.9	3.9
	The low tuition fee listed as first reason	31	17.3	17.3	21.2
	The low tuition fee listed as second reason	25	14.0	14.0	35.2
	The low tuition fee listed as third reason	14	7.8	7.8	43.0
	They choose private university	54	30.2	30.2	73.2
	The low tuition fee is not listed at all	40	22.3	22.3	95.5
	Did not answer	8	4.5	4.5	100.0
	Total	179	100.0	100.0	

V. Discussion of results & conclusions: admission process: issues, policy and practise

How fair is the admissions process in Albanian Universities?

To analyse the fairness of admission process in Albanian Universities, four factors are taken in consideration, and are evaluated as very important, too: the dimensions of merit, the philosophy of system itself, how compatible is the system with the documents of MoESY and the link between the first choice students and the program that is attending in reality.

From the qualitative analyse, the merit is seen as one-dimensional. Further: the scheme doesn't encourage different social groups to be part of higher education; it's not in coherence with proper documents of MoESY, doesn't guarantee a public university place for each candidate students and reduce the participation in enrolment. So, the system, in all its dimensions, responds in not fair way for students and their dreams and money.

From the quantitative analyse, only 39 (68.4%) students out of 57 had, as the first choice, the law program; only 15 (25%) students out of 60 had, as

the first choice, the business administration program; only 21 (70%) students had, as the first choice, the psychology program; only 18 (56.3%) had, as the first choice, the social worker program. So, this scheme doesn't satisfy, in considerable numbers, the first choice of the students. From the Table 7, only one third of the students (average) are enrolled direct, after the first round, the others have waiting for a better possibility.

So, actual admission process in institutions of Albanian higher education not only is centralised, but penalizes students' candidates and doesn't allow flexibility in designing admission politics.

Further, this scheme penalises the role of universities in the admission process too, and reduce the politics of admission. The universities are unable to draft any policy for admission or to develop any - even empiric - selection process. They cannot have a very specific statement of purpose for their admission policy.

The role of Ministry of Educational, Sport and Youth is reduced and reflect a lack in politics of access in higher education. There are no studies that can identify the sectors that have needs for specialist and how the admission process can provide a higher access.

What factors do students take in consideration in choosing between a private or public university?


From the results, 69.8% (or 125 students out of 179) choose a public university, meaning they are ok with the attending university, while 30.2% (or 54 students out of 179) in different condition will choose a private university. These numbers change in dependence from the faculty and location: so, 9.6 % of students (5 out of 52) that are attending Faculty of Law (UoT), 59 % of students (22 out of 38) that are attending Faculty of Economics (UoT) and 77% (27 out of 35) affirm that will prefer a private university instead of the public university that are attending.

In both cases of choosing between a private and public university (Table 9), the first listed reason is the professionalism, but however must be emphasised the slightly differences in meaning "professionalism" when refer one or other university; the second reasons goes for the low tuition fees in public universities (77 students list the low tuition fees in public university as a reason, Table 10), which is replaced with "good infrastructure" in private universities; the reliability is the third reason in both cases; in opposite with the general opinion, the tradition and history

of public university is listed in the fourth place and without any important weight.

4. Conclusion

1. Number of ten program choices is too much. The number of program chosen must be reduced.
2. The Albanian Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth must encourage involvement in higher education. For this purpose, the universities must have more grade of freedom in compiled of admission policies.
3. Universities must exercise intense pressure on MoESY to be separated, during the admission process, in two groups: public universities group and private universities group, because they work on different admission philosophy. Regarding the private universities, the choice of the admission process system, including variables and tools, must be subject only to them, but always under the obligation to make a clear statement about the policy.

Admission process	
Public universities	Private universities
National formula - algorithm with more variables	Individual admission process
Admission policy in function of a national background	Individual admission policy
Those that fail to gain admission to their first-choice public university can take in consideration choosing a similar in private university sector 	

4. The bottom limit of average point grade from high school (6), as a condition to be considered as candidate for student, must be cut off, or applied only for certain programs.
5. Different programs in universities could be considered to be open-access.
6. Private universities must be free to organize their own program for admission, with the condition to state the politics and make clear the necessary conditions for application process.

7. MoESY must improve the actual algorithm as a tool for admission in public universities, adding some new variables and reduce the number of choices; MoESY must make public how algorithm works.

Nr.	Variables	
	Actual variables	New variables
1	The weighted average grade from previous level of education	The weighted average grade from previous level of education
2	The grade point average more than 6	N/A
3		Achievements in science, literature, art, sports, certified by an authorised agency.
4		Participation in a movies, drama, or other important school events
5		Letter-recommendation/opinion by a teacher, at the end of final year of school/ References

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Annex: Questionnaire

This questionnaire contains questions about your first-choices University and Bachelor Program and the actual university and program that you are studying. This information may help us to improve policy and decision taking in the admission-process. If you don't understand a question or if none of the alternatives are right for you, you may leave the question blank. No information will be traceable to you as an individual. Your answers are very important to the study! Thank you very much!

1. Sex F M
2. I am attending the program direct after the ending of upper school?
Yes No
- 2.b. If not, please answer: After how much years of ending upper school? ___ years
3. I study at (name of university) _____
4. My first-university choice, for which I applied in the first round of application, was (name of university) _____
5. I am attending the Bachelor program (name of program)

6. My first - Bachelor Program choice, for which I applied in the first round of application, was (name of program) _____
7. The program that you are attending was confirmed in the round
1 2 3 other
8. Between a public and private university, you will choose:
Public Private
- 8.1 Could you please list some reasons (up to 3)?
a. _____ b. _____ c. _____