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**CHARLES UNIVERSITY**

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**The Impact of Political Culture on the Development of  
Countries: In Search of a Theory**

**Master's Thesis**

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**Study Program:** International Economic and Political Studies

**Supervisor:** Dr Janusz Salamon

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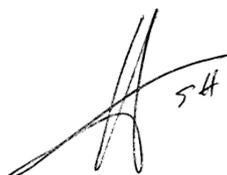
## **Declaration of Authorship**

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree with my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

Prague, 2024

*Author*

Aldi Shehu

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'A' followed by 'sh' in a cursive script. The signature is positioned above a horizontal line.

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## Master Thesis Proposal

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### Proposed Topic:

The Impact of Political Culture on the Development of Countries: In Search of a Theory

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### Topic Characteristics / Research Question(s):

The thesis examines the impact of political culture on the development of a country. The concept of political culture, encompasses the attitudes, feelings, and perceptions that inform and govern political behavior within a society. This inquiry is inspired by John Rawls' perspective on the role of political culture in shaping a society's prosperity and governance. In "The Law of Peoples," John Rawls argues that the wealth and structure of a society lie in its political culture and the traditions that support its institutions, suggesting that even countries with limited resources can achieve order and prosperity with an effective political and social culture. Despite its significance, Rawls' assertion about the centrality of political culture in societal development is under-theorized and not subjected to scrutiny. This thesis aims to fill this gap by constructing a theoretical framework to evaluate Rawls' hypothesis. To examine Rawls' claim, it will be necessary to analyse and redefine the concept of political culture, taking into account the theoretical contributions of earlier authors such as G. Almond and S. Verba. This redefinition is intended to address the interaction between individual attitudes and collective political systems. Following this, the thesis will define 'development' within the context of Development Studies, thereby establishing a framework for examining the interplay between political culture and development. This endeavour will draw upon the foundational work of scholars such as Lucian Pye, Sidney Verba, Marc Hooghe, Stephen Chilton, Howard Wiarda, etc.

These scholars have significantly contributed to understanding political culture, and its relationship with development. Their insights will contribute to a coherent theory that aligns with current empirical findings and theoretical perspectives. This approach aligns with Rawls' insights into the importance of political culture in determining a society's economic and social order. The thesis concludes with providing support for the above-mentioned thesis of J. Rawls, about the impact of political culture on the development of countries. By exploring this impact, the thesis aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how societies can achieve well-ordered states, regardless of their resource levels. This exploration is not only a response to the under-researched area of Rawls' theory but also an endeavor to provide new insights into a critical question in the fields of political science and development studies.

### **Research Questions:**

In exploring the intricate relationship between political culture and the development of a country, this thesis will address three pivotal research questions. First, it will investigate how specific components of political culture correlate with and influence key aspects of a country's development. This investigation aims to establish a theoretical linkage between the defining elements of political culture and the corresponding components of a country's development, analyzing how each aspect of political culture contributes to various developmental outcomes. Second, the research will delve into the extent to which domestic and international factors interplay in shaping a country's development, particularly focusing on their interaction with the political, economic, and cultural processes within the country. This part of the study seeks to distinguish between the influences of external and internal factors and understand their complex interrelationships. Lastly, the thesis will examine the ways in which local political culture mediates the impact of external or international factors, such as the adoption of economic and political models, on a country's development. This inquiry will address how the effectiveness of externally derived models, like free-market economics or liberal-democratic politics, in a specific country is significantly determined by its unique political culture, investigating how local political culture can either facilitate or hinder the successful implementation and adaptation of these international models within the domestic context.

### **Working Hypotheses:**

1. The impact of political culture on a development of a country can be theorized by identifying how each of the defining components of political culture can be shown to be related to the relevant defining components of development of a country.
2. Analysing a country's development requires understanding the complex interplay between domestic elements and international influences that shape its political, economic, and cultural processes.
3. Even when development of a country can be shown to depend on external/international factors (e.g. free market economic model or liberal-democratic political model), the local political culture explains the degree to which the external factors shape the domestic development.

## **Methodology:**

In this thesis in political theory, the methodology is tailored to align with the nature of the subject matter. While the thesis will periodically utilize examples and comparative cases to substantiate the hypotheses, it does not intend to undertake a comprehensive comparative analysis throughout the study. The approach is focused more on illustrating key points and theories rather than conducting extensive comparative work, ensuring that the methodology remains congruent with the political focus of the thesis. This thesis employs a mixed-methods research design, with a primary focus on qualitative methodology, to redefine political culture and its impact on national development. It integrates both qualitative and quantitative methods for a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between political culture and development. The study's core is a qualitative analysis, comprising an extensive review and critical assessment of the political culture literature. This includes a historical exploration of how political culture has been defined, alongside an evaluation of various theoretical approaches. Additionally, semi-structured interviews with political science and development experts will provide contemporary perspectives on political culture's role in national development. The complementary quantitative component involves analysing data from sources like the surveys, examining links between political culture aspects (e.g., political efficacy, trust, participation) and development indicators (e.g., institutional stability, democratic performance, socioeconomic progress) using statistical methods like regression and factor analysis to support the theoretical claims put forward in this thesis.

## **Outline:**

1. Introduction
  - 1.1 Subject Matter & The Nature of the Thesis
  - 1.2 Navigating through Methodology and the Literature Review
2. The Anatomy of Political Culture
  - 2.1 Analyzing Political Culture: Components and Influence
  - 2.2 The Interaction of Domestic and International Influences
3. Development Studies: Theories and Applications
  - 3.1 Integrating Political Culture into Development Studies
4. Conclusion
5. Appendices/Supplementary Materials

## **Abstract**

In this thesis, I explore the impact of political culture on national development. It is inspired by John Rawls and his assertion that political culture significantly shapes a society's economic and social structures. It bridges a gap in the existing literature by developing a theoretical framework that defines the way through which political culture impacts economic development. Employing a mixed-methods research design, the study combines qualitative analysis of political culture literature and semi-structured interviews with quantitative analysis of survey data. It identifies crucial components of political culture, such as political efficacy, trust, participation, and civic engagement, and examines their correlation with development indicators, such as GDP, institutional stability, and socioeconomic progress. A case study of Albania is used to illustrate the relationship between domestic political culture and international influences, highlighting how historical and cultural legacies impact contemporary development. This research provides both theoretical advancements and practical insights, aiming to enhance the understanding of political culture's role in fostering sustainable economic development.

## **Title**

The Impact of Political Culture on the Development of Countries: In Search of a Theory

## **Keywords**

Political Culture, Development, John Rawls

## **Název práce**

Vliv politické kultury na rozvoj zemí: Hledání teorie

## **Klíčová slova**

Politická Kultura, Vývoj, John Rawls

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*“For a discipline that rejoices in importing ideas, political science was strangely slow to incorporate the concept of culture”.*

**- Lucian W. Pye<sup>1</sup>**

*“Most people acquire their beliefs during a period when they are particularly receptive. Typically, a person is highly receptive during, and only during, the first two decades of his life. At the end of this period, one’s outlook becomes fixed or crystallized. Thereafter, one’s beliefs are likely to remain rather stable”.*

**- Robert A. Dahl<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup>(Pye, 1972)

Lucian W. Pye is present in this thesis, due to his contribution in political science and in particular to the concept of political culture. His invaluable work on the politics of modernization in the Third World countries, proves crucial to my efforts in this thesis and also in the future efforts to develop the concept of political culture and development of countries.

<sup>2</sup> (Dahl, 1971)

Robert Dahl is an American political scientist, most notable for his contribution in theories of democracy and political analysis. He is present in this thesis with a full body of work, and a profound impact on my understanding of political science - particularly in political culture and its connection to democratic theory, political power and idea of pluralism. Some profound concepts are polyarchy, as a multi-centered power system and criteria for democracy, which are the basic criteria for constituting a functioning democracy.

## 1. Introduction

In his seminal work, "The Law of Peoples," author John Rawls advances the idea that "the causes of the wealth of a people and the forms it takes lie in their political culture and in the religious, philosophical, and moral traditions that support the basic structure of their political and social institutions, as well as in the industriousness and cooperative talents of its members, all supported by their political virtues" (Rawls, 1993). In this profound assertion, I find the foundation of my thesis, which aims to explore the complex relationship between political culture and the development of nations. Despite its surface simplicity, political culture has presented surprisingly complex conceptual problems (Chilton, 1988). Rawls' claim, with its central view on the impact of political culture, remains under-theorized and has yet to be subjected to rigorous scrutiny. While Rawls provides a compelling narrative linking political culture to the wealth and forms of development in societies, there needs to be more comprehensive theoretical frameworks that delineate the mechanisms and pathways through which political culture exerts its influence on development outcomes. This gap in the literature emphasizes the necessity for a more detailed examination of the specific elements of political culture that contribute to development, as well as the conditions under which these elements become most effective.

Existing literature often focuses on economic variables, frameworks, and institutions, repeatedly sidelining the crucial cultural dimensions that Rawls highlights. Besides this, while political scientists and sociologists have discussed the implications of political culture on democratic stability and governance quality, there is a lack of integrated approaches that systematically connect these discussions to broader development metrics such as economic

growth, social equity, and human well-being. This oversight suggests that the theoretical potential of Rawls' hypothesis has not been fully realized, and there is substantial room for expanding our understanding of how political virtues, industriousness, and cooperative talents are cultivated and harnessed within different political cultures to drive development (Rawls, 1993). In the same spirit, the existing body of research often treats political culture as a static background factor (Lichterman & Cefaï, 2006;407) rather than a dynamic force that interacts and shapes economic and social processes. This static treatment fails to capture the evolving nature of political culture and its capacity to adapt to and influence changing political and economic landscapes.

Consequently, this thesis aims to fill that gap by constructing a robust theoretical framework to evaluate Rawls' hypothesis. This framework will not only map out the specific components of political culture and their developmental impacts. Still, it will also examine the interplay between political culture and other factors such as global economic trends, technological advancements, and international political dynamics. By analyzing more of the under-theorized aspects of Rawls' claim, this thesis aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of political culture in development. It will explore questions such as: How do political virtues translate into developmental success? What roles do historical and cultural legacies play in shaping contemporary political cultures? How does political culture interact with institutional reforms and policy interventions to influence developmental trajectories?

From a broad understanding, the concept of political culture encompasses the collective attitudes, values, and behaviors that shape the political life of a society. It is a screen through

which citizens perceive their role within the political system and their expectations of political institutions. Political culture is one of the main influencers of political institutions' stability, efficiency, and legitimacy, as scholars like Gabriel Almond, Sidney Verba, and Robert Putnam noted. However, the extent to which political culture directly impacts national development requires deeper theoretical and empirical exploration. In this context, development refers to economic progress and the broader dimensions of human well-being, including trust, political stability, and institutional integrity.

In his work and hypotheses, Rawls suggests a direct linkage between political culture and development outcomes. To tackle this, my thesis will address three pivotal research questions. First, it will examine how specific components of political culture correlate with and influence critical aspects of a country's development. This involves analyzing elements such as political efficacy, trust, participation, and civic engagement and their impact on developmental metrics like economic growth through metrics such as GDP, number of enterprises and transaction costs, governance quality, and social equity. By dissecting these components, I aim to establish a theoretical linkage between political culture and development, highlighting how each aspect of political culture contributes to various developmental outcomes. Second, the research will explore the interplay between domestic and international factors in shaping a country's development. Political culture does not exist in isolation; it is influenced by and interacts with external forces such as global economic trends, international political dynamics, and cultural exchanges. This part of the study will focus on how these external factors interface with internal political, economic, and cultural processes and how this interplay influences development trajectories. Understanding the complex interrelationships between internal and

external factors is crucial for comprehensively analyzing political culture's impact on development. Third, the thesis will examine how local political culture mediates the impact of external or international factors on a country's development. Globalization has led to the diffusion of economic and political models across borders, yet their adoption and effectiveness vary significantly depending on local political cultures. By examining case studies of countries that have adopted different economic and political models, this research will assess how local political culture shapes the implementation and outcomes of these models. This will provide insights into the conditions under which external influences are assimilated or resisted and the role of political culture in this process.

Despite its significance, the concept of political culture is fraught with theoretical challenges. As Stephen Chilton points out, defining political culture requires reconciling individual attitudes with collective behaviors and institutional frameworks (Chilton, 1988). Political culture transcends individual orientations but also shapes and is shaped by the political system. This duality poses a methodological challenge in isolating the impact of political culture on development. My thesis will navigate these theoretical complexities by employing a multi-dimensional approach integrating qualitative and quantitative analysis, case studies, and historical contextualization. To address the first research question, I will conduct an analysis of political culture indicators and their correlation with developmental outcomes across different countries. This will involve using data on political attitudes, participation rates, and trust levels and comparing these with economic indicators such as GDP growth, human development indices, and governance scores. I aim to identify significant patterns and causal relationships between political culture components and development metrics.

A crucial motivator for this part of the analysis is the work of Francis Fukuyama, particularly his seminal contribution to the concept of trust. In "Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity," Fukuyama argues that high levels of social trust are fundamental to economic prosperity (Fukuyama, 1995:7). Trust reduces transaction costs and facilitates cooperation, enabling more efficient and productive economic interactions. Fukuyama's insights highlight the importance of trust as a component of political culture that can significantly influence developmental outcomes. In his work, Fukuyama suggests that societies with higher levels of trust are better equipped to achieve sustained economic growth and development (Fukuyama, 1995:28). Building on Fukuyama's concept of trust, this analysis will specifically examine how variations in trust levels across different societies impact their developmental trajectories. In addition to trust, other political culture indicators, such as political efficacy, civic engagement, and political participation, will be analyzed to provide a comprehensive view of how political culture shapes development. By integrating Fukuyama's theory of trust with broader political culture components, this research aims to offer an understanding of the mechanisms through which political culture influences developmental outcomes, thereby contributing to theoretical and practical policy insights. For the second research question, the study will adopt a comparative case study approach, focusing on countries with varying degrees of internal and external influences. This will involve case studies of countries that have experienced significant international interventions, such as structural adjustment programs, foreign aid, and trade liberalization. By analyzing how these interventions interact with domestic political cultures, the research will shed light on the complex dynamics between internal and external factors and their impact on development. The third research question will be addressed through in-depth case studies of countries that have

adopted different economic and political models. This will involve examining countries' experiences implementing neoliberal economic reforms, socialist models, and hybrid systems. The case studies will focus on local political culture's role in shaping these models' adoption, adaptation, and outcomes. This will include analyzing the political discourse, public attitudes, and institutional responses to these external influences.

One of the exemplary case studies in this regard is Albania, a country that offers a unique context to examine the interplay between political culture and development. Albania is included in this thesis partly because it is the country I have studied the most in terms of historical, social, economic, and political dynamics. Albania's political history, marked by a prolonged period of Communist rule followed by a turbulent transition to democracy, provides a fertile ground for analyzing how shifts in political culture influence developmental outcomes (Shehu, 2022). The country's journey from isolation to integration into the global economy, coupled with its efforts to adopt democratic institutions, presents a miniature model of the broader themes this thesis aims to explore. Albania's experience highlights the critical role of political culture in mediating the impact of international influences on development. During the Communist era, Albania's political culture was characterized by a centralized, authoritarian system that stifled individual initiative and civic engagement. The post-Communist transition, however, necessitated a radical shift in political culture to embrace democratic values, market economy principles, and international cooperation. This transition was not seamless; it involved significant challenges, including political instability, corruption, and social discontent, which reflected the underlying political culture. By examining cases such as Albania, my thesis will explore how the legacies of its past political culture continue to

influence its current developmental path. This involves analyzing the extent to which the old political attitudes persist and how they interact with the new democratic norms and practices. For instance, the prevalence of clientelism and patronage politics in Albania can be seen as a remnant of its authoritarian past, which affects the functioning of its democratic institutions and its development outcomes. Albania's case also underscores the importance of understanding the local context in implementing international development models. The adoption of neoliberal economic reforms in the 1990s, driven by international financial institutions, was met with mixed results in Albania. While these reforms aimed to liberalize the economy and integrate Albania into the global market, their success was contingent upon the local political culture's capacity to adapt to and support these changes. The resistance from entrenched political and economic elites, coupled with a lack of robust civic engagement, posed significant barriers to effectively implementing these reforms.

Finally, this thesis aims to contribute to the theoretical and empirical understanding of how political culture impacts national development, guided by John Rawls' hypothesis. By addressing the three pivotal research questions, the study will comprehensively analyze the mechanisms through which political culture influences development outcomes. This will not only enhance our understanding of the role of political culture in shaping development but also provide valuable insights for policymakers and practitioners seeking to promote sustainable and inclusive development.

## **1.1 Methodology**

In this thesis on political theory, the methodology is designed to align with the nature of the subject matter, focusing on the intricate relationship between political culture and national development. While the thesis will periodically utilize examples and comparative cases to substantiate its hypotheses, it only aims to conduct a partial comparative analysis throughout the study. Instead, the approach is more focused on illustrating key points and theories to ensure that the methodology remains congruent with the political focus of the thesis. The main feature of this thesis is that it employs a mixed-methods research design, with a primary focus on qualitative methodology, to redefine political culture and its impact on national development. Integrating both qualitative and quantitative methods allows for a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between political culture and development.

The core of this study is a qualitative analysis comprising an extensive review and critical assessment of the political culture literature. This includes a historical exploration of how political culture has been defined over time and an evaluation of various theoretical approaches. The literature review will cover seminal works by scholars such as Lucian Pye, Gabriel Almond, Sidney Verba, Robert Putnam, and Francis Fukuyama, among others. These works provide a foundational understanding of political culture's elements, such as political efficacy, trust, and civic engagement. To gain contemporary perspectives on the role of

political culture in national development, semi-structured interviews<sup>3</sup> will be conducted with experts in political science and development studies. These experts will include academics, policymakers, and practitioners with extensive experience in the field. The semi-structured nature of the interviews will allow for in-depth discussions while providing flexibility to explore new insights that emerge during the conversations. The interviews will be transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis on an inductive basis to identify common themes and patterns relevant to the research questions. To conduct an inductive analysis for my semi-structured interviews, I have adopted a strategy that balances predefined themes and hypotheses with open-ended questions. This approach allows me to explore the nuances and complexities of political culture in Albania while ensuring that the interviews remain grounded in specific research objectives. By incorporating open-ended questions, I encourage participants to share their perspectives and experiences in their own words, providing rich qualitative data that may reveal unexpected patterns and insights. This method aligns with the principles of grounded theory, where data collection and analysis are iterative processes that inform each other (Charmaz, 2014). It also helps to mitigate bias by allowing interviewees to highlight issues they consider important, rather than being confined to the researcher's preconceived notions. Consequently, this strategy not only validates my initial hypotheses but also enhances the depth and breadth of the research findings, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of

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<sup>3</sup> Semi-structured interview is used as a qualitative research method that combines predefined questions with the flexibility to explore topics in more depth as they arise during the conversation. This approach has allowed me to have a clear framework of topics to cover while also providing the opportunity to probe deeper into specific areas based on the interviewee's responses. Topics such as political culture can become confusing for the interviewees, but nevertheless they are reminded all the time what are the concepts they are being asked about and what is required in their answer.

the role of political culture in Albania's development. A model of these interviews in English will be found at the end of this thesis under Appendices. The model presented is simply for transparency purposes because, in reality, the interview was conducted in Albanian, and each transcript is in this language. If this scientific paper is expanded for research purposes, the interviews will be conducted in English for methodological purposes.

Complementing the qualitative analysis is a quantitative component that involves examining empirical data to support the theoretical claims put forward in this thesis. This component will use data from sources such as the World Values Survey, the European Social Survey, and other relevant datasets that provide information on political attitudes, participation rates, and trust levels across different countries. The quantitative analysis will involve statistical methods like regression analysis and structural equation modeling to examine the links between political culture aspects (e.g., political efficacy, trust, participation) and development indicators (e.g., GDP, Growth, democratic performance, socioeconomic progress). Regression analysis will help determine the strength and direction of the relationships between these variables. At the same time, structural equation modeling will allow for the testing of more complex causal relationships and the assessment of the overall fit of the theoretical model.

### *1.1.1 Data Collection*

As far as data collection is concerned, the qualitative component primarily involves literature reviews and semi-structured interviews. The literature review will use academic databases such as JSTOR, Google Scholar, and institutional libraries. Key texts and articles

will be identified, critically analyzed, and used to understand the evolution of political culture theories and their application to development studies. The semi-structured interviews will be conducted with selected experts identified through academic networks, professional organizations, and recommendations. Interview questions will be designed to elicit detailed responses on the role of political culture in national development, focusing on aspects such as political efficacy, trust, and civic engagement. Thematic analysis will be used to analyze the interview transcripts, working with the data to identify recurring themes and insights. For the quantitative component, data will be obtained from existing surveys and datasets. The World Values Survey and European Social Survey provide comprehensive data on political attitudes and behaviors, which are used to measure political culture components. Economic and development indicators are sourced from databases such as the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme. The data is cleaned and prepared for analysis using statistical software, with some of the data being used directly from the reports and articles published by these institutions. Regression analysis is performed with these data to explore the relationships between political culture variables and development indicators. This research must adhere to ethical guidelines. This will ensure the integrity and validity of the study. Consent will be obtained from all interview participants as part of the interview, and their confidentiality will be maintained throughout the research process. The data collected will be securely stored and used solely for the purposes of this research.

### *1.1.2 Rationale for the Albanian Case*

The case study of Albania is an integral part of this thesis's methodology, chosen to illustrate the theoretical concepts and empirical relationships between political culture and

national development. The rationale for selecting Albania stems from its dramatic transition from a centralized, authoritarian regime to a democratic system, which offers valuable insights into how shifts in political culture can influence developmental outcomes. The transition period, mainly consisting of reforms and challenges, allows for a detailed exploration of the interplay between political culture and development.

From a historical perspective, Albania was under Ottoman rule for five centuries, which significantly influenced its social and political structures. Following the Ottoman Empire's collapse, Albania declared independence in 1912 but faced internal political instability and external pressures. The establishment of a Communist regime in 1946 under Enver Hoxha led to extreme isolation and authoritarian control. This period left a lasting impact on Albania's political culture, creating a legacy of centralized authority and mistrust in political institutions. The collapse of the Communist regime in 1991 initiated a challenging transition to democracy and a market economy. Severe economic hardships, political instability, and social unrest marked the early 1990s. The dismantling of the centralized economy and establishing democratic institutions were fraught with difficulties. Corruption, weak governance, and the collapse of pyramid schemes in 1997 further exacerbated the national crisis, reflecting the profound impact of Albania's historical and political context on its development trajectory.

In analyzing Albania's political culture and development trajectory, key elements such as trust, civic engagement, and traditional social structures emerge. Trust, a critical component of political culture, remains low in Albania, impeding effective governance and economic development. The legacy of repression and isolation has fostered a culture of suspicion and cynicism towards political institutions, hindering the development of robust civic engagement

and political participation. The influence of traditional social structures, such as clans and kinship networks, continues to play a significant role in Albania's political culture. These structures often operate parallel to formal political institutions, sometimes undermining democratic processes and governance. Clan loyalty and patronage can skew political representation and accountability, contributing to corruption and inefficiency in public administration. This interaction between traditional structures and modern political institutions highlights the complexity of Albania's political culture. Economically, Albania's development has been uneven, reflecting the interplay between political culture and economic policies. Efforts to liberalize the economy and attract foreign investment have achieved mixed results. Progress in infrastructure development and economic growth has been notable, but challenges persist in reducing poverty, enhancing social equity, and ensuring sustainable development. Political instability and weak institutional frameworks have often hindered the effectiveness of economic reforms, underscoring the importance of a supportive political culture for successful development.

### *1.1.3 Conclusions*

The methodology employed in this thesis combines qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between political culture and national development. By integrating literature reviews, interviews, and empirical analyses, this research aims to develop a robust theoretical framework that elucidates the impact of political culture on development. The Albania case study will illustrate these concepts in practice, offering valuable insights for both theoretical advancements and practical applications in the field of political development.

## 1.2 Literature Review

Through reading and researching, it becomes clear that the relationship between political culture and national development has been a focal point in political theory and development studies. Various scholars have contributed to understanding how cultural attitudes, values, and behaviors shape nations' political and economic pathways. Political culture encompasses elements such as political efficacy, trust, civic engagement, and participation, which collectively influence the functioning and stability of political institutions (Almond & Verba, 1963). However, there is a need to delve deeper into these components to understand their specific impacts on development outcomes (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Putnam et al., 1994).

John Rawls' assertion that "the causes of the wealth of a people and the forms it takes lie in their political culture and in the religious, philosophical, and moral traditions that support the basic structure of their political and social institutions, as well as in the industriousness and cooperative talents of its members, all supported by their political virtues" serves as the primary motivation for the conduct of this literature review (Rawls, 1993). Despite the importance of Rawls' claim, it remains under-theorized, creating the need for a comprehensive examination to clarify the mechanisms through which political culture affects national development and can be used to enhance national development. Howard Wiarda argues that, it is often culture that conditions the form, pace, and style of economic development instead of the other way around (Wiarda, 1989). Traditionally, political culture has been linked to democratic stability and quality of governance. Almond and Verba's "The Civic Culture" highlighted the importance of civic attitudes and participatory norms for sustaining democratic systems (Almond & Verba,

1963). Subsequent studies by Putnam in "Making Democracy Work" demonstrated that regions with higher levels of civic engagement and social capital exhibited more effective governance and better developmental outcomes (Putnam et al., 1994). All these findings do, is that they underscore the significance of the level of involvement that community and social networks have in fostering institutional performance and growth in the economy of a particular community.

Inglehart and Welzel, in their 2005 work "Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy," have explored the shift towards postmaterialist values and its impact on political and economic development. They argue that societies with solid self-expression values and quality-of-life concerns tend to experience higher levels of democratic stability and economic progress (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). This cultural shift supports more participatory and responsive governance structures, indicating a crucial link between cultural evolution and development. As conceptualized by Fukuyama (1995) in "Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity," trust is another critical component of political culture that influences economic development. High levels of social trust reduce transaction costs and facilitate cooperation, enabling more efficient economic interactions and fostering prosperity (Fukuyama, 1995). Fukuyama's insights are pivotal to understanding how trust functions as a social virtue that underpins economic success, suggesting that societies with higher trust levels are better positioned for sustained development.

Furthermore, the role of civic engagement in development has been extensively studied. In "Bowling Alone," Putnam highlights the decline in social capital and its adverse effects on community and institutional performance in the United States (Putnam, 2001). This decline

reflects broader trends where reduced civic participation correlates with weaker governance and economic outcomes. Such insights underscore the importance of fostering civic engagement to enhance developmental prospects. In addition to trust and civic engagement, political participation is a vital aspect of political culture that impacts development. Verba, Schlozman, and Brady in "Voice and Equality" emphasize that political participation fosters democratic responsiveness and policy effectiveness (Verba et al., 1995). Their work illustrates how inclusive political processes and active citizen involvement can lead to more equitable and effective governance, thereby supporting national development. Lucian W. Pye's contributions further emphasize how complex the concept of political culture is and its impact on development. Pye argues that political culture is a set of attitudes, beliefs, and sentiments that give order and meaning to a political process and provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behavior in the political system (Pye, 1966:104). He emphasizes that political culture is crucial in understanding the political dynamics of developing countries, where traditional norms and modern political structures often coexist and interact in complex ways. Stephen Chilton's work on defining political culture adds another layer to this discussion. Chilton argues that political culture should be understood through the patterns of orientations to political action, which includes the distribution of such orientations within a society (Chilton, 1988). His emphasis on the micro-macro link in political culture helps understand how individual attitudes aggregate to form collective political behaviors, which in turn influence national development trajectories.

The unique case of Albania provides an illustrative example of how political culture influences development. Robert Elsie, in "The Tribes of Albania: History, Society and

Culture," delves into the tribal social formations in Albania and how these have shaped the country's political culture. His work highlights the persistence of traditional clan (known as *fis*<sup>4</sup>) structures and their impact on modern political processes and social cohesion. Understanding Albania's political culture through its tribal history offers valuable insights into how traditional social formations can affect contemporary governance and development. Of course, this is not the only work describing the political culture situation in Albania. The topic of political culture in Albania is present in the works of local and international scholars, including M. Pajo. This author is concerned with analyzing the features of the political culture in post-Communist Albania. According to her, this study helps us understand the dynamics of the Albanian political system during the transition phase and "sheds light" on political culture's determining role in democratization processes (Pajo, 2017). In my view, there are also good indicators in the great regulatory frameworks that society has produced. These acts include regulations, canon laws, and traditions - which show, along with R. Elsie's work, what it means to be influenced by the past to produce ideology and development in modern times. Even today, we see a lack of comprehensive analysis of political culture in the case of the Albanian state and society, and this master's thesis will be a modest contribution that will continue to develop into a more detailed doctoral thesis.

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<sup>4</sup> *FIS*, masculine Noun ; plural ; -e(t)

1. term in history; social group in primitive society with people of the same blood, with a common language and the same customs, which formed the basic unit of life and production organization; communities of people in the Middle Ages who governed themselves according to customary law: the Illyrian tribes (*Fjalorthi | FIS, 2024*).

### *1.2.1 Debates in the Field*

Recent debates in the field of political culture and development are focused on the impact of globalization and digitalization on what political culture constitutes and how it can influence the development of a society or nation. Scholars, such as Salamon, argue that globalization has led to a diffusion of political norms and practices (Salamon, 2015), thus influencing local political cultures in diverse ways. While some argue that globalization fosters democratic values and practices, others highlight the potential for cultural homogenization and the erosion of local political traditions (Norris & Inglehart, 2009). The rise of digital technology and social media has also sparked significant discussion. These platforms have transformed political participation and engagement, creating new avenues for civic involvement and activism. However, they also pose challenges such as the spread of misinformation, increased political polarization, and the potential manipulation of public opinion by powerful actors (Tufekci, 2017). These developments necessitate a re-evaluation of traditional theories of political culture to account for the rapidly changing digital landscape.

In addition, a new dimension in the debates has been brought about by the crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic was, and still is, a test for the resilience of political institutions and the social structure of societies worldwide. It has highlighted the importance of trust, participation, institutional efficacy in government, and social cohesion when managing public health crises. Countries with high levels of trust and civic engagement have generally fared better in terms of compliance with public health measures and overall crisis management (Fukuyama, 2020). This underscores the relevance of political culture in navigating complex global challenges and achieving sustainable development.

Volker Bornschieer's work in "Culture and Politics in Economic Development" provides more insight into the relationship between culture and economic growth. Bornschieer argues that cultural factors, including values and norms related to innovation, risk-taking, and cooperation, significantly influence economic development (Bornschieer, 2005). He highlights that political culture shapes economic policies and institutional frameworks, affecting a nation's developmental trajectory. Bornschieer's analysis aligns with and expands upon Rawls' hypothesis by illustrating how deeply ingrained cultural traits can drive or hinder economic progress. He argues that the willingness to trust others, often strangers, without expecting that they will immediately reciprocate this trust is a cultural resource and becomes an enabler, if not a necessary precondition, of modern social capital formation (Bornschieer, 2005:31).

Another area of debate is the relationship between the political institutions of a country and the cultural norms engraved in its genetics because of its existence in time. North, Wallis, and Weingast, in "Violence and Social Orders," argue that inclusive political institutions, rooted in stable political cultures, are essential for sustained economic growth. These institutions create a predictable environment conducive to investment and economic activities, highlighting the institutional-culture nexus in development (North et al., 2009). Authors differentiate between limited access orders (natural states) and open access orders. In limited access orders, elite coalitions control political and economic power, stabilizing violence but limiting economic and political development. In contrast, open access orders, characterized by inclusive political and economic institutions, foster political and economic competition, leading to more significant development and stability. These open-access societies create

predictable environments conducive to investment and innovation, highlighting the critical link between institutional structures and development (North et al., 2009).

The critique that the topic of politics or political culture lacks empirical data is a common concern among scholars who argue that much of the literature is based on theoretical assertions rather than robust, quantifiable evidence. This critique emphasizes the need for more systematic data collection and empirical studies to validate theoretical frameworks and ensure that conclusions drawn about political culture and its impact on development are grounded in observable and measurable phenomena. But there are studies with empirical evidence that have reinforced these theoretical frameworks. For example, Ostrom in "Governing the Commons" demonstrates that communities with strong norms of reciprocity and trust can effectively manage shared resources, leading to sustainable development (Ostrom, 2015). Ostrom's extensive case studies illustrate that communal management of resources such as forests, fisheries, and irrigation systems can be successful when local users create and enforce rules that govern usage and ensure equitable distribution. This finding challenges the conventional "tragedy of the commons" narrative by showing that voluntary organizations and self-governance can effectively address common pool resource problems without state intervention. This emphasizes the role of local political culture in shaping development outcomes through collective action and cooperation. Also, coming back to the contribution of North, Wallis, and Weingast, the authors highlight that, although evidence from the past few decades is mixed, political and economic development have gone hand in hand over the past two centuries (North et al., 2009:3). The simple evidence that they use in their work shows a strong correlation

between political and economic development (Table 1.1, p.4). This information lists the per capita income and each country's rank in the Polity IV measures of democracy<sup>5</sup>.

By integrating these diverse scholarly contributions, the literature review presented in this thesis aims to provide a far-reaching vision of how political culture influences national development. Throughout the thesis, an examination of the foundational theories and empirical evidence will focus on key themes and debates in the field. This review will set the stage for a detailed analysis of Rawls' hypothesis, exploring the specific components of political culture and their impact on development, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on political development. This literature review is a critical foundation for this thesis, providing a broad perspective on the intersection of political culture and development. It highlights the key issues, debates, and gaps in the existing scholarship, setting the stage for a complete exploration of Rawls' hypothesis. Through this review, the thesis aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on political culture and its vital role in shaping the developmental trajectories of nations.

## **2. Defining Political Culture**

Political culture is a complex concept that encapsulates a society's collective attitudes, values, and behaviors that shape its political processes and institutions. To understand political

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<sup>5</sup> The democracy measure combines information on the quality of political institutions: political access, political competition, and constraints on the executive branch. The table shows that high income and good political institutions are closely related. If we consider economic performance in greater detail we find the same relationships (North et al., 2009).

culture comprehensively, it is essential to reconcile individual attitudes with collective behaviors and institutional frameworks. In their seminal work, *The Civic Culture*, Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba introduced the idea that political culture is a mix of cognitive, affective, and evaluative orientations toward the political system. They argued that these individual attitudes blend into a broader cultural pattern that influences and is influenced by the political institutions of a society (Almond & Verba, 1963). They emphasized the role of civic attitudes and participatory norms in sustaining democratic systems.

Stephen Welch's book, *The Theory of Political Culture*, presents a sophisticated analysis of political culture, critiquing positivist and interpretivist methodologies for their lack of theoretical rigor. Welch proposes a dualistic theory integrating the dimensions of practice and discourse. The practical dimension refers to habitual actions and behaviors, while the discursive dimension pertains to the shared meanings and narratives that inform these actions (Welch, 2013). This dual framework seeks to explain the dual nature of political culture, which maintains stability while adapting to change. For instance, political efficacy, or individuals' belief in their influence over political processes, is shaped by both, actual participation (practice) and prevailing political narratives (discourse). From Welch's approach, we find certain alignment with previous theories by Almond and Verba, specifically on the importance of civic attitudes and engagement for democratic stability and effectiveness (Almond & Verba, 1963). Still, we extend it by incorporating interdisciplinary insights. Welch's integration of philosophical and psychological insights into the dualistic theory of political culture provides a comprehensive framework that explains the causal dynamics of political culture, emphasizing its role in political stability and change.

Robert Putnam further expanded on this concept in *Making Democracy Work*, where he analyzed the role of social capital and civic engagement in the effectiveness of democratic institutions. As presented, he demonstrates that regions with higher levels of civic engagement and social capital tend to have more effective governance and better developmental outcomes (Putnam et al., 1994). To define political culture, Putnam underscores the significance of collective behaviors, such as trust and reciprocity, that shape political culture.

The reconciliation of individual attitudes with collective behaviors is crucial in defining political culture. Individuals' beliefs and feelings about politics, whether supportive or critical, aggregate to form a societal norm. These norms, in turn, affect collective political actions such as voting, protest, and civic participation. For instance, a society where individuals generally trust their government is likelier to exhibit collective behaviors that support and sustain democratic institutions. Conversely, widespread distrust can lead to collective actions that challenge or undermine political stability.

Stephen Chilton, in his work on defining political culture, emphasizes the micro-macro link, which is the connection between individual-level attitudes and macro-level political phenomena (Chilton, 1988). In understanding how personal experiences and perceptions translate into broader societal trends and institutional behaviors, it is essential to analyze this link. Chilton argues that individual political orientations sum up to shape the collective political culture, which then influences national political outcomes. For example, individual experiences of political efficacy (beliefs about one's ability to influence politics) aggregate to create a general sense of political empowerment or disempowerment within a society. This aggregated sense can drive broader political movements and shape the functioning of political institutions.

Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, in their work *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy*, propose that political culture evolves with socioeconomic development. They argue that as societies develop economically, there is a shift from survival values to self-expression values, which support more participatory and democratic political systems (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). This theory highlights the dynamic nature of political culture, suggesting that cultural values and political institutions co-evolve with economic development.

By examining the micro-macro link, fellow researchers can better understand how individual-level data from surveys and interviews reflect broader political and social trends. This grasp helps in analyzing how personal experiences of governance, corruption, and civic engagement influence collective political culture, with the ultimate purpose of determining or projecting national development. This thesis aims to build on these foundational theories by seeking a new theoretical framework that more precisely delineates the mechanisms through which political culture influences development outcomes. Existing literature provides valuable insights but often treats political culture as a static background factor. This thesis will argue for a dynamic view, treating political culture as an evolving force that interacts with and shapes economic and social processes. By building on a robust theoretical framework, this research will map out specific components of political culture and their developmental impacts, aiming to offer both theoretical advancements and practical insights for scholars, policymakers, and development practitioners. By advancing a new theory, this thesis will not only enhance the understanding of political culture's role in development but also provide a comprehensive tool for analyzing and fostering political environments conducive to sustainable development.

## **2.1 Components of Political Culture**

Political culture is complex, and in its complexity this concept should be seen through several key components that give shape to the political and social fabric of a society. Understanding these components: 1. political efficacy, 2. trust, 3. participation and civic engagement, is essential in comprehending what political culture is, and how it influences development outcomes.

### *2.1.1 Political Efficacy*

Political efficacy refers to individuals' belief in their ability to influence political processes and outcomes. Due to this belief, an individual sees himself/herself as a crucial aspect of democracy practice. In Almond and Verba's seminal work, it is clearly highlighted that high levels of political efficacy are associated with stable and effective democratic systems (Almond & Verba, 1963). Citizens who feel that their voices matter are more likely to engage in political activities, such as voting and advocacy. Inglehart and Welzel further emphasize that political efficacy is linked to self-expression values in societies, driving modernization and democratization (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). Thus, political efficacy plays a vital role in empowering citizens and enhancing the responsiveness of political systems.

### *2.1.2 Trust*

Trust in political institutions and among citizens is another foundational component of political culture. Fukuyama argues that high levels of social trust reduce transaction costs and facilitate cooperation, which is essential for economic prosperity (Fukuyama, 1995). Trust in

government institutions ensures that policies are implemented effectively, while interpersonal trust fosters social cohesion and collective action. Putnam, in his analysis of Italian regions, demonstrated that higher levels of social capital and trust correlate with better governance and economic performance (Putnam et al., 1994). This shows that trust is not only a social virtue but also a crucial element for the functioning of democratic and economic systems.

### *2.1.3 Participation and Civic Engagement*

Political participation encompasses a wide range of activities through which citizens engage with the political system. Verba, Scholzman, and Brady highlight that political participation ensures diverse representation in policymaking, which is critical for democratic health and policy effectiveness (Verba et al., 1995). Participation can take various forms, including voting, campaigning, and joining civic organizations. Norris argues that participation strengthens democracy by holding leaders accountable and ensuring that citizens' interests are represented (Norris, 2002). Therefore, high levels of political participation are essential for creating inclusive and responsive political systems. Civic engagement refers to the involvement of citizens in activities aimed at improving community well-being and promoting collective action. Robert Putnam's ideas illustrate how civic engagement and social capital contribute to effective governance and economic growth (Putnam et al., 1994). Civic engagement fosters networks of reciprocity and trust, which are essential for collaboration and problem-solving within communities. Skocpol's research also underscores the importance of civic organizations in mobilizing citizens and fostering democratic participation (Skocpol, 2003). According to her, engaged citizens are more likely to take part in public initiatives and support policies that benefit the broader community, thus enhancing social cohesion and democratic governance.

These components are intricately linked and enhance each other's impact. A society with high political efficacy typically sees active civic engagement, while high levels of trust can enhance political participation. Together, these elements form a robust political culture that supports effective governance and sustainable development. In the next chapter, this thesis will explore how these components of political culture influence economic development. It will analyze the relationships between political efficacy, trust, participation, and civic engagement and their impacts on economic growth, governance quality, and social equity. By understanding these dynamics, the research aims to provide insights into how fostering a strong political culture can lead to improved development outcomes.

## **2.2 Mechanisms of Influence**

Political culture plays a crucial role in shaping economic and social processes by influencing the norms, values, and behaviors that underpin these systems. Political culture affects how citizens perceive their roles in the economy and society, which in turn shapes their economic behavior and social interactions. For instance, high levels of trust within a society can reduce transaction costs and facilitate economic cooperation (Fukuyama, 1995). When individuals trust each other and their institutions, they are more likely to engage in mutually beneficial economic activities and support public policies that promote economic stability and growth. Political efficacy also influences economic and social processes. When citizens believe they can influence political outcomes, they are more likely to participate in civic activities and advocate for policies that foster economic development and social welfare. This active engagement can lead to more responsive and effective governance, which is essential for creating an environment conducive to economic growth and social equity. Robert Putnam's

study demonstrates how civic engagement and social capital contribute to better governance and economic performance by promoting cooperation and trust within communities (Putnam, 1993). This indicates that a robust political culture can enhance the effectiveness of institutions, thereby supporting sustainable economic and social development.

Political culture can not exist in isolation; it interacts with global economic trends, technological advancements, and international political dynamics. Globalization has introduced new economic opportunities and challenges, influencing political cultures around the world. As the argument of Inglehart and Welzel goes, economic development leads to cultural shifts from survival values to self-expression values, which support more participatory and democratic political systems (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). These cultural changes are further accelerated by technological advancements, such as the internet and social media, which provide new platforms for political participation and civic engagement. While these technologies can enhance democratic practices by facilitating communication and organization, they also pose challenges, such as the spread of misinformation and increased political polarization.

International political dynamics also shape political culture. External interventions, such as foreign aid and international development programs, can influence domestic political cultures by promoting democratic values and practices. However, the effectiveness of these interventions often depends on the existing political culture and the receptiveness of local actors. For instance, international efforts to promote democracy in post-Communist countries have had varying degrees of success, reflecting the different cultural and historical contexts of these nations. Political culture shapes economic and social processes by influencing individual

and collective behaviors, trust in institutions, and civic engagement. It interacts dynamically with global economic trends, technological advancements, and international political dynamics, creating a complex web of influences that shape developmental outcomes. In the next chapter of this thesis, we will further explore these mechanisms to provide a comprehensive understanding of how political culture affects economic development, aiming to offer insights for both theoretical advancements and practical applications in policymaking.

### **3. Political Culture and Economic Development**

The relationship between political culture and national development is a critical area of study, revealing how the collective attitudes, values, and behaviors of a society influence its economic and social progress. In this part, I will examine the empirical correlation between key components of political culture - political efficacy, trust, participation, and civic engagement and development indicators such as economic growth, governance quality, and social equity.

Political efficacy, defined as the belief that individuals can influence political processes, plays a crucial role in democratic stability and governance effectiveness (OECD, 2023). High levels of political efficacy contribute to the stability and functionality of democratic institutions (Almond & Verba, 1963). When citizens believe they can effect change, they are more likely to participate in political and civic activities, leading to better governance outcomes. Empirical data supports this view, showing that countries with higher political efficacy tend to experience stronger economic performance and more effective governance structures. In the study of Frank

Bannor, evidence is found that supports the "paradox of the plenty" theory<sup>6</sup>. It suggests that an abundance of natural resources can stifle economic growth but enforces the fact that effective governance and political stability can mediate the negative impact of natural resource rents on economic growth (Bannor et al., 2023).

Trust, as a fundamental and essential component of political culture, significantly impacts economic interactions and institutional performance. That is why Fukuyama underscores that high levels of social trust reduce transaction costs and facilitate cooperation, thereby enhancing economic prosperity (Fukuyama, 1995). Societies characterized by high trust levels and high confidence in government levels generally exhibit higher economic growth rates and more robust institutional frameworks. Data from the World Values Survey (WVS), one of the most widely used tools to measure trust attitudes across the world, reveals that countries like Sweden and Norway, which rank high in social trust, also enjoy strong economic indicators and effective governance. This correlation highlights the importance of trust in fostering an environment conducive to development. Questions such as the relationship between trust and economic growth or the improvement of conditions for economic growth are debated in academic works dating from the last century. The clearest proof of this correlation is shown in two very important graphs for this argument. In Figure 1.<sup>7</sup>, we have a map of

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<sup>6</sup> The resource curse (also known as the paradox of plenty) refers to the failure of many resource-rich countries to benefit fully from their natural resource wealth, and for governments in these countries to respond effectively to public welfare needs. While one might expect to see better development outcomes after countries discover natural resources, resource-rich countries tend to have higher rates of conflict and authoritarianism, and lower rates of economic stability and economic growth, compared to their non-resource-rich neighbors (NRGI, 2015).

<sup>7</sup> See: List of Figures.

Europe, where it is seen through a scale, the share of respondents who answered "most people can be trusted" to the question: "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?"(Ortiz-Ospina et al., 2024). The differences between countries that we find in this map of European countries are quite significant. As an example, in Norway and Sweden, more than 60% of the survey respondents think that most people can be trusted. At the other end of the spectrum, in Albania, Greece, Portugal, and Serbia, less than 20% think that this is the case. But if we look deeper into the collected data, and more specifically in Figure 2<sup>8</sup>, we see an even more important connection for our study. This relationship is between GDP per capita and trust, as measured by the World Values Survey. There is a strong positive relationship: countries with higher self-reported trust attitudes are also countries with higher economic activity (Ortiz-Ospina et al., 2024). In the 1972 article "Gifts and Exchanges," Kenneth Arrow, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences in the same year, observed that "virtually every commercial transaction has within itself an element of trust, certainly any transaction conducted over a period of time."(Arrow, 1972; Ortiz-Ospina et al., 2024)

Political participation (also referred to as civic engagement) refers to voluntary activities undertaken by the mass public to influence public policy, either directly or by affecting the selection of persons who make policies. Examples of these activities include voting in elections, helping a political campaign, donating money to a candidate or cause,

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<sup>8</sup> See: List of Figures

contacting officials, petitioning, protesting, and working with other people on issues (Uhlaner, 2015). This component of the political culture of a society is necessary for democratic responsiveness and policy effectiveness. This is exactly what Verba, Scholzman, and Brady demonstrate in *Voice and Equality*-that inclusive political participation ensures diverse representation in the policy-making process, leading to more equitable development outcomes (Verba et al., 1995). Participation not only enhances the legitimacy of democratic institutions but also drives policy initiatives that promote economic and social development. This is clearly proven in the study of the World Bank, where even though the correlation between democracy and economic growth is much debated, a robust positive association is reported in this research. On average, this evidence suggests that political engagement through electoral institutions leads to better development outcomes (Dal Bo et al., 2016:131). Participation not only enhances the legitimacy of democratic institutions but also drives policy initiatives that promote economic and social development. This is clearly proven in the study of the World Bank, where even though the correlation between democracy and economic growth is much debated, a robust positive association is reported in this work. On average, this evidence suggests that political engagement through electoral institutions leads to better development outcomes. Moreover, in D. Acemoglu's study on democracy and its causal relationship to growth, it is specified that there is strong evidence that democratic institutions lead to greater growth in the long run, using data from both Freedom House and Polity IV (Acemoglu et al., 2019). This study examines the effects of democratization within countries over time, controlling for forms of institutional variation across countries other than democracy. They report extensive robustness tests using different measures of democracy, among them participation and engagement, and different methods of estimation, including accounting for

the dynamics inherent in how gross domestic product (GDP) changes over time. This relationship is best shown in Figure 3<sup>9</sup>.

Nevertheless, the impact of political culture on development is not uniform across all contexts. Historical legacies, cultural traditions, and socio-economic conditions shape political culture in ways that can either promote or hinder development. Stephen Chilton's work on defining political culture emphasizes the need to understand these contextual variations (Chilton, 1988). In countries with a history of authoritarianism and turbulent past, such as Albania, the transition to democracy and a market economy can be particularly challenging due to the lingering effects of past political cultures. Albania's experience highlights how entrenched practices like clientelism and patronage can undermine democratic institutions and economic reforms, demonstrating the complex relationship between political culture and development. Empirical evidence from datasets like the WVS and ESS underscores the correlation between political culture components and development indicators. Countries scoring high in political efficacy, trust, participation, and civic engagement consistently exhibit better performance in economic growth, governance quality, and social equity. For example, Scandinavian countries, known for their high levels of social trust and civic engagement, consistently rank among the highest in global development indices.

In conclusion, the correlation between political culture and development is significant and multifaceted. Key components of political culture - political efficacy, trust, participation,

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<sup>9</sup> See: List of Figures.

and civic engagement - play crucial roles in shaping development outcomes. By fostering these elements, societies can enhance their governance structures, promote economic growth, and achieve greater social equity. This analysis not only contributes to the theoretical understanding of political culture but also offers practical implications for policymakers seeking to promote sustainable and inclusive development.

### **3.1 Interplay Between Domestic and International Factors**

An aspect of this research work, which comes partially in the framework of an innovative analysis, is the relationship between domestic political culture and international factors - a relationship which appears complex and is difficult to define. There is a significant way, in how the interaction between these elements, shapes national development. This part explores case studies of countries with substantial international interventions and examines the impact of global economic trends, international political dynamics, and cultural exchanges on their development trajectories.

Several countries have experienced profound changes due to international interventions. There, interventions have significantly impacted their political cultures and development paths. The first notable example is post-war Iraq. Following the 2003 invasion led by the United States, Iraq underwent a series of political, economic, and social transformations. The international intervention aimed to establish a democratic government and rebuild the economy - but with the imposition of external political structures, there was a clash with Iraq's existing political culture. Political culture in Iraq was characterized by strong

sectarian divisions and a legacy of authoritarian rule (Dodge, 2012). The resulting instability and ongoing conflict demonstrate the challenges of aligning international objectives with domestic political realities. Another example is Afghanistan, where extensive international efforts were made to foster democratic institutions and economic development following the US-led intervention in 2001. Despite the significant investments by the US government and heavy military presence, the political culture marked by tribal affiliations and localized power structures often conflicted with the introduced democratic models. These interventions highlight the importance of understanding and integrating local political cultures into international development strategies to achieve sustainable outcomes (Barfield, 2010).

Global economic trends play a critical role in shaping national development by influencing political cultures and governance structures. The rise of globalization has interconnected economies, leading to the diffusion of economic models and practices across borders. Countries like China and India have leveraged global economic trends to transform their economies and political systems. China's integration into the global economy since the late 20th century has led to rapid economic growth and significant social changes. However, the Chinese government has maintained a tight grip on political control, adapting global economic practices to fit its domestic political culture of centralized authority. It appears what the people want is not democracy per se—it is what they can get from democracy that matters to them; democracy has yet to acquire moral value in the Chinese political culture (Gore, 2010). In a similar fashion, India's economic liberalization in the 1990s opened the country to global markets, spurring growth and technological advancement. This shift has influenced India's political culture by promoting a more entrepreneurial and competitive ethos while

simultaneously challenging existing social hierarchies and traditional practices - in what is considered a "slow but steady" development (Kohli, 2004). Through these examples, we clearly see how international economic forces strain the local political culture to bring about changes, be they small or extended over time.

International political dynamics, including foreign aid, diplomatic pressures, and international alliances, significantly influence domestic political cultures. In many developing countries, foreign aid is a critical source of funding for development projects. However, the conditions attached to this aid often require adopting specific political and economic reforms. For example, Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank during the 1980s and 1990s aimed to stabilize economies by reducing government spending and promoting market liberalization. In countries like Ghana and Zambia, these reforms led to economic adjustments but also sparked political resistance and social unrest due to their impact on local political cultures and social structures (Harrison, 2004). In this line of thought, there are also international alliances and geopolitical strategies that can shape domestic political cultures. During the Cold War, for example, many countries aligned either with the US or the Soviet Union, adopting political ideologies and systems that aligned with their respective blocs. These alignments often had lasting impacts on the political cultures of these countries, influencing their governance structures and policy choices long after the Cold War ended (Westad, 2005).

Cultural exchanges facilitated by globalization, migration, and international communication have also played a vital role in shaping political cultures. The spread of democratic ideals, human rights norms, and cultural practices through media, education, and

migration has influenced political cultures around the world. For instance, the Arab Spring uprisings were partly fueled by the spread of democratic ideals and organizational strategies through social media and international broadcasting (Lynch, 2013). These cultural exchanges have the power to challenge and transform existing political cultures, fostering new forms of political engagement and activism. Case studies of countries with significant international interventions, such as Iraq and Afghanistan, illustrate the challenges of aligning international objectives with local political realities. Global economic trends, international political dynamics, and cultural exchanges continuously shape and reshape political cultures, influencing national development trajectories.

### **3.2 Local Political Culture and External Influences**

Examining the interaction between local political culture and external influences is essential for understanding how various economic and political models are adopted and adapted and how their resulting outcomes are shaped. This part focuses on case studies from countries with distinct economic and political systems, emphasizing the pivotal role that local political culture plays in mediating these processes.

One illustrative example is the experience of East Asian countries like China and South Korea. China's economic transformation since the late 20th century is a significant case where the local political culture of centralized control has influenced the adoption of market-oriented reforms. While embracing elements of capitalism, China has maintained its authoritarian political structure, showcasing a unique blend of market economy and political

authoritarianism. This hybrid model reflects how China's local political culture, rooted in centralized authority and state control, has shaped its adaptation to global economic trends. In contrast to the Chinese case, South Korea has gone from a totalitarian system to a system of robust democracy while undergoing rapid industrialization and economic growth. South Korea has experienced one of the largest economic transformations of the past 60 years (Santacreu & Zhu, 2018). The local political culture, characterized by Confucian values of hierarchy and respect for authority, initially supported authoritarian governance structures that drove economic development. However, as the country's economy matured, there was a cultural shift towards greater political participation and democratization, illustrating the dynamic interaction between economic growth and political culture. Another example is Rwanda, which has seen significant international intervention and aid following the 1994 genocide. The Rwandan government, under President Paul Kagame, has adopted a development model that emphasizes strong state control and rapid economic modernization. This model aligns with the local political culture of centralized authority and collective action, which has been instrumental in the country's post-genocide recovery and economic growth (Beswick, 2010). However, the authoritarian aspects of this political culture have also raised concerns about political repression and limited democratic space.

The importance of local political culture is best compared to the shape of a container, where we try to pour water. With its form, local political culture is imposed, and it plays a crucial role in shaping how countries adopt and adapt external economic and political models. In the case of China, the adaptation of market reforms was significantly influenced by the local culture of centralized control, which allowed the government to implement reforms gradually

and maintain political stability. The outcomes of these reforms were a rapidly growing economy and increased global influence. It demonstrates the effectiveness of aligning economic strategies with local political norms (Gore, 2010). Similarly, South Korea's political culture facilitated the initial acceptance of authoritarian governance to achieve the desired economic development for the time. As years passed and as economic conditions improved, there was a cultural shift towards democratization, highlighting how local political culture can evolve and influence political outcomes over time (Kohli, 2004:67). This transition underscores the importance of considering cultural contexts in the implementation of political and economic reforms. In Rwanda, the adoption of a state-led development model reflects the local political culture of strong leadership and centralized control. This alignment has enabled rapid economic progress and social stability, albeit with challenges related to political freedoms and human rights. The Rwandan case illustrates how local political culture can shape the outcomes of international interventions and development strategies, emphasizing the need for culturally sensitive approaches in policy implementation.

### **3.3 In-depth Case Study: Albania**

The historical context of Albania is pivotal to understanding its current political culture and development outcomes. Albania's prolonged Ottoman rule left a lasting imprint on its social and political structures. Following independence in 1912, the country faced internal and external challenges that eventually led to establishing a Communist regime under Enver Hoxha in 1946. This period of extreme isolation and authoritarian control profoundly influenced

Albania's political culture. The fall of Communism in 1991 marked the beginning of a difficult transition to democracy and a market economy, characterized by political instability, economic hardship, and social upheaval - that brought with it crises such as the 1997 Civil War.

In contemporary Albania, the political culture is a complex mix of traditional values and modern democratic aspirations. The transition to democracy has been challenging, with issues such as widespread and multilevel corruption, weak institutions, and a fragile civil society. Trust in politicians and political institutions is low, as shown in Figure 4<sup>10</sup>, and civic participation remains limited, as per Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI) 2024 (BTI, 2024). The lingering effects of authoritarianism and centralized control continue to influence political attitudes and behaviors, resulting in a political culture that is often skeptical of democratic processes and reforms. Despite these challenges, Albania has made significant progress in certain areas. Economic reforms and efforts to integrate into the European and global economy have spurred periods of growth and development. But, these advancements are uneven and frequently undermined by political instability and governance issues. Persistent problems with institutional trust, limited civic engagement, and inefficiencies in political participation continue to impede sustainable development. The country's development path reflects the intricate interplay between its historical legacies and current political dynamics.

To gain deeper insights into Albania's political culture, I conducted interviews with 50 experts in politics, culture, and economics. These interviews were aimed at absorbing

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<sup>10</sup> See: List of Figures

information from these academics or doctoral students regarding the components of political culture that I have selected as a measurement unit for the framework that will analyze the impact of political culture on economic development at the national level. The interview questions were compiled in this logical order: (a) How informed are the experts about political culture?; (b) Is there a logical connection between the selected components (institutional efficiency, trust, participation, and engagement) and economic development in Albania?; (c) After being introduced to these components, do they see them as an important part of the impact on national development?; (d) How important is political culture when we talk about economic development? The interview is divided into six parts, and each part has 2-3 open-ended questions. During the formulation of the questionnaire, I considered creating more scalar questions (from 0-5 or 0-10) to gain a quantitative aspect from the answers. However, after consulting with some experts, I concluded that these types of questions could be more suitable for the kind of information I am looking for - qualitative and based on the conceptual knowledge of the persons to be interviewed.

The first part, "Understanding Political Culture," is a standard theme that the interviewees do not share the same worldview regarding political culture. Only 6 out of 50 respondents answered on the same basis regarding the concept of political culture, specifying that political culture was personal intellectual formation regarding politics. However, they were only partially related to the concepts presented by the authors mentioned in the literature review or the second chapter. When asked about the components of the political culture that affect development the most, they mainly refer to the corrupt practices of Albanian society, even though the question is not related to the Albanian context but to more general definitions. In

the second part, the questions are related to political culture and development, which is the heart of this thesis. In this part, the interviewees are informed about the selected components of political culture, where over 60% unanimously say that trust is the most important component. The remaining 40% is divided into 30% in favor of institutional efficiency and 10% for participation and engagement. This clearly indicates what experts value when political culture is connected with development. In the third and fourth parts, the main topic is Albania, where the interviewees state that they have deep knowledge of this country. The question that had the most extensive answers from these two parts is the question about the challenges of the Albanian transition. And this is logical, because 48 out of 50 interviewees associate the consequences of the transformation of the political culture with the remnants of the Communist system. According to almost 80% (39/50) of the experts, there is an apparent division regarding political culture between urban and rural areas, where the remains of tribal formations are still seen in the latter. These formations affect the level of trust in these areas' society and the cooperation of these societies with those of urban areas - where social transactions (between individuals) are more frequent and outside of family or tribal concepts. Parts five and six are mainly other information requested from the interviewees, which do not constitute primary information for this interview. Of course, the impressions given by the interviewees give the fifth part particular importance for the subsequent development of this topic. Also, in most cases, these experts referred me to their colleagues during the two months of interviews, which made selecting experts even simpler.

From the interviews, several critical observations were revealed. Firstly, the concept of political culture was not well understood among Albanian experts, indicating a gap in both

academic and practical comprehension of how political culture affects political and economic outcomes. In 43 out of 50 interviews, there was a visible pattern where the experts connected the concept of political culture with individual knowledge about the policies created by the parliament or applied by the government. In an academic sense, this would be categorized as knowledge about policies created by the state and not political culture. In fact, political culture is defined differently: as a set of attitudes, beliefs, and sentiments that give order and meaning to a political process and provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behavior in the political system (Pye, 1966). Secondly, there has been little to no research focusing on the impact of trust, participation, and efficacy - as part of political culture and later as an influence on national development - within the Albanian context. This lack of empirical studies suggests a pressing need for focused research to understand these dynamics better. Additionally, the interviews highlighted another noticeable pattern in the experts' views on political culture's impact in Albania. Many experts did not perceive trust, institutional efficiency, and participation as integral components of or significantly influenced by the broader political culture. Instead, they attributed development challenges to more immediate issues such as economic policies, corruption, and external influences. This perception underscores the complexity of political culture in Albania and its role in shaping the country's development. The apparent disconnect between political culture and development outcomes, as seen by local experts, emphasizes the necessity for a more comprehensive approach to studying political culture in Albania. In these interviews, which I consider an important part of this study, but also as more material for a more in-depth study of the impact of political culture on development - it seems clear that the main need is the expansion of the interviewed group. The number of 50 experts gives a clear picture of knowledge on the concepts asked but is limited

when analyzing questions related to the direct impact on development. In these answers, there is no specific pattern, and as a result, it is necessary to increase the number of interviewees.

Albania's political culture, shaped by its unique historical experiences, continues to influence its development trajectory significantly. The insights from expert interviews and historical analysis highlight the need to integrate local perspectives and empirical research to develop a more accurate understanding of political culture and its impacts on national development. This case study illustrates the critical importance of considering both historical and contemporary factors in addressing the developmental challenges faced by Albania.

#### **4. Revisiting Rawls' Hypothesis**

Rawls argues that the political virtues, industriousness, and cooperative talents of a society's members, supported by their political culture and moral traditions, significantly impact their economic and social outcomes. As we approach the final part of this thesis, let's revisit Rawls' hypothesis one last time, evaluating its validity through the empirical and theoretical frameworks developed in previous chapters.

To assess Rawls' hypothesis, it is essential to examine the empirical evidence and theoretical arguments that link political culture to development outcomes. We use the findings from this study, particularly through the detailed analysis of Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, with a highlight on Albania's political culture and its development trajectory. In the case of Albania, the historical and contemporary political culture, characterized by centralized authority and

limited civic engagement, has played a significant role in shaping its economic and social outcomes. The legacy of authoritarianism and the challenges in transitioning to a democratic system illustrate the complex interplay between political culture and development, validating Rawls' assertion that political culture significantly influences national outcomes. The broader empirical analysis conducted in this thesis, using data from sources such as the World Values Survey and the European Social Survey, supports the notion that the chosen components of political culture (political efficacy, trust, participation, and civic engagement) are closely linked to development indicators like economic growth, governance quality, and social equity. High levels of political efficacy and trust correlate with better governance and economic performance, while active political participation and civic engagement foster inclusive and effective political systems. These findings align with Rawls' hypothesis, suggesting that political culture indeed plays a critical role in shaping developmental trajectories.

#### **4.1 Contribution to the Discourse on Political Culture and Development**

This thesis contributes to the broader discourse on political culture and development by integrating theoretical insights and empirical evidence to provide a comprehensive analysis of how political culture influences development outcomes. The dualistic theory of political culture proposed by Stephen Welch, which integrates the dimensions of discourse and practice, offers a robust framework for understanding the dynamic and evolving nature of political culture. By applying this framework, the thesis highlights the importance of considering both the attitudinal and behavioral aspects of political culture in analyzing its impact on development. Together

with the case studies of countries with different economic and political models, such as China, South Korea, and Rwanda, I illustrate the varied ways in which local political cultures interact with external influences to shape development outcomes. These case studies underscore the importance of aligning development strategies with local political cultures to achieve sustainable and inclusive development. This view on political culture and its impacts contributes to the theoretical advancements in the field and provides practical insights for policymakers and development practitioners.

## **4.2 Limitations and Future Research**

Despite the significant contributions of this thesis, several methodological and conceptual limitations need to be acknowledged. One major area for improvement is the reliance on cross-sectional data from surveys like the World Values Survey and the European Social Survey, which may not fully capture the dynamic and evolving nature of political culture. Longitudinal studies<sup>11</sup> and panel data could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how political culture changes over time and its long-term impacts on development. Another limitation is the potential for bias in expert interviews. While the interviews with Albanian experts provided valuable insights into the local political culture and

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<sup>11</sup> Longitudinal studies employ continuous or repeated measures to follow particular individuals over prolonged periods of time—often years or decades. They are generally observational in nature, with quantitative and/or qualitative data being collected on any combination of exposures and outcomes, without any external influenced being applied (Caruana et al., 2015).

its impact on development, the limited awareness of the concept of political culture among these experts highlights the need for further education and research in this area. To capture broader perspectives, future studies could benefit from a more extensive and diverse pool of respondents, including grassroots activists, community leaders, and ordinary citizens. The focus on Albania as a case study, while providing a detailed understanding of one country's political culture and development, may limit the generalizability of the findings. Comparative studies involving multiple countries or societies (with similar historical and political contexts) could enhance the vigor of the conclusions drawn and provide more generalizable insights.

Given these limitations, three areas for future research emerge. Firstly, there is a need for more in-depth studies on the mechanisms through which political culture influences development. Understanding the causal pathways and interactions between political culture components and development indicators can provide clearer insights into how to foster a political culture conducive to sustainable development, especially in the Albanian context. Secondly, the impact of globalization and technological advancements on political culture warrants further investigation. Understanding how these external factors interact with local political cultures can inform more effective development strategies as global economic trends and technological changes continue to reshape political and social landscapes. Thirdly, exploring the role of education and media in shaping political culture could provide valuable insights into promoting political efficacy, trust, participation, and civic engagement. Educational programs and media campaigns that emphasize democratic values and civic responsibilities could play a crucial role in cultivating a political culture supportive of development.

This thesis revisits and essentially validates John Rawls' hypothesis that political culture significantly impacts the wealth and development of nations. The study contributes to the broader political culture and development discourse by integrating theoretical insights and empirical evidence. I have theorized the impact of political culture on the development of countries by identifying the key aspects, components, and factors of political culture that need to be considered. By correlating these elements with relevant developmental outcomes, I comprehensively analyze how political efficacy, trust, participation, and civic engagement influence economic growth, governance quality, and social equity. This theory, emerging from my research, validates the hypothesis implied in John Rawls' famous statement in "The Law of Peoples," quoted at the beginning of the present work. I submit that additional scholarly work, along the lines indicated above, might refine the theory further, but it is unlikely to call Rawls' claim into question.

To conclude, the present study supports the claims advanced by John Rawls and a dozen of other leading contributors to the scholarly debate about the link between political culture and economic development, whose views have been considered before formulating my own theory of the impact of political culture on development. It confirms that even countries or regions that are not blessed with natural or economic resources can support their development and the creation of a well-functioning state by reforming their political culture to promote civic attitudes conducive to collective success. The original contribution of this thesis consists of bringing together and integrating into a coherent theory the scattered and disparate suggestions, analyses, and arguments put forward by other authors. The outcome of the current research project lends theoretical support to practical efforts to enhance the

economic conditions of a country by reforming its political culture to foster institutional efficiency, trust, and participation.

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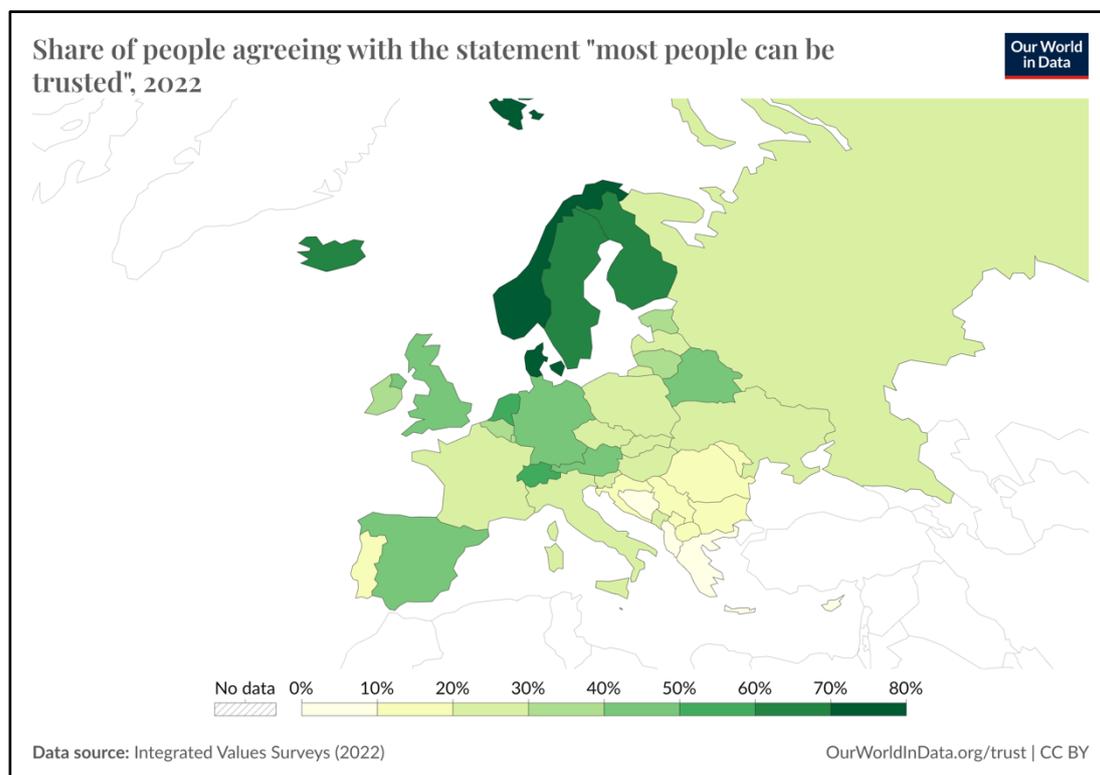
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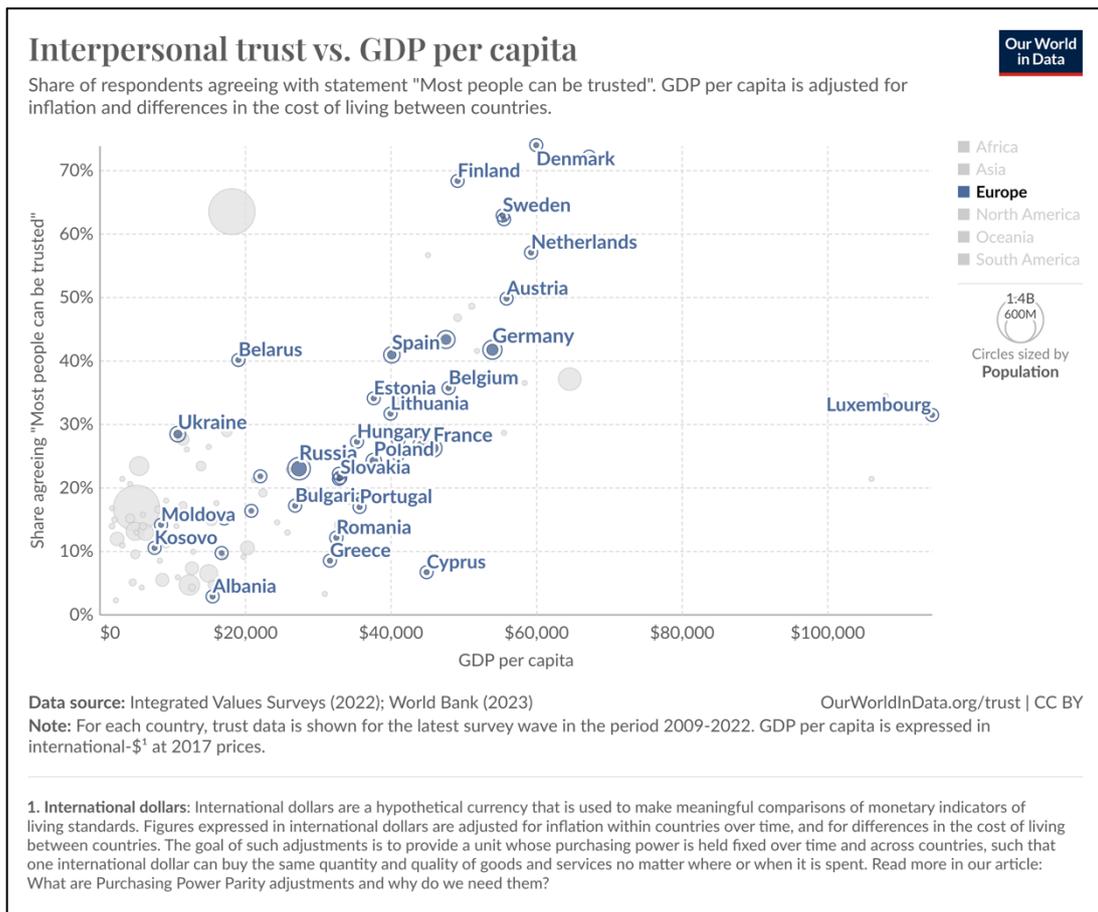
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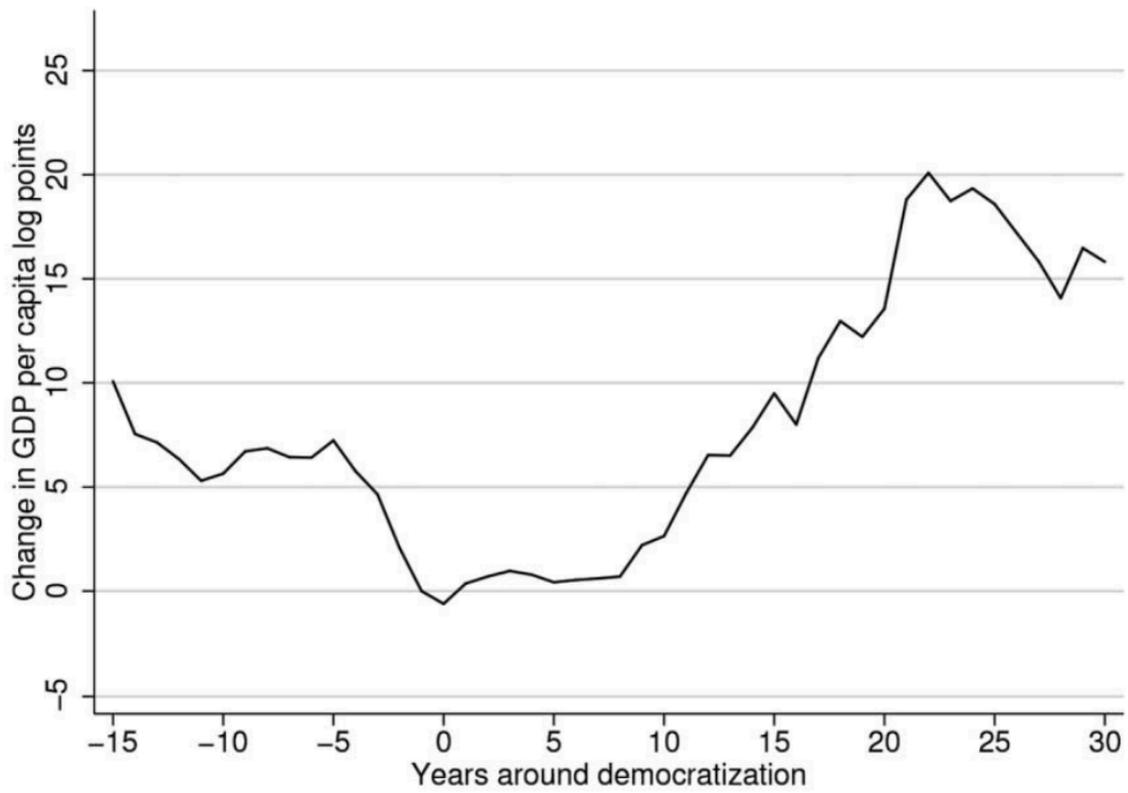
## List of Figures



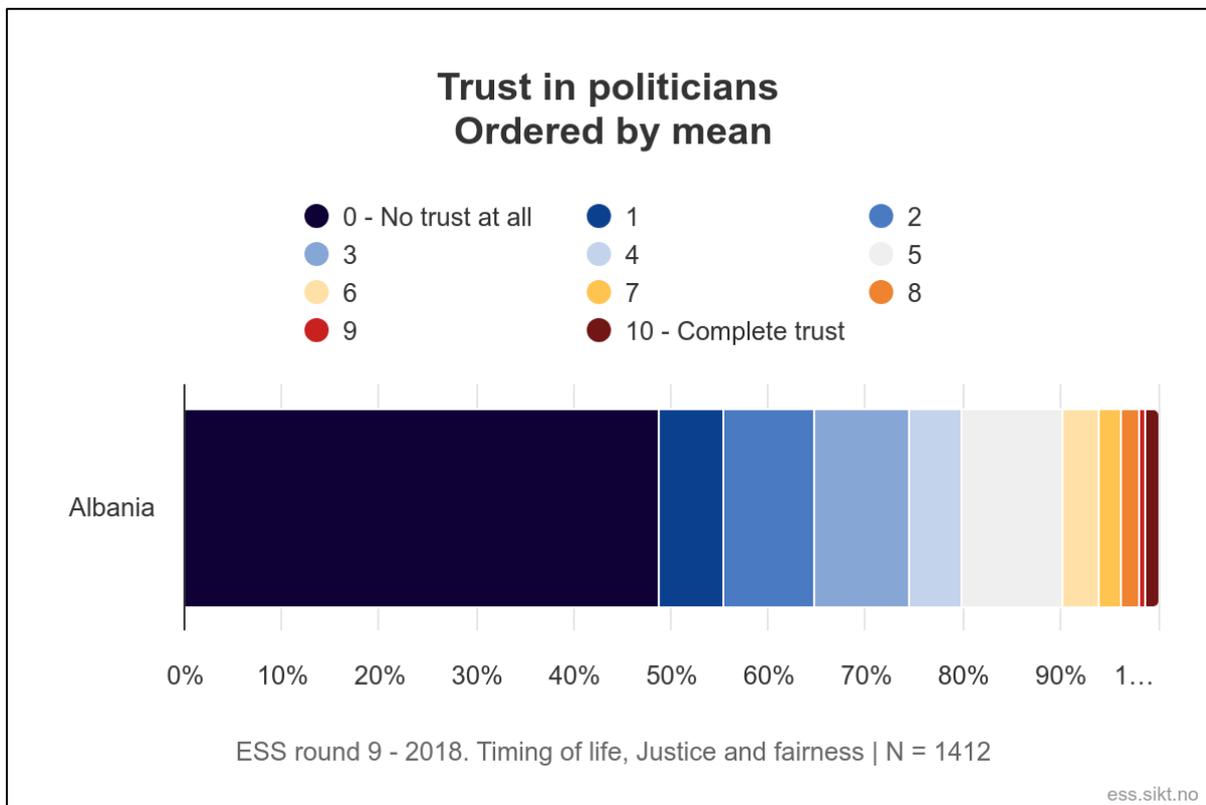
**Figure 1.** Map of Europe representing the share of people agreeing with the statement "most people can be trusted" to the question: "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?" (Ortiz-Ospina et al., 2024; World Value Survey, 2022).



**Figure 2.** The chart shows the relationship between GDP per capita and trust, as measured by the World Values Survey. There is a robust positive relationship: countries with higher self-reported trust attitudes also have higher economic activity. When digging deeper into this connection using more detailed data and financial analysis, researchers have found evidence of a causal relationship, suggesting that trust drives economic growth and not just correlates with it (Algan & Cahuc, 2013).



**Figure 3.** GDP per capita before and after democratization. This figure plots GDP per capita in log points around a democratic transition relative to countries remaining nondemocratic in the same year (Acemoglu et al., 2019:49).



**Figure 4.** Data from the ESS Round 9 (2018) indicates a significant lack of trust in politicians among the Albanian populace. Most respondents reported deficient levels of trust, with scores predominantly clustered at the lower end of the scale.

# Appendices

## 1. Model of the semi-structured interview

<b>Interview Questions</b> (English for display purpose)
<b>Part 1: Understanding Political Culture</b>
Can you describe your understanding of political culture and its components?
-
How do you think political culture influences the stability and effectiveness of political institutions?
-
In your view, what are the key elements of political culture that contribute to a country's development?
-
<b>Part 2: Political Culture and Development</b>
How do political efficacy, trust, participation, and civic engagement impact national development outcomes?
-
Can you provide examples of countries where political culture has significantly influenced their development trajectory?
-
How do you think historical and cultural legacies shape contemporary political cultures?
-
<b>Part 3: Domestic and International Interplay</b>
How do domestic political cultures interact with global economic trends and international political dynamics?
-
In what ways can international interventions, such as foreign aid or structural adjustment programs, impact a country's political culture?
-
How does globalization influence political culture, and what are its implications for national development?
-
<b>Part 4: Case Study Insights</b>
Based on your expertise, how has Albania's political culture influenced its development outcomes?
-
What challenges has Albania faced in transitioning from a centralized, authoritarian regime to a democratic system in terms of political culture?
-
How do traditional social formations, such as clan structures, impact Albania's political culture and development?
-
<b>Part 5: Policy and Practical Implications</b>
What strategies can be implemented to foster a political culture that supports sustainable and inclusive development?
-
How can policymakers effectively integrate cultural considerations into development planning and policy-making?
-
Are there specific interventions that you believe can strengthen political virtues, industriousness, and cooperative talents within a society?
-
<b>Part 6: Additional Comments</b>
Is there anything else you would like to add regarding the relationship between political culture and national development?
-
Do you have any recommendations for further reading or other experts to interview on this topic?
-

2. The concluding remarks for all the interviewed experts.

**Concluding remarks presented to the interviewed**

1. Thank you for the participation in this interview. As an interviewer I value not only the time you dedicated to this interview, but also the valuable insights on the topics revolving around political culture and development.
2. The answers of this interview, will contribute to the overall ideas presented in the thesis " The Impact of Political Culture on the Development of Countries: In Search of a Theory", submitted at Charles University in Prague, year 2024.
3. The answers, will be corrected only for grammatical aspects, without modifying or alternating the concepts, ideas or messages that the interviewee expressed. The identity of the interviewed will be protected, and none of their personal information will be collected for the purposes of this interview.
4. The main language used for these interviews is Albanian. Everything is translated in English language, for the purpose of submitting the outcomes of these interviews in the above mentioned thesis.