



## Migration vs. Potential Migration: Why do Albanians have a Great Desire to Migrate?

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### 1. Introduction

Nowadays migration is a much-discussed phenomenon locally, nationally and internationally. Driven by the changes brought by political and military conflicts, the pressures and developments that are taking place in the economy, countries that have become globalized, climate change and the desire for a better life, today more people than ever before are moving and living beyond the borders of the country where they were born. Migration is the process of people moving across the borders of the state where they live to another state and a migrant is an individual who leaves the country where he is living with the intention of settling permanently in another state. Migration continues to be an important issue for many countries in the world, affecting both countries of origin and host countries.

The phenomenon of migration has an impact on several levels: the individual of the person who migrates, his family circle and the local community, and at the national level. Migration has a direct impact on the country of origin and the country of destination.

At the individual level migrants are economically affected by their movements, migration leads to new employment opportunities; at the level of the household in the country of origin migration reduces poverty, affects human capital and improves the conditions of education and health care. Migration also has an impact at the national level, bringing about changes in the national economy and human capital at the national level. Seeing the importance of this phenomenon in Albanian society, this paper has been drafted that analyzes why our society has such a great desire to emigrate. The data of the paper compare the real emigration with the potential one.

### 2. Methodology

The methodology used in this article is based on qualitative techniques, mainly based on the analysis of articles, various reports and official statistics on the phenomenon of migration in Albania in recent years and the tendency of Albanians to migrate. The main issues are related to the descriptive analysis of the migration of Albanians and the comparison of this phenomenon with the potential trend.

The article will also analyze in general the causes and impact of migration in Albanian society to present an overview

of the recent years about the situation of these issues.

### 3. Results and Discussions

Currently according to the estimates made by the United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs (UN DESA) in 2020 in the world there are approximately 281 million migrants, which equates to 3.6 percent of the population (McAuliffe, M. ; Triandafyllidou, A. , 2021: 21). According to the Extended National Migration Profile of Albania for the years 2015–2018, the latest data to which the national profile is referred are those of January 2018 by INSTAT, which speak for a total number of 1 584 137 Albanian citizens living outside the territory of Albania, of which 828 530 are men and 755 607 women.

In most of the articles and publications studied during the literature analysis, migrants are categorized by their country of origin, such as Albanian migrants in Greece. But in recent years it has been observed that various authors also refer to other categories related to the identity of migrants, social class, gender or age. In addition to using these categories for the study of migrants, some authors are also critical of the use of ethnicity and national identity as a category of analysis in studies on migration. Their work on migration is more structured and perceptions and discussions are based on new categories, such as: migrant flows, family reunion, migration of skilled workers through migration programs, illegal migration, etc. (Glick-Schiller, N., 2008: 321; Glick-Schiller, N. ; Çağlar, A., 2013: 61; Runfors, A. ; 2016: 8). More and more researchers are attaching more and more importance to understanding the causes and consequences, the current state of an individual, local and regional changes, forecasts for the future situation, and other issues related to migration.

Another type of categorization for migration are the migration motives. The most numerous and common motives are for reasons of employment, family reunification, study, business. Although this categorization is useful in recognizing the main motive of people who push them towards emigration, the motives are not very useful to understand and analyze the main cause of emigration, which, as the authors Hein de Haas, Stephen Castels and Mark say Milles, we must find it in the structural processes of development and change. The difficulty also increases when we see that migrants often have multiple motives for migrating and these motives may also change over time (De Haas, H. ; et al., 2020: 30). Migration for employment reasons, which is also known as economic migration, is the most important main cause of migration.

Family migration is often a direct consequence of the decision of migrant workers to settle, and then this decision fosters further migration that continues the chain through what the authors call migration social networks. These networks reduce the costs and risks of migration because the first migrants give information to those who will come later (Ibid: 31).

Migration for study and business is another category of motives that push people to emigrate. People emigrate in search of a better and quality education. While those individuals who emigrate for business reasons, do so because the host country offers better facilities and opportunities to open a business and the projected profits will be higher than in the country of origin.

Migration is generally never an individual action, where a person decides to leave his or her homeland in search of the best life opportunities and to adapt to living in that other country where he or she settles down completely detached from the country of birth. Migrating and settling in another country are long-term processes that accompany a migrant throughout his life, as well as subsequent generations. Migration is often a collective action, arising from social, economic and political changes in a country and in many cases affecting entire communities and societies both in the areas of origin and in the host countries. As Michelle Tribalat says, migration can overcome death. In most cases, migrants request that after death their bodies be buried in their native land (Tribalat, M., 1995: 109–111).

According to Russell King, one of the most well-known foreign scholars who has studied Albanian migration since its inception after the dissolution of the totalitarian socialist regime, the Albanian case is an excellent illustration of the need to look at migration not only in terms of motivating and attractive factors, although these factors are very obvious, especially the factors that have pushed Albanians to migrate, but in particular to see the dynamics of migration of this country. Like the phase of mass migration from many Central and Eastern European countries after the fall of the Iron Curtain, the exodus from the Republic of Albania must be placed and understood within this broader economic, geopolitical and transformational context (King, R., 2018 : 124).

In recent years, several studies have been conducted on what is known in the field of migration as potential migration. Potential migration is "the absolute number of adult persons planning or preparing to emigrate ... in relation to the number of population in the respective country ", (Tjaden, J. ; Auer, D. ; Lazcko, F., 2017: 1 –2). This definition has also been accepted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and is used in recent debates on migration trends and policies.

According to data published in the study of authors Rusell King and Ilir Gedeshi in 2018, approximately 52 percent of the Albanian population aged 18-40 years want to migrate from the Republic of Albania. Compared to the 2007 survey

conducted by the ETF, where potential migration resulted in 44.2 percent, the desire for migration has increased by about 8 percent in Albania (King, R. ; Gedeshi, I., 2018: 34:35).

#### 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

In-depth analyzes after the 2011 Population Census conducted by INSTAT show that migration still remained at high levels, but with some structural changes. In the period 2001 - 2010, according to INSTAT, over 481 thousand people left the Republic of Albania (INSTAT, 2014: 35). This report states that the main reasons that have made Albanians migrate are related to employment, education and raising living standards. Another factor that has influenced this balance is the economic growth of some countries in the European Union, where low unemployment rates create more and more demand for labor and this is a typical reason why many Albanians seek to emigrate to Germany, United Kingdom and Belgium. Education abroad is another factor that has influenced the emigration of recent years, the numbers of those young people who leave to study abroad have increased (ibid., 2014: 33-34).

The migration rates remained approximately the same for the period 2011-2020. Albanians continue to emigrate at high rates. According to the 2021 report of INSTAT, on the population pyramid and demographic data in Albania, during the years 2011-2020 it is estimated that an average of 42 thousand people emigrated each year (INSTAT, 2021). According to this report, the main reasons for migration are related to better opportunities for work, education and health care. During the last two decades, the emigration of Albanians has been closely related to the family. Family reunification has been one of the reasons that has become more important for the legal migration of Albanians to other countries.

All these data show us that the migration of the Albanian population, although in many studies more emphasis is placed on the phenomenon of the 1990s, as the largest wave of departures from the Republic of Albania, this flow continues to be visible, in figures. high and continuous. According to various calculations, some presented above, in the period 2010 - 2021 have left the Republic of Albania, as many Albanians, as in the previous two decades.

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