

Comprehending the Mobility Factors of Albanian citizens from 1991-2016, in a more complex globalized world

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Abstract

In the decade of the twentieth century, 1991-2000, a massive increase of Albanian emigration has been recorded related to two main factors:-collapse of communist regime in 31 march 1991, which has produced a massive emigration toward Italy, and Greece (regular and irregular),-and the crisis of march 1997 due to the collapse of financial pyramidal schemes. Some stable situation has been noted in the first decade of 21st century (2001-2010). Because of the economic crisis of 2008-2012, in the second decade of 21st century and because of the new phenomena "asylum seeking", the return phenomena has become and is still today the agenda of the day in the EU.

The returned phenomena is on the top of the agenda for the host countries, but the reintegration of returned people/emigrants beside the category where they belong (voluntary return to be integrated in home country, returned because of lost of jobs and difficulties after the crisis of 2008-2012, returns of minors and forced returned), is not yet responding to the real needs of returned people. The aim of this article is to comprehend: -the push and pull factors of the mobility out in general and by qualification level in particular in order to identify the main problem, the functioning or no functioning of the reintegration policy process as part of social policy and propose conclusions and recommendations that could help solving the problems identified by using scientific methods.

Keywords: Mobility (regular/irregular), Factors of mobility, Return phenomenon, Reintegration.

Introduction

The migration process of Albanian citizens from 1990-2016, has known four main phases.

The first one was in 1990-1996, recognized by three main phenomena:

- "Embassy Migrants, Summer -July 1990-", with more than 5000 people¹ refugees in the Westerner Embassy, from which 3,199 people or 63% were housed in West Germany, and the 12 July has been convoyed to the port city of Durres toward Italy to bring them by train to Germany, France etc,
- "Mass Exodus", March, August 1991, through the "boat people exodus to southern Italy, where 25,000 migrants were accepted and settled in Italy and
- Regular and Irregular migration till 1996.
- The second one 1997-2000, this has been characterized by two main crises: "The Pyramidal Crisis, March 1997, and Kosovo Crisis 1998-1999, (end of war 11 June 1999).

¹ Migration and Development in Albania, Working Paper C5, Sussex Centre for Migration Research, December 2003, page 25.

The third phase 2000-2010, which can be considered as a stable phase in the migration process and as a period of integration of Albanian citizens to host countries (families reunification, children integration, etc),

The fourth or last one 2010-2016, (2013-2016), is characterized by a completely new dynamic or phenomena called: "Asylum Seeking" with more than 90% of Albanian citizens to Germany known as "Asylum seeking" in EU.

The different waves of emigration, has made Albania with more than 33% citizens living abroad, for a period of 25 years after the collapse of communist regime. (1991-2015). According the latest data approximately 1.5-2 million Albanians² are abroad, mainly in: (i) 0.5-0.6 million in Greece; (ii) 0.5-0.6 million in Italy, and; (iii) 0.1 million in USA, 70³, 000 in Germany etc. Based on Albania extended migration profile 2012-2014, published by Ministry of Internal Affairs December 2015, there were 1.4-1.5 million of emigrants in 2011, or 33% of the entire country population (INSTAT, 2011). During 2016-2017, there is an attempt to discuss on the role of Migration and Diaspora, in Albania and Kosovo and to bring much closer the research on this topic to the policy level.

The aim of this paper is to understand, comprehend push and pull factors for migration (which is a permanent issue for more than 2 decades.) and the status of reintegration process of all return Albanian citizens. The period 2009-2017 is the period of big return, because of two main reasons: economic crisis of 2008-2012 and return from the category of "Asylum Seekers" 2013-2016. In 2017 will return back in Albania only from Germany 55 thousand Albanian citizens that have had negative answer to the request for asylum seeking.

Analysis of the mobility factors of Albania citizens from 1990-2016, in a more and complex globalized world

The mobility factors for migration of Albanian citizens are different through the phases which it has passed. For the first phase 1990-1996, phase 1.1, 1990-1991, the migration has been firstly for political reason, and phase 1.2 from 1992-1996, has been a strategy of pure economic survival, and a mean of self-realization, seeing the income benefit in EU countries more attractive and a mean to support the remaining members of the family in Albania (generally the parents).

The second phase 1997-2000, has been for physical and economical survival after the crisis of March 1997 in Albania and the conflict of Kosovo in 1998-1999.

The third phase 2000-2010 has been a phase of more stability, and Albanian having a more realistic image of Europe, they have shifted their attention beside Italy and Greece for family and regular migration, toward countries with better economic prospects and possibilities such as United Kingdom, USA and Canada (NSM, 2005:10).

The fourth phase 2010-2017 is known as a phase of return 2010-2013 and increase of asylum seeking in EU countries 2013-2016.

² <http://www.cid.harvard.edu/ciddata/ciddata.html>

³ Federal Statistical Office ,Wiesbaden 2016.

The crisis of 2008 in most European Union Countries, especially in Greece and Italy, has changed the destination migration of Albania citizens toward EU countries. If in 1992-2000, the main destination migration has been Italy and Greece, in the last decade (2010-2016) the main country of destination has been Germany. The figure of the table 2.1 confirms this idea.

Table 2.1. Asylum application of Albanian Citizens to EU and Germany 2010-2015.

	Asylum Applicants	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total	EU	1,075	2,860	6,875	10,555	16,145	65,935
	Germany	40	80	230	1,245	7,865	53,805 or 81%

Source: Eurostat, 2016.

The question is why this change of migration destination?

There are many factors that can prove this, but the most important factors are:

- The labor market in Germany offer more than every other EU countries possibility to be integrated,
- The high standard of living, social policy protection, education system is more attractive than in the other countries. The support through allowance for living expenses during the stay. The monthly allowance was 140 Euro per adult and 40 Euros per child. Housing, electricity and water bills as well as medical services were free of charge for the whole family.

The phases of mobility of Albanian citizens 1990-2016 are presented in the graph nr.2.1 below:

Push and pull factors

The push factors: The law economic performance and decrease in demand for labor, law salary level for unskilled people are key factors that push Albanians in general and young people in particular to leave the country.

Search for better life is another factor because the transition period and European Integration of Albania has been very long.

The expectations of Albanian citizens in 1991 has been very optimistic in terms of EU integration, in order to ensure the four freedoms "including the most important, the free movement of workers".

Long transition period toward EU integration, political parties' conflicts and high unemployment rate has produced lost of trust.

The pull factors: The socio economic development level and the high standards of living of the destination country as Germany, Belgium, Netherland, etc make very attractive the migration.

The higher possibility for being employed, better jobs, higher earnings, and-especially for those who had a professional qualification- the opportunities to reach higher level of careers, better education prospects for their children, and ensured quality of health

system , were the main pull factors, even for those that has asked asylum protection.

Return and Reintegration process

In order to analyze the return phenomena, for the purpose of this research are studied three main sources:

-INSTAT and IOM Survey 2013, titled return migration and reintegration in Albania, Extended Profile of Migration published by Ministry of Interior, 2012-2014, Albania and Eurostat data on migration.

Based on the survey of INSTAT and IOM, 2013, a total of 133,544 Albania migrants of the age group 18 years old and above have returned to Albania in the period 2009-2013, of whom 98314 were males or 73,7%, and 35130 or 26.3% females.

-Albanian Extended Migration Profile 2012-2014, published by Albanian Ministry of Interior, 29,6665 Albanian citizens have been asked to leave EU in 2014. More details on Albanians citizens apprehended and asked to leave EU countries from 2012-2014 are in the Table 3.1.

-EUROSTAT data on Migration 2016, especially on Asylum application from Albania to EU, and Germany, 2010-2016. Returning to Albania followed the same pattern as departure: it was quick decision but this time handed by German authorities. In Albania they found same context as before, and that's why they want to return ...to Germany

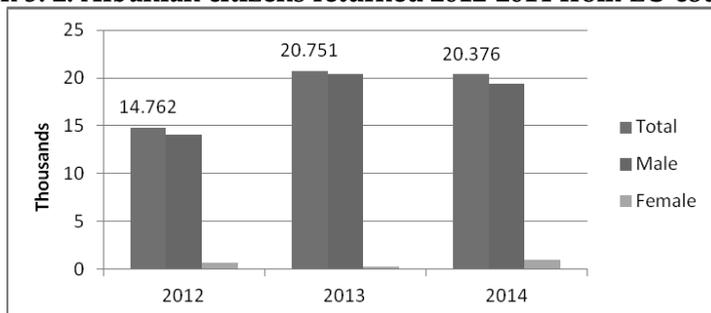
Table 3.1 . Albanian citizens apprehended in EU countries, 2012-2014

Year	2012	2013	2014
Albanian citizens apprehended in EU	18,610	27,035	30,430
Albanian citizens who have been refused entry in EU	13,195	12,980	14,275
Albanian citizens who have been asked to leave EU	16,160	20,725	29,665

Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs

The data on returned people are available through official data of Ministry of Interior. Based on this source during 2014, a total of 20,376 Albania citizens have been returned from EU countries⁴. More detailed are presented in the graph nr. 3.2.

Graph 3. 2. Albanian citizens returned 2012-2014 from EU countries



Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2015.

⁴ Albania Extended Migration Profile 2012-2014.

More than 95% of returned Albanian citizens are male (95% in 2012 and 96% in 2014).

The intensification of return of Albanian citizens has been for different reasons, such as:

- (i) voluntary return of economic emigrants;
- (ii) return of emigrants because of the crisis in the host countries;
- (iii) return of minors where accompanied or not and,
- (iv) forced return.

The forced return is a consequence of the increased forced returns of the irregular emigrants from Albania toward EU countries (mostly in Germany, Belgium, France, etc.) reflecting the “asylum seeking” phenomena. This development is a result of the fulfillment of Albanian government obligations in the framework of the EU integration. In this framework, a Readmission Agreement between the European Community and the Albanian Government has been signed in 14 April 2005 and entered into force on 1 May 2006 for Albanian citizens and on 1 May 2008 for third-country nationals.

Reintegration Process - Challenges and difficulties

In terms of Institutional framework regarding the return and reintegration of Albanian citizens, the list of institutions responsible and involved is very large as: Ministry of Interior in front office in the process of retuning, who runs the database of border-crossing entries of returned Albanian citizens through the General Directorate of Border and Migration (European Commission, 2016), Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth (responsible for the reintegration of returned people in terms of social and employment policies), National Employment Service (NES), with a focal point at local level that: (i) collects detailed information on returned Albanian citizens, (ii) assesses their needs, provide them information according their needs, and to address them to the institutions offering relevant services, such as to health, education, employment and so forth; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Health, -Ministry of Public Work, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Finance.

Acknowledging the importance of the phenomenon of returned migrants⁵ in 2010, Albanian government has approved the Strategy on Reintegration of Returned Albanian citizens 2010-2015. The strategy has foreseen a series of measures to be undertaken for the reintegration⁶ of Albanian nationals from EU member states.

⁵ Return migrants/migration: The movement of persons returning to his/her country of origin or habitual residence usually after spending at least one year in another country. This return may or not may be voluntary. Return migration includes voluntary return or forced return.

⁶ Reintegration: (i) Re-inclusion or re-incorporation of a person into a group or a process, e.g. of a migrant into the society of his/her country of origin or habitual residence; (ii) Re-integration (cultural): In the context of return migration, re-adoption from the returned migrant of the values, ways of living, language, moral principles, ideology, and traditions of the county of origin's society; (iii) Re-integration (economic)- In the context of return migration, the process by which a migrant is reinserted into the economic system of his or her country of origin, and be able to earn his or her own living. In terms of development, economic reinsertion also aims at using the know-how which

The main objective and measures of this strategy were to: (i) improve the legal framework on reintegration support, and to; (ii) ensure effective structure in Public Institutions to guarantee reintegration support for returned Albanian citizens, and (iii.) integration of Albanian citizens in the economic and social life. But from 2012 till 2015, a new phenomenon has arisen i.e. the asylum-seeking in the EU member States, especially in Germany, Belgium, France, etc.

The reintegration mechanisms in Albania are very weak.

Why the reintegration process is very weak?

There are a lot of factors, but the main that can be listed are as follow:

-Lack of concrete measures for reintegration of returned people,
-Lack of confidence in the public institutions that offer services. This can be explained by two main data screened during the elaboration of this paper:

Based on the publication of Cooperation and Development Institute, Tirana, Albania, December 2016, a quarter of the participants have had no contact at all with any public institution in Albania since their return. The detachment and non-communication with official institutions and / or administration is a constant feature of our migrant group.

In 2014, the data of Albanian National Employment Service shows that from 20,376 returned migrants (2014) only 834 or 4% has been registered in the employment offices, for being supported for employment and vocational training issues.

Hence, the administration should carefully assess their way to engage with this group. A more proactive approach, the use of community structures and other cultural-specific factors can definitely help to spread the information and establish a dynamic of cooperation of the individual with the administration.

After returned, despite the employment conditions, the unemployment status and their living conditions in Albania, some of them are attending German language courses and/or vocation courses that would enable them not only to develop labour market skills, but also to get certificates that would facilitate their legal return to Germany for employment purposes.

Basically on their return they continued to do whatever they were doing before they left, being it work, study or unemployment. Nevertheless the German experience served as a wake-up call - now they know that if they are good enough to learn the language and / or be skilled in selected professions, Germany gives them a chance. Learning the language and/or enrolling in VET is extremely useful to get this target group involved in meaningful and gainful activities, as much as providing them with a goal in life.

was acquired in the foreign country to promote economic and social development of the country of origin; (iv) Re-integration (social)-In the context of return migration, the reinsertion of a migrant into the social structures of his/her country of origin. This includes the development of a personal network (friends, relatives, neighbors) and the development of civil society structures (associations, self-help groups and other organizations). Source: Return migration and Reintegration in Albania 2013-Instat and IOM

Dilemma and will for going abroad once again but in legal way

The push factors and the reasons to re-emigrate are the same as the ones that lead to their first migration decision not long ago. They want a better life for themselves and for their children, the possibility to get a better income to overcome the financial difficulties they are facing in Albania, to have better employment opportunities and better working conditions.

Regarding the pull factors, some of the participants are using their networks and friends they made in Germany to look for job opportunities. The ones that managed to get an employment offer before they returned are using it to engage in the legal migration procedure. Others are making no plans currently because they have to wait for the expulsion period to be terminated or for the language / VET courses to be completed. Many are also saving money to pay for their trip. One of the heads of households interviewed also claimed that his two sons were now in Italy trying to find employment and finance their next family migration towards Germany.

The push factors remain the same. Pull factors are the same too, but much clearer, better defined and above all, understood. The returnee would-be emigrants are more knowledgeable about the country they want to go, and this affects directly the way they and their families are preparing for the next trip. This information situation would be an ideal target goal for the whole population of those that want to emigrate. Information on regular migration has to be better organized and provided by public authorities, because in general the information on how to re-emigrate was quite scarce and non-adequate. The rule according to which it is not sufficient to get a job offer, but one must make sure that no other German national can fill it, before applying to emigrate, was not clear. The need to provide clear and adapted information in acceptable ways to this target group is paramount to ensure a legal approach and avoid black market agents.

The Labour Market in Germany, since January 2016, is open beside the qualified workers, also for non-qualified workers provided they have an employment contract, for an initial permit to up to two years, renewable. Providing information about the German labour market and the way to reach it is paramount for an efficient procedure of legal migration. On top of allowing candidates to get properly prepared, it undercuts the efforts of migration mafia and other illegal networks to profit from the despair and ignorance of would-be migrants. It is of paramount importance for authorities - in Albania and Germany - to understand that there is a whole part of would-be-migrants that does not appear in their radar. Those individuals use informal networks to obtain information, have no or very little access to internet, have low degree of education and are not used to deal with administration. Furthermore, a high proportion lives in rural areas and cannot afford to travel to the main cities to obtain available information. This target group does not fit in the profile of what Germany is looking for. However this does not mean that they will not try to go there. These are the ones that are the easiest prey of miss-information campaign or of human traffickers, and that have the most to lose. New and innovative ways must be implemented to inform those individuals about their rights and opportunities.

Conclusions

Based on the study of the publications, legislations, strategies on mobility issues (mobility out and mobility in-reintegration of returned people), based on the analysis of the push and pull factors, based on the local and national situation of Albania, I can conclude and propose the following points:

-Increase the transparency of information on emigration and be careful during the message transmission in media, to avoid the increases the expectation of the young people and often encourage them to emigrate without giving them the exact and right information;

-Develop and implement accreditation of Private Agency for Employment in order to have a quality check and avoid problems that may happen to Albania citizens.

-Improve organizations and inputs (human and financial resources) for standardized services for migrations issues.

-The re-integration policy for returned emigrants need to be better coordinated due to the multiples of actors involved and the unclear role, overlapping responsibilities and resulting ownership;

-The Public Employment Service must change approach and increase the level of support in concrete terms and accompaniment on the ground, and not only with advice and counseling dispensed in the offices;

-Creation of a special fund for the reintegration of the voluntary returned asylum seekers;

-Increasing the role of local government. Fiscal alleviation and concrete support for the returned emigrants based on a regional approach through a better coordination with all actors at regional and local level.

-Build up the trust in country of origin (Albania) and approach change for the reintegration of returned people by using concrete measures in order to ensure a fast and decent integration and not only by elaboration of integration strategy. Operational and coordination actions need to be urgently implemented in cooperation between government and donors communities.

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