

Distr.: General

8 April 2016

English

Economic Commission for Europe
Conference of European Statisticians
Work Session on Migration Statistics

Geneva, Switzerland

18-20 May 2016

Item 8 of the provisional agenda

Emerging issues, including new methods to estimate and project migration

Experience and challenges on measuring migration – Evidence from Albania

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Abstract

Emigration was one of the major reasons for the population decline in Albania between the 2001 and the 2011 censuses. Given that Albanian emigrants have not systematically registered when leaving the country, and because there have been few incentives to register their departure with the local authorities, the use of ‘indirect methods’ was the possible way to produce an estimate of the individuals who have emigrated between 2001 and 2011. According to INSTAT’s indirect estimations during this period about 481.000 Albanians left the country. On the return side, Census data revealed that about 139.827 Albanians returned to the country during 2001-2011.

Migration remains the main component which drives the population changes. For this reason its measure is the main challenge we face when calculating the annual population. Apart from the ‘indirect methods’ used for calculation of net-migration, this paper put its focus as well, in the new approach we used recently by using Labour Force survey on measuring migration.

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I. International migration

1. International migration has been a major force in population change in the past two decades. The main reason for the population decline observed in the last two censuses was the large-scale emigration of Albanian citizens. In Albania, as usually elsewhere, migration particularly involves young adults, who migrate for reasons of employment and education opportunities and for family reasons. Consequently, youth particularly figure in migration statistics and were main contributors to the recorded population decline in Albania.

2. Emigration was the main single reason for the declining population in Albania prior to 2001 and between 2001 and 2011. The abolition of barriers to emigration and the social turmoil in the 1990s generated successive waves of emigration in these years. Several hundreds of thousands Albanians left the country (e.g. Carletto et al. 2006), a loss that was not offset by immigration and natural increase. This massive emigration was the main cause for the complete reversal from a high annual population growth in the 1979-1989 inter-census period of 2.0 percent, to a negative growth (-0.3 percent annually) in the subsequent 1989-2001 inter-census period. In absolute terms, the population increase of almost 600 thousand persons that was observed in the inter-census period before 1989, turned into a decrease of more than 100 thousand in the one after 1989. The 2011 census conclusively showed that emigration was the most important factor in the net population loss of 269 thousand persons between 2001 and 2011, accounting for 8.8 percent of the 2001 population. According to INSTAT indirect estimations, during this period about 482 thousand Albanians left the country, a number that was only partially compensated by immigration and natural growth.

3. Part of the explanation of the continuation of emigration may be sought in the changing characteristics of Albanian emigration. It is thought that during the 1990s migration was dominated by young single men looking for work abroad in a time when Albania was in turmoil. In the first decade of this millennium migration seems to have diversified: migration is still dominated by young adults, but in addition to men, women increasingly go abroad as well. The share of children has somewhat increased too, and this is a clear indication of the process of family reunification and marriage migration that often follows the earlier 'pioneering' migration of a first male-dominated wave. Such a process of family reunification and marriage migration tends to enable continued high migration levels at least for some years after the first wave of migration.

4. Data from Eurostat and statistical institutes of other countries help to illustrate this with regards to the more important European destinations. Immigration in the past decade to Germany and Greece consisted of 56 percent males, and that to Italy of 51 percent males. Migration to Germany is probably still strongly work (and study) oriented, as indicated by the low share of children. In comparison, Italy and especially Greece have a broader age distribution, indicative of family-oriented migration. These age-sex distributions of immigration are reflected in the data on the population structure of Albanians currently residing abroad, as reported in the 2011 Census.

Table 1: Immigration of Albanian citizens in selected countries (in thousands)

Country of residence	Year	Number (in thousands)
Albanian citizenship		
Greece	2011	480.8
Italy	2011	482.6
Germany	2011	10.5
United Kingdom	2005	10.5
Belgium	2011	5.2
France	2005	5
Spain	2011	1.6
Austria	2009	1.5
Born in Albania		
USA	2010	77.4
Canada	2006	7.5
Australia	2006	2.0

Sources: Eurostat and National Statistical Institutes

A. Emigration – the indirect method

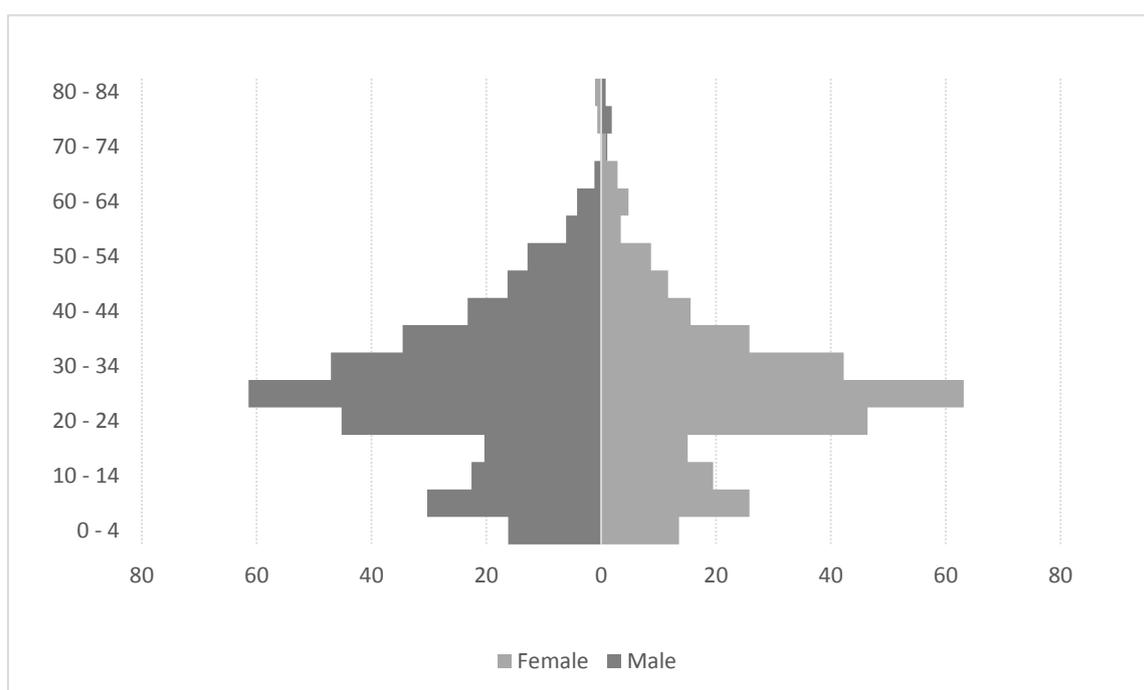
5. Emigration is one of the major reasons for the declining population in Albania between 2001 and 2011. Given that Albanian residents are not systematically registered when they leave the country, and because there are few incentives to register a departure with the local authorities, there are no reliable measures of the number of individuals who have left Albania. It is possible, however, to use indirect methods to produce an estimate of the individuals who have emigrated between 2001 and 2011. This indirect method consisted on comparing data from both the 2001 and the 2011 Censuses. Over that decade, the population of Albania decreased with 8.8 percent, from 3.1 million to 2.8 million. In order to estimate to what extent external migration was responsible for this decline, the population was projected forward from the 2001 census, using revised figures on deaths and births from the civil register, and assuming no external migration happened (see Migration in Albania, 2014).

6. In a first step, the population as of January 2001 is taken as the basis. Both the age and sex of individuals are considered. In a second step, information on live births was taken for each year, taking into consideration the number of males and females born. In a third step, the number of deaths by age and sex are calculated using the specific death rates based on the population projections of the 2001 census (Population Projections for Albania, INSTAT edition, 2004). For each age group, the number of deaths was subtracted from the population in 2001. For the population aged zero, the number of live births in the preceding year was taken into consideration. This procedure was then repeated for each year until January 2012.

7. The outlined procedure calculates a closed population which does not take into account migration. To calculate the number of emigrants, it is necessary, as a next step, to compare the closed population as calculated above with the census population. First, the estimated population as of 1 January 2012 (i.e. the closed population) was extrapolated to 1 October 2011 to match the population on the same date (1 October 2011).

8. Having adjusted the projections to match the date of the census (1 October) rather than 1 January, it was then possible to calculate the difference between the closed population projected for 1 October 2011, and the population enumerated in the census – having adjusted for under-coverage on the basis of the Post Enumeration Survey (PES). The difference between these two figures is the estimated net migration.

Figure 1: Albanians emigrants 2001-11, by age and sex (in thousands)



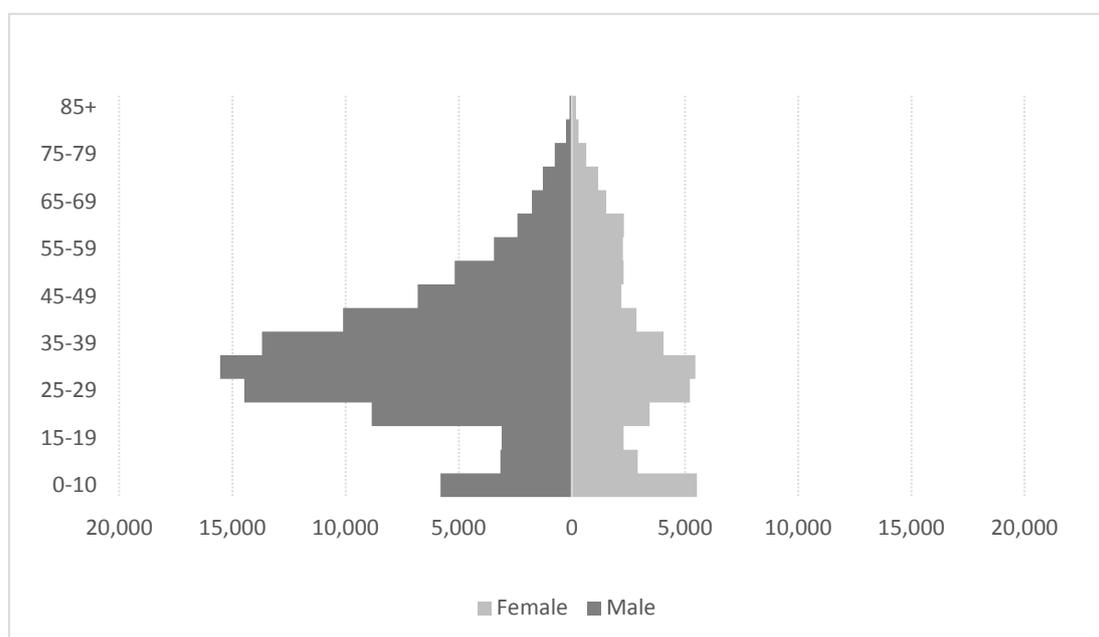
Source: Migration in Albania, 2014 INSTAT

B. Return migration

9. Given the strong increase in the number of Albanians residing abroad over the decade, return migration cannot have been very substantial. Nevertheless, in the 2011 census a total of more than 100 thousand people reported that they had returned from residence abroad since 2001. Census analysis demonstrated that returns have been on the rise every year, in particular after 2008 (Migration in Albania). Overall, in 15 percent of the households in Albania lives someone who has ever lived abroad. This amounts to about six percent of the total population (172 thousand persons).

10. While some of these return migrants settle in Albania permanently, for many of them the return is temporary in nature. In this sense, the return migration captured in the census is a snap-shot of on-going circular migration. Moreover, the migration figures are based on the internationally accepted definition of an international migrant as someone who stays abroad for at least one year. It is likely, however, that Albanian migration, in particular to the important neighbouring destinations of Italy and Greece is seasonal or temporary, whereby people work and reside for part of the year in Albania and for another part in Italy or Greece, moving back and forth for work and family reasons. If so, the total impact of migration is even larger than the above estimates indicate.

Figure 2: Albanians returnees 2001-11, by age and sex



Source: Migration in Albania, 2014 INSTAT

11. The return migration has been on rise after 2008, as census data revealed. In order to capture more in detail this phenomena INSTAT in collaboration with IOM conducted the Return and Re-integration survey in 2013.

2. Difficulties measuring migration flows

12. It has often been pointed out that statistical information on migration is insufficient and incomplete in terms of availability, harmonization of concepts and definitions and accuracy. It is widely recognized that migration data are not easy to collect and that data collections systems, as well as definitions used to define migration events vary significantly.

13. In Albanian case, measuring migration flows is the main challenge. As introduced above the only data available concerning migration was the Albanian Population and Housing Censuses which gives an estimation concerning migration stock within intercensal period. As it is known using censuses on measuring migration has its own difficulties or limitations. Population and Housing census it is carried out every 10 years, accommodates only small number of questions and it cannot capture all migration events like entire families that moved as well as seasonal/temporary, circular migration. Therefore it cannot constitute a source of annual statistics on international migration.

14. Moreover, in absence of administrative data sources, we tried to rely on social surveys as Quarterly Labour Force survey.

3. Measuring migration using Labour Force Survey

15. The Quarterly Labour Force Survey is a household based survey. All individuals aged 15 years and over in the selected household are subject of labour force survey. The survey survey has a rotation sampling scheme according to which a selected household remains in the sample for five consecutive quarters before leaving the sample altogether. The rotation scheme ensures an overlap of about 80% between samples in two consecutive quarters, and 20% between samples in two quarters one-year apart. The sample is based in a two-stage sampling procedure. In the first stage are selected the geographical areas with a proportional probability to the size of the enumeration area. In the second stage within each of the geographical areas (once selected in the first stage) are selected a fix number of 8 households by equal probability systematic sampling method. The sample size for QLFS is 5040 households for each calendar quarter.

16. From the first quarter of 2015, the sample design of the quarterly labour force survey was increased in order to meet the new EU LFS requirements on precision of employment and unemployment estimates at national and regional levels. This revision of the sample has started in the first quarter 2015 and the duration effect of this revision will end in the first quarter of 2016 due the rotation scheme that is implemented. The sample size for QLFS will be 7900 households for each calendar quarter.

17. In 2014 for the first time, in the LFS quarterly survey was incorporated a new module for measuring internal, international as well as returned migration. This information through this module is collected on quarterly basis but the data are processed and published on annual basis. The new module on migration was incorporated in LFS questionnaire in 2014, this was a pilot to check if everything function. Since it was the first time, data collected from this module had some problems, the number of emigrants was under covered (very low), and while on the other side the returnees were captured well. In 2014, the question regarding migration took as a reference 2011 census date in order to cover the whole post-census period, while in 2015 it continued by considering only the previous year situation. This module was incorporated in the 'roster', this part of the questionnaire collected some basic information for all the household members and not only for those who are object of the survey. Furthermore the questions added to the LFS questionnaire provide us a view on

internal migration as well, even though for these statistics we use the administrative data, having both sources allow us to compare and judge about the quality of the survey data as well.

18. For 2015, due to the fact of sample size increase and the result of QLFS was designed to produce estimate in regional levels, the quality of data collected from migration module were better than 2014. In order to judge about the quality we compare these results with Projection Data on Migration. Emigrants and Returnees figures from QLFS have almost the same trend as in Projection data.

Migration Module in LFS questionnaire

Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q17a	Q17b	Q17c
Citizenship	Country of birth	Year on which person came in Albania	Residency status (Usual household members)	Month and year of leaving this place of residence.	District of actual place of residence	What was the reason of leaving this place of residence?
Albanian (write code AL for persons with albanian passport)	1.District in Albania Skip to Q17		1.Person usually present (always present or absent for less than one year) Skip to Q18		(write code according to the district list)	1. Employment opportunities 2. Study opportunities 3. Family reasons 4. Other
Other (write code according to the country list)	2. Abroad <i>(write code of country of birth according to the country list)</i>		2.Person usually absent (for more than one year) living elsewhere in Albania 3.Person usually absent (for one year or more) living outside Albania Skip to QM2			(do not continue with Q18-QM4 and the individual questionnaire for this person)

Q18	Q19	Q19a	Q20	QM1	QM2	QM3	QM4
<p>What was your usual place of residence one year before (1 January 2015):</p> <p>(For all those born before 1 January 2015, otherwise continue with the other hh member)</p> <p>1. Same place <i>(do not continue with Q19-QM4 for this person)</i></p> <p>2. Other place in Albania (code AL and >>Q19)</p> <p>3. Other country (>> Q20)</p>	<p>District of residence on 1 January 2015.</p> <p>(write district code according to the district's list)</p>	<p>Municipality/Commune of residence on 1 January 2015</p> <p>(write code according to the municipalities and communes lists)</p> <p>Skip to QM1</p>	<p>Country of residence on 1 January 2015</p> <p>(write code according to the countries list)</p> <p><i>(Skip target Q18= 3)</i></p>	<p>What was the reason of coming to the actual place of residence?</p> <p>1. Employment opportunities 2. Study opportunities 3. Lost job abroad 4. Finished studies abroad 5. Family reasons 6. Other</p> <p>(Continue with the other hh member or >> individual questionnaire)</p>	<p><i>(If Q17 = 3)</i> When [NAME] left Albania? (write month and year)</p>	<p>What was the reason that [NAME] left Albania?</p> <p>1. Employment opportunities 2. Study opportunities 3. Lost job in Albania 4. To join family 5. Family reasons 6. Health reasons 7. Other</p>	<p>What country did [NAME] go to?</p> <p>(write code according to the countries list and do not continue with the individual questionnaire for this person)</p>

4. References

INSTAT 2014: Migration in Albania

INSTAT 2014: Population of dynamics, new demographic horizons

INSTAT 2014: Return migration and re-integration in Albania

INSTAT 2015: Youth in Albania