

**INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND WORK-RELATED SECURITY.
A CASE STUDY FROM THE ALBANIAN CONTEXT**

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| Abstract: | <p><i>The concept of work-related security is associated with seven forms of security, as described in ILO's Socio-Economic Security Program⁴⁵⁰. This paper aims to analyze how the lack of seven forms of work-related security influences the decision to migrate, focusing on the case of Albanian citizens who have migrated to different Western European countries. The migration of people in work active age from the Republic of Albania to Western countries, associated with a frenetic population decline, is the biggest concern nowadays in Albanian society.</i></p> <p><i>The present paper shows the results of a qualitative study. The study highlighted that the lack of one or more forms of work-related security plays a very important role in motivating people to emigrate.</i></p> <p><i>The present study results can orient other quantitative studies that lead to measuring the impact of work-related security forms in the decision to emigrate. This study also sheds light on the way policies should consider work-related security to normalize the phenomenon of migration from Albania to Western countries.</i></p> |
| Keywords: | Work-related security; migration, push factors, Republic of Albania |
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Introduction

The present study has a sociological focus and aims to explore how work-related (in)security with all its forms, serves as a motive that encourages migration to countries that offer higher levels of security concerning work. It brings the case of the Albanian context after the fall of the communist regime. Regardless of the studies that explore the causes of migration in general and the motives of international migration from the Republic of Albania to Western countries, there are no studies that consider the relationship between work-related security and motives of migration. Thus, this study could serve as a contribution to fill a gap in the range of studies in this field.

As Ravenstain mentioned in his work "Low of migration", the major causes of migration are economic⁴⁵¹, and the economy is strongly related to the work. Before starting the analysis of the relationship between work-related security and migration, it is worth explaining the dimensions of work-related security. Focusing on the features of the Fordism era, 7 dimensions of work-related security have been identified⁴⁵².

1. *labor market security*, which is related to a high level of employment guaranteed by macroeconomic policy, sufficient employment, and labor possibilities;

⁴⁵⁰ International Labor Office, *Economic Security for a Better World*, Geneva 2004, www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/RessourcePDF.action?ressource.ressourceld=8670, p. 14. (12.07.2023)

⁴⁵¹ Ernst Georg Ravenstein, *The laws of migration*, "Journal of the Statistical Society of London", Vol. 48, No. 2, June, 1885, pp.167-235

⁴⁵² International Labor Office, *Economic Security for a Better World*. Geneva, 2004, www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/RessourcePDF.action?ressource.ressourceld=8670, p. 14 (14.07.2023)

2. *employment security*, which has to do with the protection against arbitrary dismissal, and employment stability compatible with economic dynamism;
3. *job security*, which represents a dimension of security linked to an occupation or ‘career’, plus tolerance of demarcation practices, barriers to skill dilution, craft boundaries, job qualifications, etc.;
4. *work security*, which deals with the protection against accidents and illness at work, through safety and health regulations, limits on working time, unsociable hours, and night work for women, etc.;
5. *skill reproduction security*, which is related to the widespread opportunities to gain and retain skills, through apprenticeships, vocational training, etc.;
6. *income security*, which has to do with income protection by progressive taxes, comprehensive social security, pay indexation, minimum wage machinery, etc.;
7. *representation security*, which is a dimension of work-related security that deals with the defense of collective bargaining rights in the workplace through independent trade unions, employers, groups, and other organizations that may raise the voice of employees and working communities.

In this paper, these 7 forms of work-related security have been explored as motives that drive people's desires and needs to migrate outside the borders of their country of origin. So, the research questions that drove the study are: 1. Does work-related security serve as a motive that generates migration? 2. How do people who have migrated from Albania to Western countries perceive this influence? 3. How these perceptions are shaped according to their professional qualifications and skills?

A Framework Theory

Before exploring the how seven forms of work-related security serve as motives for international migration, it is important to review the concept of *push factors* given from the perspective of push and pull factors theory. Everett Lee⁴⁵³ has conceptualized the factors associated with the decision to migrate and the process of migration into the following four categories:

- (1) Factors associated with the area of origin;
- (2) Factors associated with the area of destination;
- (3) Intervening obstacles and
- (4) Personal factors (individual's perception).

According to this theory *push factors* are conditions that can force people to leave their homes and are related to the country from which a person migrates. Push factors include non-availability of enough livelihood opportunities, poverty, rapid population growth that surpasses available resources, "primitive" or "poor" living conditions, desertification, famines/droughts, fear of political persecution, poor healthcare, loss of wealth, and natural disasters. On the other side, *pull factors* are exactly the opposite of push factors; they attract people to a certain location. Typical examples of pull factors of a place are more job opportunities and better living conditions; easy availability of land for settling and agriculture, political and/or religious freedom, superior education and welfare systems, better transportation and communication facilities, better healthcare system and stress-free environment attractive, and security. If there are intervening obstacles between two places, the flow of migrants may not develop completely. The number of opportunities at a location is directly correlated with the number of migrants, and the number of barriers that stand in the way is inversely correlated. The literature review below gives a panorama of how different scholars have seen the relations between work relations security and migration in an international context.

Literature Review on Work-Related Security and Migration

Usually, studies that connect migration with security are divided into two groups: the ones who see (in)security as the cause of migration and the others who see the (in)security because of migration.

In his book "Security and Migration in the 21st Century", Elspeth Guild raises the question: what do we mean in today's world when we talk about security and migration? What is the intersection of these two crucial fields? What are the implications for both states and individuals of this clash between public interest and policy concern? Guild tackles these urgent questions, illustrating her points with a plethora of current examples ranging from the effect of asylum seekers on state border security to identity security in citizenship

⁴⁵³ Everett Lee, *A theory of migration*, "Demography", Vol. 3, No. 1/1966, p. 50, DOI 10.2307/2060063 (01.08.2023)

laws⁴⁵⁴. Some studies relate migration with security issues focusing on how the experience of irregular migrants exposes themselves to insecurity and vulnerability⁴⁵⁵, or the experiences of migrants in the host country and the uncertainty they encounter not only in the labor market but in all spheres of life. Many researchers have connected migration and security issues with the experiences of specific groups, such as minorities, women, etc.⁴⁵⁶. For example, Shih Joo Tan examines how migrant women in Singapore and Hong Kong negotiate everyday security and safe work against the backdrop of effective employment relations and institutional structures of labor and migration law⁴⁵⁷. Other studies connect migration with security and development⁴⁵⁸. Others address the implication of state structures and institutional capabilities for the migration-security balance sheet⁴⁵⁹. Recently the migration issue is strongly related to terrorism⁴⁶⁰.

Other authors explore the future of work, international migration, and the intersection of the two at a time of rapid change, uncertainty, and disruption for migrants, laborers, and their families and communities⁴⁶¹. Some scholars raise the idea that security questions related to migration should be examined concerning a range of political and socio-economic questions⁴⁶². There is a wide literature regarding the exploration of the motives of emigration, but those that have focused on the relationship between security related to work, as a reason for migration, are very limited. Here it is worth mentioning the contribution of scholars Duszczuk and Matuszczuk, entitled "Labor Market Security and Migration-related Decisions: Theoretical Background". In their paper, the authors explain the essence of labor market security and its potential impact on migration-related decisions, putting forward the thesis that employment-related security is a vital factor affecting both individual decisions to migrate and the choice of destination of migration⁴⁶³. Focusing on this last idea the following analysis will be focused on the Albanian context of migration after the fall of the communist regime.

The Albanian Context of Migration after the Fall of the Communist Regime

It looks like one of the migration laws of Ravenstein is true for the Albanian context, which after the collapse of the communist regime generated migration mainly for economic reasons. Based on different scholars' works, the Albanian migration after the fall of the communist regime was massive and complex. It started in 1990 when 5000 Albanian citizens entered the territory of embassies of different Western countries in Tirana⁴⁶⁴. After that, a big wave of migration followed with the exodus by ship in Italy in March and August 1991. In the March phase, around 25,000 Albanian citizens arrived on the Italian coasts, and in the August phase of the exodus another 20,000 Albanian citizens, who arrived on the Bari coasts with big ships, were

⁴⁵⁴ Elspeth Guild, *Security and Migration in the 21st century*, Wiley, 2009, p. 53

⁴⁵⁵ Khalid Koser, *Irregular migration, state security and human security*, "Global Commission on International Migration", September 2005, p. 2, https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/policy_and_research/gcim/tp/TP5.pdf (01.08.2023)

⁴⁵⁶ AKM Ahsan Ullah, Noor Hasharina Hasan, Siti Mazidah Mohamad, Diotima Chattoraj, *Migration and Security: Implications for Minority Migrant Groups*, India Quarterly, Vol. 76, No. 1/2020, pp. 136-153, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0974928419901199> (01.09.2023) **COPY**

⁴⁵⁷ Shih Joo Tan, *Gendered Labour, Everyday Security and Migration an Examination of Domestic Work and Domestic Workers' Experiences in Singapore and Hong Kong*, Routledge, 2022, pp. 45-53

⁴⁵⁸ Khalid Koser, Jerome Elie, *Migration, Security and Development: Understanding the linkage, 2014* <https://blogs.worldbank.org/peoplemove/migration-security-and-development-understanding-linkages> (21.08.2023)

⁴⁵⁹ Nazli Choucri, *Migration and Security: Some Key Linkages*. "Journal of International Affairs", Vol. 56, No. 1, 2002, pp. 97-122, *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24357885> (21.08.2023)

⁴⁶⁰ Marc Helbling, Daniel Meierrieks, *Terrorism and Migration: An Overview*, "British Journal of Political Science 52", No. 2/2022, p. 977-996, DOI:10.1017/S0007123420000587 (21.08.2023)

⁴⁶¹ Donald Kerwin, *International Migration and Work: Charting an Ethical Approach to the Future*, "Journal on Migration and Human Security", Vol. 8, No. 2/2020, pp. 111-133, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2331502420913228> (22.08.2023)

⁴⁶² Jef Huysmans, Vicki Squire, *Migration and Security*, in Dunn Cavelty, Myriam, Mauer, Victor (Eds.), "Handbook of Security Studies", Routledge, London, 2009, p. 1

⁴⁶³ Maciej Duszczuk, Kamel Matuszczuk, *Labour Market Security and Migration – related decisions: Theoretical Background*, in Maciej Duszczuk (Ed.), "Why do people migrate?", Emerald Publishing Limited, Bingley, pp. 25-66

⁴⁶⁴ Vladimir Misja, *Emigracioni Ndërkombëtar në Shqipëri gjatë Periudhës së Tranzicionit*, Marin Barleti, Tiranë, 1998

repatriated to Albania⁴⁶⁵. Another phase of invisible migration continued clandestinely during 1993-1996, mainly directed toward Italy by small ships and toward Greece by crossing the land borders. In 1996 some financial pyramidal companies accumulated from the population an amount of money equal to half of the country's GDP for that year⁴⁶⁶.

After the collapse of the pyramidal scheme in 1997, another mass migration from Albania, mainly toward the geographically close countries. Also in 1999, because of the Kosovo refugee crisis, 500 thousand of Kosovo people were sheltered in the Republic of Albania⁴⁶⁷ and some of them aimed to reach different Western countries. Many Albanian citizens took advantage and joined the group of refugees from Kosovo to go toward the Western developed countries as well. In 2000, it was estimated that 800.000 Albanian citizens lived and worked abroad, mainly in Greece and Italy⁴⁶⁸. During the second decade after the fall of the communist regime the migration flow toward the developed countries was a lower density, partially because of a kind of stabilization of the big economic crisis that occurred immediately after the fall of the communist regime, and partially because of the normalization of the emigration from family and social channels, mainly toward Greece and Italy⁴⁶⁹.

During the years 2000-2010, there was relative stability and consolidation of the Albanian immigrant community in the host countries, however, the potential migration remained high in the Republic of Albania. Thus, from the data obtained from the Gallup World Poll 2010-2015, Albania ranked sixth in the world in terms of the adults who planned to migrate outside the borders of the Republic of Albania⁴⁷⁰. During the period 2014-2018, another way of reaching the western developed countries has been generated through asylum requests. Around 16 100 Albanian citizens presented an asylum request during the year 2014 and another 65,900 presented such a request in 2015⁴⁷¹. From around 2019 until nowadays Albanian migration continues, on one hand through official channels such as agencies that provide employment contracts, especially for health and IT professionals, and, on the other hand through informal channels mainly toward Britain through transit countries such as France etc.

The migration of people in work active age, including highly skilled professionals, from the Republic of Albania to Western countries such as Germany, Sweden, Grand Britain, the USA, Canada, etc., associated with a frenetic population decline, is still the biggest concern nowadays in Albanian society. During 2021, the Albanian net migration was -32 853 citizens⁴⁷². In 2023, compared to 1990, the population in Albania has been reduced by 15.1%, down to 2,761,785 inhabitants, from 3,254,541 before the cycle of emigration and the gradual aging of the population began⁴⁷³. The economic reason seems to remain one of the most important push factors of Albanian migration toward Western countries.

Methodology

The methodology of the present paper is based on the combination of the data obtained from secondary and primary sources. The secondary sources, such as different articles from Albanian and foreign scholars have been useful in creating a general panorama about the historical phenomenon of the migration e from Albania, after the fall of the communist regime, to the western countries. A qualitative study, which was conducted during the period of March-August 2023, helped the understanding of the empirical context about the motives of migration from Albanian society toward the mentioned countries. The exploration of the in-depth interviews helped to gain insight into peoples' experiences and perspectives about work-related security,

⁴⁶⁵ Rando Devole, *Ura mbi det, Emigracioni shqiptar në Itali*, Ora, Tiranë, 2008, p. 10

⁴⁶⁶ James Korovilas, *The Albanian economy in transition: the role of remittances and pyramid investment schemes*, "Post-Comunist Economies", Vol. 11, No. 3/1999, p. 409

⁴⁶⁷ UNHCR, *UNHCR Fundraising – 2000 Global Appeal*, Albania, 2003

⁴⁶⁸ Ilir Gëdeshi; Russel King, *New tendencies of potential migration from Albania*. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2018, p. 22

⁴⁶⁹ *Idem*

⁴⁷⁰ Frank Lazcko, Jasper Tjaden, Daniel Auer, *Measuring global migration potential, 2010-2015*, "Global Migration Data Analysis Centre, Data Briefing Series", No. 9/2017, p. 1

⁴⁷¹ Open Data, *Number of refugees to Europe surges to record 1.3 million in 2015*, www.pewglobal.org (01.08.2023)

⁴⁷² INSTAT, *Population of Albania, 1st January 2022*, www.instat.gov.al/media/9829/population_of-albania-on-1-january-2022_final-15-04-2022.pdf (01.08.2023)

⁴⁷³ INSTAT, *Population of Albania, 1st January 2023*, www.instat.gov.al/media/11654/population_of-albania-on-1-january-2023.pdf (01.08.2023)

as the motive of migration. The provided data have been explored through the thematic analysis of 27 semi-structured interviews with people who have migrated from Albania to Western countries such as Germany, Sweden, Grand Britain, Italy, Greece, Spain, and Portugal. The two criteria for selecting the interviewees were “the economic (working) reasons for migration” and “at least one year in the host country”. The purpose sample, typical for qualitative-based research, was used to gather the data. Of 27 interviewees (18-60 years old) 12 were male, 15 females.

Study Limitations

Studying has certain limitations. Firstly, the literature that intersects work related to security dimensions with migration motives, especially in the Albanian context, is very limited. Secondly, the use of a limited number of interviewees does not allow the generalization of the findings but only identifies some tendencies, that can be measured by using the quantitative research method.

Empirical Findings

The study highlighted that the lack of one or more forms of work-related security has played a very important role in pushing people to emigrate from the Republic of Albania. All seven forms of work-related security have been identified during the interviews. Through the interviewing process, some tendencies were identified regarding the forms of work-related security, as push factors for migration and professional qualification. The so-called white-collar professionals such as teachers and medical professionals mentioned the lack of some forms of work-based security such as labor market security, job security, skill reproduction security, income security, and representation security. Because they have “transnationally valid forms of cultural capital”, highly skilled migrants are seen as the archetype of a socially mobile group⁴⁷⁴.

A 36-year-old woman, who worked as an elementary teacher in Albania, before migrating to Spain, during the interview claimed: “I worked as a teacher in an elementary school in my country of origin. My fiancé was also a gym teacher. We were together for 5 years and we couldn't think of getting married, buying a house, or having children. We both were poorly paid and had led a very modest life. This was the main reason why we decided to leave Albania. Here in Spain things are different. We work both in a restaurant. We work long hours, but we get paid for it and we are satisfied. We are even thinking of buying our apartment because the baby will soon be born”. Another skilled professional, a man 42 years old, who has worked as a family doctor in Albania and has migrated to Germany, affirmed as follows: I never found myself in the work I was doing in Albania. The salary was scandalous, and they were not indexed (at least until 3 years ago when I left). The doctor's image was underestimated, and the patients often threatened us. The union did not work, the working conditions left much to be desired, and the possibility of professional qualification must be found I provided for myself, the training, the conferences, and everything. I felt insecure and unmotivated and, since I was still young, I came here to Germany. Here I feel respected, treated with dignity, and motivated. Regarding the category of unskilled workers (the so-called blue collars), they mentioned mostly labor market security, employment security, work security, and income security, as forms of worked-based security which served as push factors of their migration.

A woman 47 years old during her interview mentioned: “I worked in a shoe factory before migrating. I worked 8 hours a day and got paid 300 Euro, which was the minimum wage. I had 10 years of experience within that factory, but there was no additional payment for seniority. The treatment from the owners was disrespectful. I felt tired, stressed, and worthless, so, with the help of my sister who lives in Italy, I decided to go there and take care of an elderly person. I'm sheltered at the house of the old woman, and I have the free of charge the nutrition. I get paid 1000 Euro per month, and I feel many times more valuable and more respected than in my country”. Another man 39 years old, stressed the importance of the employment instability during these crisis times, as a motive for migration. “It was hard during COVID time. The business where I worked, the appliance store, was in crisis during COVID and I found myself without salary for three months. I could not benefit even from the modest aid by the state at that time, because the employer had not declared me as an insured employee. In 2021 I decided to reach a friend of mine in Britain...”. Despite the level of professional qualification, gender, and age, the interviews showed a high level of sensitivity about the form of income

⁴⁷⁴ Anja Weiß, *The transnationalization of social inequality: Conceptualizing social positions on a world scale*, "Current Sociology", Vol. 53, No. 4/2005, pp. 707-728

security, as a reason that pushes them to migrate. A 43-year-old man who migrated from the Republic of Albania to Italy 10 years ago, mentioned: “In Albania, I worked in the construction sector and was paid very poorly, while here I’m paid quite well. With a little effort, I even save something, while there within a week the salary ran out”. In summary, the results of the empirical data gathered from the interviews are shown in the table below:

| Dimension of work-related security | Features | Elements identified in interviews, as motives to migrate | Categories of people |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Labor market security | -adequate employment - work opportunities -high employment levels guaranteed by macroeconomic policy; | Lack of work opportunities Lack of work by the profession of the individuals | White collars Blue collars Male and Female Young and mature people |
| Employment security | - defenses against arbitrary termination, - employment stability compatible with economic dynamism; | Arbitrary dismissal Employment instability due to the financial crisis | Blue collars Male and Female Young and experienced employees |
| Job security | - occupation or ‘career’, - tolerance of demarcation practices, - lack of barriers to skill dilution, - job qualifications, | Lack of career development opportunities Lack of professional qualifications Professional burn out | White collars Male and Female Young and experienced employees |
| Work security | - the protection against accidents and illness at work, - safety and health regulations, - limits on working time, - limits on unsociable hours, - limits on night work for women, etc. | Lack of protection from accidents at work Lack of safety and health regulation Lack of payment for overtime | White collars Blue collars Male and Female Young and experienced employees |
| Skill reproduction security | - widespread opportunities to gain and retain skills, through apprenticeships, vocational training, etc.; | Lack of vocational training Lack of opportunities for skills development | White collars Male and Female Young and experienced employees |
| Income security | - protection of income through minimum wage machinery, wage indexation, comprehensive social security, progressive taxation, etc. | Lack of wage indexation | White collars Blue collars Male and Female Experienced employees |
| Representation security | - deals with the protection unified voice in the labor market via independent employers and trade unions; - associations and other organizations capable of advocating for the rights of laborers and communities of workers | Lack of protection from trade unions and employers' associations | White collars Male and Female Young and experienced employees |

Table 1. Dimensions of Work-Related Security as Push Factors for Migration⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷⁵ Source: Author` research

Conclusions

As the findings showed, the work-related forms of (in)security may serve as motives that can generate international migration from one country to another, specifically from one country where the forms of work security are missing to a country where the work security forms are guaranteed. The present qualitative study results can orient other quantitative studies that lead to measuring the impact of work-related security forms in the decision to emigrate.

This study sheds light on the way policies taken from governments, employers, unions, and others, should consider work-related security to normalize the phenomenon of immigration from Albania and similar countries to the Western countries.

Thus, policies that promote adequate employment work opportunities, protection against arbitrary dismissal, employment stability compatible with economic dynamism, opportunities of 'career', job qualifications, tolerance of demarcation practices, elimination of barriers to skill dilution, opportunities to gain and retain skills through apprenticeships, protection against accidents and illness at work, limits on working time, protection of income through minimum wage machinery, wage indexation, vocational training, protection of collective voice in the labor market through independent trade unions and employers; associations and other bodies able to represent the interests of workers and working communities, etc., can help the improvement of the working conditions for employees and can prevent the social hemorrhage of people from less developed to the more developed countries, normalizing the migration flows.

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