

# Internal migration and population distribution in Albania – the case of Durana

## Abstract

Demographic change in Albania during the last three decades has influenced the socio-economic development of the country but has also contributed to the creation of new economic areas with high socio-economic development potential. During 2011-2021, it is estimated that, on average, 42 000 Albanians emigrated and 23 000 immigrated every year. The main reasons both for emigration and internal migration are related to better opportunities for work, education and healthcare. Internal migration from urban zones to the centre of the country has significantly affected its development, transforming the Durrës and Tiranë area (Durana) into an economic powerhouse. Nevertheless, Durana faces significant social challenges such as poverty (mainly of young families); unemployment of young people; inequality; and difficulty in accessing public goods and services for a part of the population. The purpose of this study is to analyse the socio-economic effects of internal migration into Durana and to present the likely challenges of urbanisation for the area in the next decade, influenced by projections for its population and economy.

**Keywords:** transition, internal migration, demography, socio-economic development, urbanisation

## Introduction

Migration has been a key component of the post-communist transformation decades in Albania, putting pressure on policy makers to coordinate policies related to public spending, poverty and access to public goods and services so as to increase the well-being of the population. The decline in the number of births, the ageing of the population, unemployment among young people and the continuing movement of the population towards urban areas have also made it more difficult for policy makers to coordinate socio-economic policies, affecting the sustainability of development (INSTAT 2014a, 2022).

At the same time, all actors – the government, the social partners and civil society – have come to different levels of realisation of the need to share responsibilities in order to build new balances in their socio-economic activities and to minimise their impact on the environment. This is set against the backdrop of the planning models which directed local development in past decades but which nowadays appear less suitable in terms of ensuring the sustainability of local economic and social development (OECD 2012).

Albania's population has been decreasing since 1990, although not all its areas have followed this trend (INSTAT 2021). The overall decrease in the population during these transformation decades may be accounted for firstly by emigration, which continues to be a considerable factor; and secondly by a decline in the number of births (INSTAT 2021).

Furthermore, intensive movements towards Durrës and Tiranë, which form the metropolitan area known as Durana, have brought sizable demographic changes in the population structure of these two cities. Massive internal migration of people into Durana, as a result of the freedom of movement permitted following 1990, has resulted in increased population density and the concentration of economic activities in this area (i.e. urbanisation) as well as a significant displacement of the country's labour, economic resources and investment. Durana's strategic position, with more than 75 per cent of higher education institutions, scientific research centres and non-profit organisations now being located there, has significantly affected the geography of its development, giving the area the potential to play a powerhouse role in terms of economic contribution to the Albanian economy and turning it into the main driver of productivity growth in the national economy.

The purpose of this article is to analyse the socio-economic effects of internal migration into Durana over the last three decades on the economy of the area. The study also aims to identify the main factors that have contributed to this displacement of the population into the area. We concentrate in particular on the period from the start of the transition up until 2001 as that was when the tone was set for the issues explored in our article. At the end, we present the challenges of urbanisation for Durana in the next decade, influenced by official projections for the population and economy of this area.

### Theoretical perspective: internal migration and socio-economic development

Movement of populations (migration) in the search for a better life is a phenomenon as old as the history of human society itself. History has shown that, almost always, migration influences the socio-economic development of both the origin and the host countries, leaving more work for politicians and researchers to analyse the push and the pull factors which influence migratory movements. Migration as a phenomenon can appear in two forms: international migration and internal migration, the second of which is the object of our study.

Internal migration is the movement of people within the same country, from one administrative unit to another (IOM 2009: 17); while a migrant is a person who changes residence during the period of time under consideration (INSTAT 2001: 11). The reasons for such migratory movements can be political, economic and environmental. Moreover, migration can be analysed in both spatial and temporal dimensions: in the spatial dimension we see the usual reflection of movements from backward regions to developed ones, from mountainous areas to the plains, from small towns to large cities and from the countryside to the city; while the time dimension usually reflects the phenomenon of migration occurring during particular periods of time, often as a result of particular, specific pressures.

Free movement in search of a better life by an individual is also accompanied by a disruption in the socio-economic balances of the origin and the host areas as a result of the migrant in question transferring the social, economic and environmental costs and benefits of his or her existence. Following a literature review, these effects are summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1 – Social, economic and environmental effects of internal migration**

a) Social effects of internal migration

<b>Area of origin (emigration)</b>	<b>Host area (immigration) – positive effects</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ decrease in the number of the educated population</li><li>■ lower standard of living</li><li>■ lack of services and reduction of life expectancy</li><li>■ reduction of cultural development</li><li>■ increase in desire to leave among the young population</li><li>■ increase in perception of life being more monotonous on account of fewer cultural activities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ increase in the number of the educated population</li><li>■ tendency towards an increase in the standard of living</li><li>■ improvement in services and in cultural life</li></ul>
<b>Host area (immigration) – negative effects</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ disparity in cultural development with the local population</li><li>■ difficulty in integrating in the new life in terms of culture</li><li>■ propensity for social conflict with the local population</li><li>■ change in the structure of the population (age, gender, work, etc.)</li></ul>

b) Economic effects of internal migration

<b>Area of origin (emigration)</b>	<b>Host area (immigration) – positive effects</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ decrease in skilled labour force</li><li>■ reduction in number of investments based on comparative advantage</li><li>■ increase in unskilled labour force; inability to work because of high unemployment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ increase in skilled labour force</li><li>■ increase in the number of investments</li><li>■ regional reconceptualisation of development poles</li></ul>
<b>Host area (immigration) – negative effects</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ ‘stock’ of skilled labour and the potential for mismatches</li><li>■ difficulties in finding a job for the uneducated population</li><li>■ increase in unemployment</li></ul>

## c) Environmental effects of internal migration:

<b>Area of origin (emigration)</b>	<b>Host area (immigration) – positive effects</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ degradation of the environment resulting from population abandonment</li><li>■ abandoned houses falling into ruin</li><li>■ uncultivated agricultural land (left fallow) falling prey to erosion</li><li>■ low pollution</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ rapid urbanisation</li><li>■ development of the service sector</li><li>■ the development of local plans with priority placed on demographic integration and the social, economic and environmental development of the area</li></ul>
<b>Host area (immigration) – negative effects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ overpopulation of some areas</li><li>■ more areas of informal accommodation</li><li>■ lack of urban planning</li><li>■ loss of agricultural territories due to the increased amount of construction</li><li>■ higher pollution (waste, noise, water, etc.)</li></ul>

The features of migration phenomena in general and internal migration in particular are also found in Albania. Migratory movements in Albania are related to historical factors such as wars (for instance the departure of Albanians in the fifteenth century after the Ottoman invasion and the death of Skenderbeu); politics (demographic policies implemented by different governments); economics (the development of economic works considered of national priority, such as the construction of the Fierza hydropower plant in the 1970s and national roads or, alternatively, periods of economic difficulties); environmental issues (floods, avalanches, etc.); and social issues (low standard of living and high level of poverty).

In chronological terms, Albania has recently experienced several periods of migratory movements:

- after 1990, the time known as the ‘wave of the embassies’, coming after the long period of isolation and during which the movement of Albanians both within the state and outside it was heavily controlled
- between 1997 and 2001, related to the political and economic instability that Albania then experienced as a result of the collapse of the financial pyramid schemes
- after 2015, when Albania experienced a ‘brain drain’ as a result of the departure of the population, mainly towards Germany.

Migration is a phenomenon that has accompanied and continues to accompany Albania; and is one of the most significant policy challenges that the government has to face.

The policies implemented by governments in the period 1945-1990, when the movement of the population was subject to the control of the state, have made the most significant contribution to the impact that internal migratory movements within Albania are now having. In this period, the movement of the population was allowed only for officially-sanctioned reasons including work, the military and the construction of economic projects of scale. Movement becoming uncontrolled after this period, as well as the economic difficulties and psychological burdens created by the

economic collapse that occurred in the 1990s, led the population to shift to more developed regions, mainly the central and coastal ones. However, the absence of planned, co-ordinated measures in this respect has created significant problems which continue to resonate right across the whole country.

### Internal migration in Albania, 1990-2001

During these three decades of post-communist transformation, internal migration in Albania has thus played an important part in the demographic evolution of the country's regions and has served as an indicator of social changes such as urbanisation. From a demographic point of view, internal migration shows, above all, the degree of change in the territorial distribution of the population over a certain period while, in absolute terms, migration accounts for the numerical increase or decrease in the population.

The 2001 census reported quite clearly that internal migration in Albania – after the first decade of the transformation – was taking place on a 'one-way' basis: approximately 91 per cent of the inter-regional cases of migration were directed towards the central and coastal zones of the country; in contrast, the north-east and south-east zones of Albania represented only 2-7 per cent of all cases of immigration. In 1989, approximately 60 per cent of migrants had been living in the north, 32 per cent in the south and 8 per cent in the centre and on the coast. It is the central and coastal zones of the country that have experienced population increase as a result of migration – here, the immigrant population was 44 times higher for the period between 1989-2001 compared to the north-east and 13 times higher than in the south-east (INSTAT 2001).

Migration between prefectures is determined at least in part by the level of poverty within the prefecture of departure, especially for the prefectures of Dibër and Kukës where almost 37 per cent of the migrated population had been living in 1989. Over time, these districts have consistently shown a high percentage of families in receipt of economic assistance – 40 per cent of households in Kukës and 34 per cent of those in Dibër – compared to an average for the whole country of about 12 per cent (INSTAT 2000). These prefectures have had low levels of economic development and also featured outdated industries which were ruined during the period of the transition, as was also the case in Elbasan, Berat and Korçë, from which came approximately 29 per cent of the total number of migrants. In contrast, the districts of Vlorë, Tiranë and Durrës registered the lowest levels of emigration, accounting for just 8 per cent of the total number of migrants. In relative terms, the prefectures that have a significant share of the total number of the emigrant population are, firstly, Dibër, followed by Kukës, Elbasan and Berat.

The data presented in Tables A1 and A2 – included at the back of this article in an Annex – show that Tiranë, followed by Durrës, received the highest levels of migrants from other regions in the country: 72 per cent of the total number of emigrants were recorded in the 2001 census as living in Tiranë and Durrës. The third important migrant recipient region was Fier, followed by Vlorë, Lezhë and Elbasan.

Referring to the 2001 census, we can see that Tiranë accounted for over half of the inter-prefecture movement of people at this time (136 576 migrants coming from

other prefectures in the country). Durrës, as the second city to which migrants within Albania were most attracted, accounted for a further 18 per cent of all migrants (44 859). No less than 70 per cent of migrants from Kukës and Dibër prefectures went to Tiranë and 20 per cent to Durrës. In 1989, another prefecture, Korçë, accounted for 10 per cent of all the migrants who had arrived in Tiranë and 8 per cent of all those who had come to Durrës. Other regions also contributed a small number of inter-prefecture and inter-regional migrants.

It is important to note that the data actually highlight two different types of migration. The first type is long-distance migration, directed to the main economic poles at the centre of the country, including Durana. The second type is rather short-distance migration in the direction of the coast, with the wider area thus forming a region of both immigration and emigration at one and the same time.

### *Factors in internal migration*

Internal migration and the urbanisation process that Albania experienced in the post-communist years was driven by a number of direct factors including economic, political, social and cultural ones.

First, urban life was considered to be more superior than living in a village because of the better socio-economic opportunities. Tiranë, as the capital of the country, was considered a model city for leisure and pleasure, and exhibited less conservatism and gendered oppression (Vullnetari 2014). Second, the 1992 privatisation of agricultural land marked the end of the agricultural cooperatives, forcing people to move from rural to urban areas where the possibilities for a stable working life and a better social life were bigger (Vullnetari 2014). Third, after four decades of controlled mobility, Albanians were finally free to move and decide for themselves where they wanted to work and make a living. Data from censuses and the Albanian Living Standard Measurement Survey confirm that the immediate post-communist restructuring years of 1991-93 were one of the two peaks of intensity for internal movement, along with the years following the collapse of the financial pyramids in 1997 (Carletto et al. 2004: 7). Fourth, once it was clear that the regime was then on the brink of collapse, a widespread disregard for law and order ensued as pent-up frustration at decades of close surveillance and, for many – oppression – exploded on a massive scale (Vullnetari 2014).

A review of the literature on internal migration supports the presence of a combination of economic, political, social and cultural reasons lying behind such moves. Thus, according to Carletto et al. (2004), in almost three-quarters of post-1990 internal moves the migration of households was attributed to factors such as starting a new job, looking for a better job or having insufficient land. Accessing better education and healthcare were key factors in the early 1990s and these continue to motivate more recent immigrants as rural areas and small urban peripheries continue to suffer from a dilapidated social and physical infrastructure (Çaro 2011; Tomini and Hagen-Zanker 2009).

Hosting the vast majority of the country's educational and health institutions, the capital's attractiveness in these respects cannot be disputed. Tiranë and Durrës also exert a major pull in terms of business purposes, with business owners choosing to

re-locate and take advantage of the concentration of people in this area as well as the various structural facilities often not available in other places (Tiranë Regional Council 2005). The population of Tiranë serves not only as a crucial pool of skilled and readily available labour but also as a much-needed mass of consumers (Doka 2005).

Additionally, however, such re-location is also affected in a major way by return migration as those who return from abroad and who have disposable capital often end up investing it in Tiranë and Durrës and not in their areas of origin (Kilic 2007; Vullnetari 2012).

### *Rural to urban movements*

Since 1990 approximately one-fifth of the total population in Albania has emigrated abroad and, since that same year, Albania has also experienced large-scale movements of the population from rural to urban areas. Between 1989 and 2001, the total population in Albania fell by 4 per cent, to 3 069 275 inhabitants, while the rural population fell by no less than 15 per cent. Migration of the population, whether rural to urban or in terms of international migration (substantially to Italy or Greece), served as an important escape route from unemployment or other economic difficulties that the post-communist transition brought to the Albanian market economy (INSTAT 2001).

The share of the urban population increased between 1989 and 2011 from 35 to 53.7 per cent, transforming the population of Tiranë which doubled its population in the same period. Economic crisis and political changes stimulated large-scale flows of emigrants but internal movements, which were very limited before 1990, have had, if anything, a greater impact on demographic change at local and district levels. This mixing of internal and international mobility has produced quite a complex regional typology of migratory change in Albania. In both cases, the most significant population flows have been from the mountainous north and south towards the western lowlands, mainly within and around the triangle of Tiranë, Durrës and Elbasan (King and Vullnetari 2003).

During 1989-2001, as Table 2 emphasises, Dibër, Fier and Lezhë have had the highest levels of rural immigration while Vlorë, Durrës and Tiranë have had the lowest levels. For all these prefectures, other than Tiranë, we can observe an accentuation of the urbanisation of migration.

**Table 2 – Population in Albania (2001) according to migration status (1989-2001), by urban/rural residence**

Prefecture of destination	Non-migrants				Migrants			
	Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Berat	58.9	85 875	41.1	59 082	57.0	2428	43.0	1832
Dibër	80.2	108 780	19.8	26 800	76.0	1278	24.0	404
Durrës	46.4	66 118	53.6	76 225	37.7	16 898	62.3	27 961
Elbasan	65.1	173 425	34.9	93 079	38.2	2585	61.8	4182
Fier	66.2	180 963	33.8	92 448	71.1	15 298	28.3	6045
Gjirokastër	60.8	52 831	39.2	34 016	48.9	1314	51.1	1372
Korçë	63.0	129 261	37.0	76 060	53.4	3136	46.6	2738
Kukës	75.5	58 372	24.5	18 991	67.9	706	32.1	333
Lezhë	69.6	75 634	30.4	33 106	61.7	6597	38.3	4100
Shkodër	61.8	117 913	38.2	72 788	53.1	2025	46.9	1790
Tiranë	33.2	109 543	66.8	220 726	37.2	50 748	62.8	85 828
Vlorë	48.0	66 437	52.0	71 914	28.2	3710	71.8	9427
All	58.3	1 225 152	41.7	875 955	42.2	106 723	57.8	146 012

Source: 2001 census

The major internal migratory movements starting from the 1990s have thus had an obvious impact on the absolute size of the Albanian population as well as in terms of its geographic distribution, the internal population structure (i.e. sex and age ratios and the population's socio-economic composition), the general functioning of the economy and the country's infrastructure (INSTAT 2001).

The census data of 2001 and 2011 provide some important indicators of the relationships between internal migration and socio-economic development. The most noted of these features is the direction of movement inside Albania, as we have indicated: from rural to urban areas; from the highlands to the valleys; and from the north and south towards the coastal west. It is evident, however, that the intensity of such moves, as well as the accompanying challenges, does not affect all prefectures in the same way or to the same extent.

### The case of Durana: projecting forwards to 2031

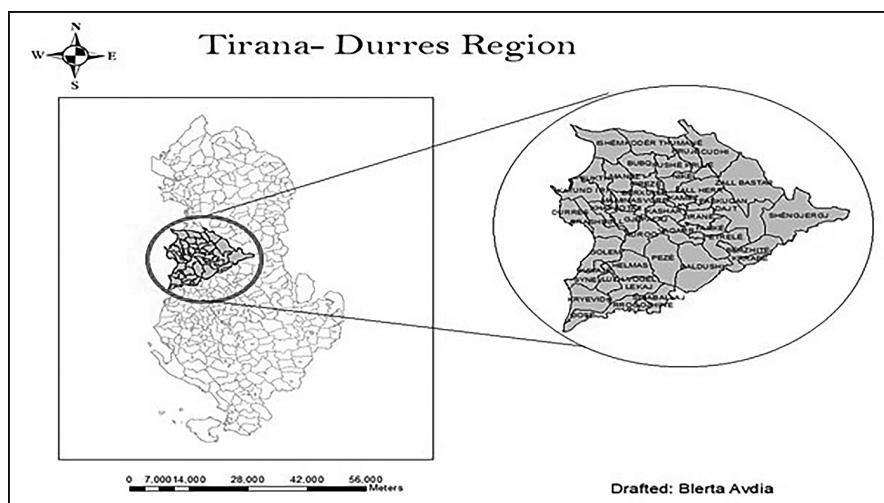
We can see from the data presented above that internal migration in Albania has been concentrated on the most developed region of the country, that is within the region of Tiranë and Durrës which forms the economic zone of Durana. The area is

located in the western lowlands; it has a Mediterranean climate and access to the Adriatic Sea; and it is rich in lagoons, rivers and good agricultural land. All of this provides Durana with significant potential for economic development in respect of the incoming population. Furthermore, the geostrategic position of the area, close to 'Mother Teresa' international airport and the largest port in the country (Durrës), as well as its proximity to the airports of neighbouring countries, adds additional opportunities both for economic development and for cooperation with foreign investors.

Moreover, the major economic centres and a large share of the important decision-making and public infrastructural institutions are located in Durana, with the activity of all these actors having a significant impact on its opportunities for socio-economic development. All these factors have contributed to make this region more attractive for populations moving from the north/north-east and the south/south-east regions than anywhere else within Albania.

The economic area of Durana contributed about 53 per cent of Albania's GDP in 2019 and represents the economic area with the highest income per capita in Albania. Referring to data for that year from INSTAT – the Institute of Statistics – Tirana's per capita income is calculated to be 32 per cent higher than the country's average.

**Figure 1 – The geographical position of the Tirana-Durrës region in Albania**



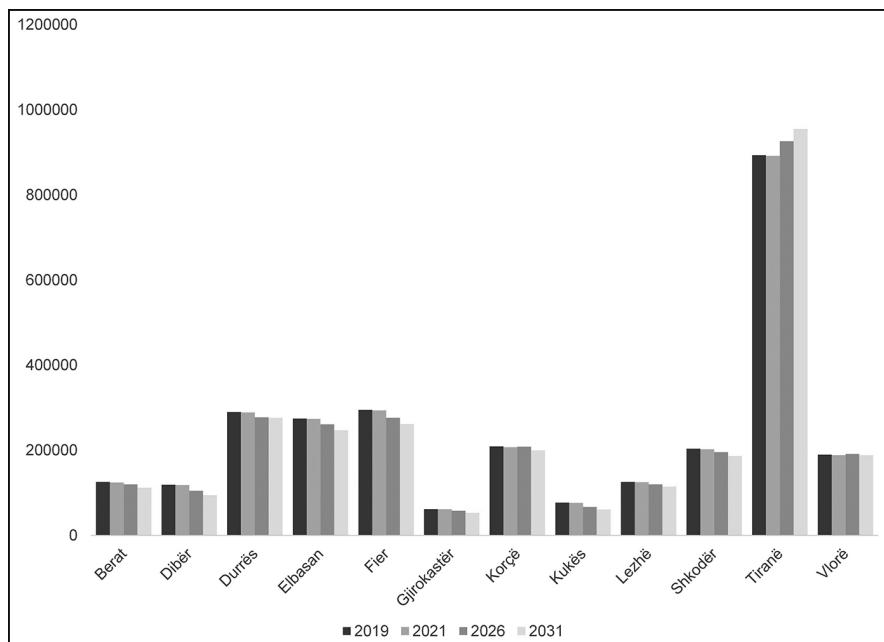
INSTAT reports that the total population of Albania on 1 January 2022 was 2 829 741, with Tiranë accounting for 32.9 per cent, continuing to be the most populated area of the country, followed by Durrës with 10.4 per cent. The population of the area of Durana, according to INSTAT's projections, is estimated to increase by 211 560 inhabitants by 2031 (Figure 2). The increase in population will be mainly in and around Tiranë, accounting for an additional 201 000 inhabitants, some 26.4 per

cent greater than the population figure in 2011; while the district of Durrës will have a further 10 000 inhabitants, some 3.7 per cent more than the population in 2011.

Durana will thus continue to be the region with the highest population density in the country, according to INSTAT's demographic projections, with a density expected to reach 515 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> in 2031 compared to an average population density at the same point across the whole country which is projected to be 97 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>. In 2020, the average population density reported by INSTAT was 99 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>, a figure which had remained at almost the same level over the past five years. The district of Tirana recorded the highest population density, of 550 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>, while the second district in this respect was Durrës, with 380 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>.

Figure 2, and Tables 3 and 4, contain population projections up to 2031 for Albania firstly as a whole, as recently revised and updated; and then specifically for the Durana area.

**Figure 2 – Change of population in Albania by prefecture, 2019-2031**



Source: INSTAT (2022b); updated population projections hypothesis, 2019-2031

**Table 3 – Population projections up to 2031**

Prefectures	Total				
	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031
Tiranë-Durrës	1 033 344	1 108 105	1 167 091	1 212 303	1 244 904
Durrës	269 784	275 017	278 305	279 954	279 796
Tiranë	763 560	833 088	888 786	932 349	965 108
Albania	2 907 362	2 888 996	2 863 311	2 827 569	2 782 309

Source: INSTAT, regional statistical yearbook 2015

**Table 4 – Population and density projection for 2031**

Prefectures	Projection of population, 2031 (inhabitants)		Density of population, 2031 (inhabitants/km2)	
	No.	%	No.	%
Tiranë-Durrës	1 244 904	44.7	514.85	531.98
Durrës	279 796	10.1	365.27	377.42
Tiranë	965 108	34.7	584.21	603.65
Albania	2 782 309	100	96.78	

Source: INSTAT, 2022 (authors' calculations)

Another indicator used to analyse demographic changes at the level of Albanian prefectures is the gross coefficient of net internal migration, showing the impact that internal migration has on the population of particular areas. According to INSTAT's Statistical Yearbook for 2021, Durrës and Tiranë are the only ones with a positive gross internal migration coefficient, respectively showing an increase of 8.4 and 6.7 persons per thousand inhabitants.

Although the social capital of the area identifies its advantageous potential, and is by itself of great interest to researchers, Durana does face several social challenges including poverty (mainly of young families); unemployment of young people; inequality; and difficulty in accessing public goods and services for a part of the population (INSTAT 2021). These problems stem from the influx of people attracted to the area as a result of its advantages, but in the context of public infrastructure and planning controls being both too poor and too weak when set against the scale of the tasks asked of them.

#### *Implications of internal immigration for the socio-economic development of Durana*

Albania's migrations, both internal and international, have played a key role in poverty alleviation in the country as a whole, but Durana still faces social challenges,

as we have identified, and specifically in the area of poverty. More specifically, Table 5 provides data reported by INSTAT for 2012 on poverty, from which it is evident that poverty in Durana is above the national average. Table 6 shows data on family poverty according to family structure: it is evident that families with a high number of children face more problems as well as that the incidence of poverty in Durana tends, in most cases, to be higher than it is in Albania as a whole.

**Table 5 – Poverty indicators in 2012**

Prefectures	Poverty indicators (%)		
	%	Depth	Severity
Tiranë-Durres	15.21	3.19	1.05
Durrës	16.50	3.63	1.27
Tiranë	13.92	2.74	0.82
Albania	14.31	2.96	0.97

**Table 6 – Population in poverty, 2012, by family structure (%)**

Prefectures	No child	1 child	2 children	3 or more children
Tiranë-Durrës	3.7	16.5	17.0	34.5
Durrës	1.7	18.0	21.7	33.9
Tiranë	5.7	15.0	12.3	35.0
Albania	4.5	12.4	15.6	33.1

Source for Tables 5 and 6: INSTAT Regional Statistical Yearbook, 2015

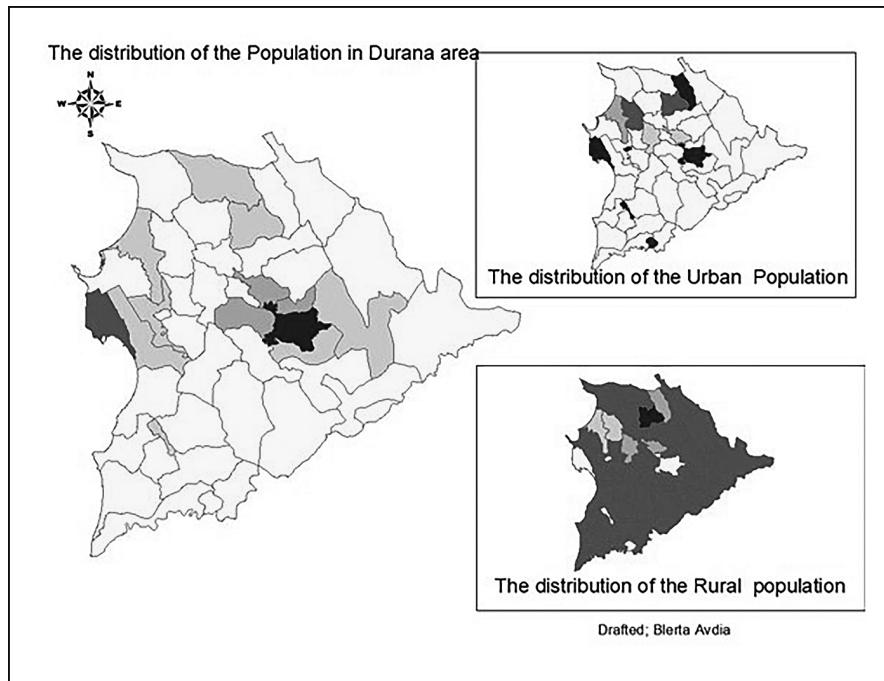
In terms of access to government services and the impact in this area of digitisation, it is important to mention the investment that the Albanian government has made during the last decade (in the e-Albania portal), for citizens and businesses to download documents and forms and to request different public services depending on their needs and their status. However, according to the National Plan for the sustainable development of the broadband infrastructure 2020-2025 (Ministria e Infras-trukturës dhe Enerjisë 2020), special attention needs still to be paid to the question of access for residents of rural areas and the poor who, due to low computer knowledge and the lack of internet access, may well be excluded from accessing these services as well as from the digital divide which develops from access to such services and ease of use.

All the socio-economic indicators analysed above indicate the necessity for more in-depth studies on the planning and development policies of Albania in the service of facilitating and promoting economic activity, in harmony with the principles and objectives of sustainable development.

*Population distribution within Durana and the challenges of urbanisation*

Based on INSTAT data, the distribution of the urban and rural population within the Durana area, and the changes which population movements into the area over the last three decades have created, may also be identified (see Figure 3 and Table 7).

**Figure 3 – Population distribution in Durana for 2011; urban-rural population in 2014**



**Table 7 – Distribution of urban and rural population within Durana (per cent)**

County/district and local unit (municipality)	Classification by administrative division		Classification based on cell network	
	Urban %	Rural %	Urban %	Rural %
Tiranë	64.90	35.10	92.20	7.80
Durrës	64.10	35.90	80.40	19.60
Kamëz	31.10	68.90	99.80	0.20
Vorë	32.60	67.40	69.60	30.40
Shijak	100.0		98.10	1.90
Krujë	30.90	69.10	58.30	41.70

Source: INSTAT 2014b

The distribution of the population within Durana shows that freedom of movement of the population has increased the urban population in areas that were once dominated by a rural population, such as in Kamëz, Vorë and Shijak.

We noted above that the area of Durana is where 91 per cent of the population departing Albania's north/north-east and south/south-east regions have chosen to live (INSTAT 2001: 11). The consequences of this were the trend towards rapid urban developments and, in architectural terms, a long transition towards 'cities without walls' where abandonment and crowding are activities that take place in parallel; and where a part of the city 'struggled' with itself and with its territory and which marked the exit of the city 'outside its body' (Dhamo 2009: 23). This has been reflected in the creation of informal areas of accommodation in Durana such as at Bathorë, Breglumasi, Keneta, etc.

The process of urbanisation itself presents a separate challenge for the Albanian reality because it requires planned development and the administration of the space in two aspects: a) political; and b) socio-economic. Therefore, urbanisation represents a major challenge for Durana for the following specific reasons:

1. management of the informal areas created by internal migration so as to transform them into spaces for citizens and which give access to the centre, to public and private services, infrastructure, etc.
2. difficulty in meeting citizens' demands for housing through urban development planning or the expansion of the city in which they have settled
3. in the creation of public spaces, the fulfilment of requests for social services for the citizens of Durana
4. the cultural problems of the incoming, largely rural, population and the process of their integration into a metropolitan-based society
5. problems with ownership – a problem inherited from the past and which remains unresolved
6. the development of regional plans based on urban planning policies

7. urbanisation, as a process, ought to take place in harmony with new trends in the social and economic development of the country.

The challenges of urbanisation cannot be seen separately from policies on the distribution of the population – which, in turn, are closely related in Durana to the priorities of governance, regional development programmes and urban planning.

What we want to emphasise here is that the distribution of the population in Durana has been left to spontaneity. This, in turn, has brought about a massacre of the urban space. The problems of urbanisation not only belong to the suburbs but also to the central areas of Tiranë and Durrës where new buildings have ‘occupied’ a good part of both cities’ public spaces, often spoiling their appearance and utility alongside the incoming population bringing their own lifestyle and culture.

Durana – the economic zone of the Tiranë-Durrës area – has put in place an integrated plan to deal with the chaos of unauthorised and uncontrolled construction as a means of making the region more competitive, allowing it to operate effectively as the country’s economic engine. The plan details the development of ten strategic infrastructural poles, each offering conditions for the creation of businesses with a closed cycle in logistics, fashion, creativity, etc, realised in the concept of the concentration of the population in the Durana area and a desire to achieve its social, economic and environmental integration.

All this is in order for the population concentrated in the chaotic urbanisation of Durana to have optimal opportunities for economic activity; to improve the quality of life; to protect natural resources and their rational use; and to improve infrastructure and mobility within the area. How easy it will be to reduce the level of urban chaos in Durana and to revitalise this most economically important area – and whether it is necessary to create a ‘brand’ for the Durana region – are questions that remain open to be answered in other studies.

## Conclusions

The last three decades of post-communist transformation have witnessed strong social and economic change for the Albanian people, including internal and international migration. The result has been a re-distribution of the demographic, economic and social resources of the country in a non-controlled process which lies in fundamental contrast to the centrally planned economy of the communist years. Internal demographic transformation has been mostly evident from rural to urban areas and from the north-eastern mountain region to the districts of the coast and Tiranë. The capital and Durrës are by far the principal destinations for internal migrants, re-enforcing a vicious cycle of poverty and adding strain to municipal services that are already overstretched.

The rapid urbanisation of Durana that we have seen in the post-communist years presents major challenges to planners and policy makers if the area is to service in the function of its citizens, offering social stability and the preservation of historical and cultural identity. In the next decade policy makers will have to coordinate policies related to public spending, poverty and access to public goods and services better if these are to increase the well-being of the people living in Durana. At the same

time, it is the task of researchers to investigate and analyse the positive and negative effects of this continuing urbanisation of the population.

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Table A1 – Migration between prefectures, 1989-2001 (total numbers and in per cent)

Prefecture of departure		Prefecture of destination								Total			
		Berat	Dibër	Durrës	Elbasan	Fier	Gjirokastër	Korçë	Kukës	Lezhë	Shkodër	Tiranë	Vlorë
Berat		97	4241	951	5824	1034	1148	348	164	529	8773	2567	25 676
– %		0.4	16.5	3.7	22.7	4.0	4.5	1.4	0.6	2.1	34.2	10.0	100
Dibër	72		10 997	964	1144	47	116	153	2134	281	32 898	278	49 084
– %	0.1	22.4	2.0	2.3	0.1	0.2	0.3	4.3	0.6	67.0	0.6	100	
Durrës	51	62		149	221	38	232	18	902	108	5397	110	7288
– %	0.7	0.9		2.0	3.0	0.5	3.2	0.2	12.4	1.5	74.1	1.5	100
Elbasan	826	64	5191		5618	197	2313	38	197	105	11 076	1020	26 645
– %	3.1	0.2	19.5		21.1	0.7	8.7	0.1	0.7	0.4	41.6	3.8	100
Fier	1881	117	2042	1201		443	444	39	126	65	7560	2618	16 536
– %	11.4	0.7	12.3	7.3		2.7	2.7	0.2	0.8	0.4	45.7	15.8	100
Gjirokastër	600	5	1817	183	2074		705	15	30	85	7634	3950	17 098
– %	3.5	0.0	10.6	1.1	12.1		4.1	0.1	0.2	0.5	44.6	23.1	100
Korçë	324	31	3718	2170	1545	272		8	99	44	13 848	1410	23 469
– %	1.4	0.1	15.8	9.2	6.6	1.2		0.0	0.4	0.2	59.0	6.0	100
Kukës	42	287	6728	79	1489	47	117		1106	1285	31 769	229	43 178
– %	0.1	0.7	15.6	0.2	3.4	0.1	0.3		2.6	3.0	73.6	0.5	100

Prefecture of departure	Prefecture of destination								Total				
	Berat	Dibër	Durrës	Elbasan	Fier	Gjirokastrë	Korçë	Kukës					
Lezhë	62	361	3390	184	693	38	163	79	1137	5522	316	11 945	
-%	0.5	3.0	28.4	1.5	5.8	0.3	1.4	0.7	9.5	46.2	2.6	100	
Shkodër	47	543	2670	79	726	30	180	223	5758	8892	260	19 408	
-%	0.2	2.8	13.8	0.4	3.7	0.2	0.9	1.1	29.7	45.8	1.3	100	
Tiranë	142	81	3647	667	632	139	309	95	138	122	379	6351	
-%	2.2	1.3	57.4	10.5	10.0	2.2	4.9	1.5	2.2	1.9	6.0	100	
Vlorë	213	34	418	140	1377	401	147	23	43	54	3207	6057	
-%	3.5	0.6	6.9	2.3	22.7	6.6	2.4	0.4	0.7	0.9	52.9	100	
Total	4260	1682	44 859	6767	21 343	2686	5874	1039	10 697	3815	136 576	13 137	252 735
-%	1.7	0.7	17.7	2.7	8.4	1.1	2.3	0.4	4.2	1.5	54.0	5.2	100

Source: 2001 Census

Table A2 – Net migration in Albania (1989-2001) and proportion of the population by prefecture

Prefectures	Population 1989	Population 2001	Internal immigrants, 1989-2001	Internal emigrants, 1989-2001	Internal migration balance	Emigration as % of the population, 1989	Immigration as % of the population, 2001	Migration efficiency index
Berat	222 901	193 020	4260	25 676	-21 416	11.5	2.2	-0.7
Dibër	226 324	189 854	1682	49 084	-47 402	21.7	0.9	-0.9
Durrës	218 530	245 179	44 859	7288	37 571	3.3	18.3	0.7
Elbasan	357 497	362 736	6767	26 645	-19 878	7.5	1.9	-0.6
Fier	379 342	382 544	21 343	16 536	4807	4.4	5.6	0.1
Gjirokastër	155 998	112 831	2686	17 098	-14 412	11.0	2.4	-0.7
Korçë	311 448	265 182	5874	23 469	-17 595	7.5	2.2	-0.6
Kukës	146 081	111 393	1039	43 178	-42 139	29.6	0.9	-1.0
Lezhë	165 254	159 182	10 697	11 945	-1248	7.2	6.7	-0.1
Shkodër	285 258	256 473	3815	19 408	-15 593	6.8	1.5	-0.7
Tiranë	449 228	597 899	136 576	6351	130 225	1.4	22.8	0.9
Vlorë	264 556	192 982	13 137	6057	7080	2.3	6.8	0.4

Source: 1989 and 2001 censuses



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