



**Petrít Pollozhani, Merale Fetahi
and Arbresh Raveni, *Albanian
Emigrations and Their Effects on
Demographic and Socio-Economic
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Reviewer: Arbresh Raveni

The book “*Albanian emigrations and their effects on demographic and socio-economic developments in North Macedonia*” was published in Tetovo in 2024 by Arberia Design. It is authored by Petrít Pollozhani, Merale Fetahi, and Arbresh Raveni, three established academics in the field of economics. Petrít Pollozhani is a distinguished economist and author with decades of experience, and along with Merale Fetahi, an expert in international economics and finance, serves at the Faculty of Economics at the University of Tetova. Arbresh Raveni, who specializes in macroeconomics and public finance is currently affiliated with the Faculty



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of Economics at Mother Teresa University in Skopje. This book is a valuable contribution to the scholarship on migration, development, and regional inequality in the Western Balkans. Synthesizing a rich blend of historical narrative, economic theory, demographic analysis, and original empirical research, the book provides a multidimensional framework for understanding the long-term consequences of Albanian emigration from North Macedonia. While rooted in a specific geopolitical context, its thematic scope, ranging from state-induced displacement to diaspora engagement and policy responses, resonates with broader global debates on migration and development. The authors deploy a methodologically rigorous approach, combining econometric modelling with qualitative insights, to dissect both the structural drivers and the socio-economic repercussions of emigration. Rather than viewing migration solely as an economic phenomenon, the study situates it within the intersecting dynamics of historical injustice, institutional weakness, and socio-political marginalization. This book will be of particular interest to scholars of migration and economics, as well as to policymakers, regional planners, and practitioners engaged in diaspora affairs and post-socialist development. It challenges conventional paradigms and compels a rethinking of how migration is conceptualized, measured, and governed in contexts marked by systemic inequities and contested nation-building processes.

The first chapter offers a comprehensive and multidimensional exploration of international migration, presenting it as a structural phenomenon with far-reaching economic, political, and demographic consequences. Positioned at the intersection of globalization, demographic transformation, and socio-economic evolution, the chapter offers both a theoretical and empirical foundation for understanding the dynamics of population movement in the modern era. The scope of analysis is global, yet it gives specific attention to European migration trends and the context of the Western Balkans, particularly highlighting the push-pull factors influencing emigration from economically transitional regions such as North Macedonia. The chapter begins with contextualizing international migration within the broader trajectory of structural upheavals, such as economic transitions, political crises, and global inequalities, that have historically influenced and continue to shape migratory patterns. It highlights

that while migration is a historical constant, its contemporary acceleration and complexity demand renewed scholarly and policy attention. A significant portion of the chapter is devoted to identifying and classifying the types of migration, drawing distinctions based on temporality, causality, and destination. This taxonomy provides the analytical foundation for subsequent discussions on the motivations and risks associated with migration, ranging from economic aspirations and security concerns to social dislocation and identity dilemmas. A salient contribution of this chapter lies in its rigorous treatment of demographic implications, particularly the ways in which migration affects population structures, fertility rates, and age distributions in both origin and host countries. It brings to the fore the concept of demographic imbalance, emphasizing how migration flows may serve as corrective mechanisms in aging societies or, conversely, exacerbate depopulation in sending countries. The inclusion of population growth projections for 2030 underscores the forward-looking ambition of the analysis and reinforces the urgency of rethinking demographic policies in light of migratory movements. The economic implications of migration are addressed with a dual lens: the country of origin, which often suffers from brain drain but gains through remittances, and the host country, which grapples with integration challenges but benefits from labour force rejuvenation. The chapter does well to bridge macro-level economic effects, such as labour market impacts, with micro-level social considerations, including the subjective and non-economic motivations of migrants. The chapter culminates in a regional analysis of the Western Balkans, where the intersection of democratic transition, weak institutions, and underdeveloped public services creates fertile ground for sustained emigration. It uses macroeconomic indicators to illustrate the systemic underpinnings of migratory pressure in the region.

The second chapter presents a compelling and thorough investigation of Albanian emigration from the territories of the former Yugoslavia, providing a crucial historical framework for understanding the long-term and often traumatic processes of displacement, dispossession, and demographic transformation. The chapter situates Albanian emigration not as a peripheral or episodic phenomenon but as a central and enduring feature of Balkan political history and state formation, shaped by systematic state violence, colonial ambitions, and

ethno-political engineering. The chapter systematically explores five historical periods of coerced and politically motivated displacement of Albanian populations. It begins with the Russo-Turkish War (1877–78) and Serbia's annexation of key regions, leading to mass expulsions of Albanians. The interwar period (1912–41) highlights the Serbian monarchy's colonization policies aimed at altering Kosovo's ethnic composition under the «Temporary Law on the Regulation of Liberated Areas.» In the mid-20th century (1950–66), the Turco-Yugoslav Convention prompted the mass emigration of Albanians misclassified as Turks. The 1980s saw intensified repression during Kosovo's bid for republican status within Yugoslavia. Finally, the 1990s marked the post-socialist transition, triggering another wave of socio-economic migration. A focal objective of the chapter is to trace the objective historical conditions under which Albanians were forcibly expelled or coerced into emigration, especially from Kosovo and Macedonia. The narrative is grounded in a critical historiographical tradition that prioritizes archival evidence, consular reports, and demographic statistics, while simultaneously contesting official Serbian and Yugoslav accounts that often obscure or misrepresent the ethnic and political motivations behind population transfers. The chapter also delves into earlier episodes of displacement from Chameria (1878, 1913, and 1944–45), broadening the spatial scope of analysis and underscoring the transnational nature of the Albanian exodus. This study treats the forced migrations not merely as historical episodes, but as part of a state-engineered strategy of ethnic homogenization, in which Albanians were systematically excluded from state-building projects through expropriation, colonization, and physical removal. A significant contribution of the chapter is its sustained focus on North Macedonia, which receives particular attention due to its historically significant Albanian population and its status as a major locus of both forced and voluntary emigration. The study identifies a nexus of economic underdevelopment, political exclusion, and social marginalization as the key drivers of Albanian emigration from North Macedonia. These factors are exacerbated by persistent phenomena such as corruption, nepotism, judicial dysfunction, and the politicization of institutions. One of the most alarming trends highlighted is the massive and increasingly permanent emigration of highly qualified individuals, leading to brain drain, population decline, and

long-term demographic erosion. In terms of methodology, the chapter demonstrates scholarly rigor through its interdisciplinary approach, weaving together historical sociology, political economy, and demography. The empirical richness of the text is matched by its critical theoretical framing, which interrogates state power, ethnic politics, and the geopolitics of migration. This chapter constitutes a seminal contribution to the historiography of migration in the Balkans. It not only challenges dominant narratives that depoliticize emigration but also foregrounds the lived experiences of displacement as central to the Albanian national condition. It is essential reading for scholars of migration, nationalism, and Southeastern European history, offering both analytical depth and moral clarity in confronting the legacies of forced migration.

Chapter three explores the pivotal role of the Albanian diaspora and the broader challenges of national development and minority inclusion in North Macedonia. Through a thoughtful blend of economic geography, demographic trends, and political critique, it lays the groundwork for understanding these complex issues, offering fresh perspectives for anyone studying the Balkans, migration, or post-socialist societies. The chapter opens with a critical overview of North Macedonia's transition economy, emphasizing the slow and uneven pace of development since independence. With a GDP growth rate averaging only 1.2% from 1991 to 2023, the study reveals the deep structural challenges that hinder economic transformation. Privatization failures, political instability, and underinvestment have not only impeded development but also fuelled emigration, particularly among Albanians, who remain disproportionately affected by socio-economic exclusion. A key focus is the regional economic structure, revealing stark disparities across Macedonian regions. Using GDP and investment data, the chapter shows how underdeveloped regions with high Albanian populations, such as Pollog and the Northeastern region, suffer from low productivity, weak competitiveness, and alarming levels of unemployment. The analysis ties these imbalances directly to migratory patterns, arguing that economic stagnation and uneven development are both causes and consequences of large-scale emigration. The chapter then examines labour market indicators, such as productivity per labour unit, export-import performance, and employment/unemployment rates, to assess regional capacities. It highlights the

limited competitiveness of peripheral regions and underscores how low investment translates into underemployment, social marginalization, and heightened emigration pressure. The demographic section offers a nuanced examination of population trends, focusing on the interplay between migration and natural population growth. The author critically revisits historical population policies, including discriminatory anti-natalist policies targeting Albanians, and evaluates their long-term impact on demographic structures. Through a detailed analysis of census data from 1948 to 2021, the chapter documents the decline in population growth and changing ethnic composition, warning of a looming demographic crisis, especially as emigration becomes increasingly permanent and includes highly educated youth. A particularly strong segment of the chapter is its treatment of the ethno-political dimensions of demography. It traces historical manipulations of census categories, especially regarding Albanian identification, and exposes how population data have been politicized to shape national narratives and influence policy. Furthermore, the chapter critiques constitutional limitations on minority rights, which tie linguistic and symbolic rights to demographic thresholds, thus perpetuating marginalization through technical-legal frameworks.

Chapter four presents a groundbreaking empirical analysis of the Albanian diaspora from North Macedonia, serving as the first study to explore their propensity to return and invest in their homeland. Based on a comprehensive survey conducted between 2017 and 2023, it focuses on emigrants from the southwestern municipalities of Struga, Tetovo, and Kërçova, examining their migration patterns, socio-economic integration, and aspirations for reintegration. The findings underscore the diaspora's diverse professional engagements and a notable inclination toward maintaining economic and cultural ties with their homeland. While 34% of respondents express a willingness to return, many show interest in local investments, influenced by factors such as age, education, and income. Additionally, the preservation of language and familial connections highlights the importance of cultural continuity, reflecting the evolving nature of diaspora identity across generations. Although the study's scope is limited to emigrants from the southwestern region, it makes a significant contribution to migration literature by offering a unique perspective on the

dynamics of diaspora engagement. The chapter concludes with practical policy recommendations aimed at facilitating investment, fostering reintegration, and strengthening cultural connections, providing actionable insights for leveraging the developmental potential of the Albanian diaspora.

Chapter five examines economic disparities and migration dynamics in North Macedonia through the application of three distinguished econometric frameworks: Shift-Share Analysis, the Gravity Model of Migration, and the Probit Model. The chapter begins with a Regional Shift-Share Analysis, which uncovers significant structural disadvantages in North Macedonia's least developed regions, including Pollog and the Southwestern and Northeastern areas. By disaggregating economic performance into detailed sub-sectors, the analysis demonstrates how systemic underdevelopment in Albanian-majority areas drives large-scale emigration. Building upon this macroeconomic foundation, the Gravity Model of Migration is applied to identify determinants of emigration flows from 2009 to 2022. The findings reveal that economic stagnation and adverse structural conditions at home, coupled with economic opportunity and cultural-linguistic affinity abroad, drive emigration. This macro-level perspective sets the stage for the chapter's most novel contribution: a micro-level examination through the Probit Model, which is based on original survey data and explores return migration and investment behaviour among Albanian emigrants from the southwestern region. Key findings indicate that older emigrants, those with property ownership, and those maintaining strong ties to their homeland through frequent visits and remittances are more likely to return. Conversely, emigrants with higher education levels, long-term residence permits abroad, and children enrolled in host-country schools are less inclined to repatriate. Generational differences further underscore this trend, with first-generation emigrants exhibiting a higher likelihood of return compared to third- and fourth-generation counterparts. A lack of willingness to invest in the homeland strongly correlates with a reduced probability of return. By synthesizing macroeconomic and micro-level analyses, the chapter offers a rigorous applied econometric study that sharpens understanding of migration and diaspora dynamics while informing regional development policy in post-Yugoslav North Macedonia.

Chapter six stands as a model of applied demographic foresight and policy relevance. It not only quantifies the severity of North Macedonia's demographic decline but also situates it within a broader European context of migratory flux and institutional response. Its rigorous projections and comparative policy analysis offer invaluable insights for scholars, planners, and policymakers confronting the dual challenge of depopulation and emigration in transition economies. The first analytical component focuses on population projection scenarios for the period 2022–2070. Employing variant-based simulations (low, medium, high, and constant fertility), the study forecasts a pronounced population contraction under all models. Even under the high-fertility scenario, total population falls below current levels, while the low-fertility variant signals a dramatic demographic decline of over 38%. These projections underscore an alarming convergence: natural population growth is negative across all forecasted decades, driven by persistently low fertility and rising mortality. The analysis extends to age structure forecasts, predicting a sharp rise in the proportion of elderly (65+), up to 39% in the constant projection, indicating a rapid demographic aging with significant socio-economic implications. The second component analyses fertility, mortality, and life expectancy through disaggregated scenarios. Fertility projections reflect deeply entrenched reproductive patterns: even modest assumptions (medium variant) suggest fertility will remain below replacement level. Mortality projections, on the other hand, posit a gradual increase in life expectancy for both genders, mirroring Western European trends. These forecasts point toward an extended phase of demographic transition characterized by shrinking youth cohorts and expanding elderly populations, structural shifts that will reshape labour markets, pension systems, and healthcare demands. A pivotal section of the chapter is devoted to emigration forecasting, where the dynamics of out-migration and potential return flows are mapped in relation to North Macedonia's prospective EU accession. Drawing from comparative experiences of Central and Eastern European states, the chapter projects a continued intensification of emigration until 2030, followed by a gradual stabilization and eventual shift to net immigration by 2050. These forward-looking projections are anchored in realistic assumptions about economic convergence, labour demand, and demographic pressures. The final part of the chapter turns

to international policy case studies on return migration, with detailed attention to countries like Poland, Turkey, and several EU member states. These comparative examples are not merely descriptive but analytically integrated: they illuminate policy instruments ranging from fiscal incentives, reintegration programs, diaspora engagement strategies to targeted interventions for professional returnees, digital outreach campaigns and regional coordination mechanisms.

Chapter seven concludes the book not merely as a summary of previous findings but as a critical interpretive lens that synthesizes historical depth with forward-looking recommendations on the phenomenon of Albanian emigration from North Macedonia and the wider Western Balkans. It shifts from empirical exposition to evaluative and normative analysis, aiming to interrogate structural injustices, reinterpret conventional development narratives, and chart policy pathways for addressing entrenched demographic and socio-economic vulnerabilities. At its core, the chapter problematizes the orthodox development-migration equation, the notion that remittances and labour outflows are unilaterally beneficial for sending countries. While acknowledging short-term benefits such as reduced unemployment and increased household consumption, the chapter forcefully argues that these are illusory gains in the absence of deep structural transformation. The authors critique the failure of Balkan states to convert migration flows into sustained development through productive investment or institutional reform. Remittances, it contends, largely finance consumption and real estate, rather than innovation, employment generation, or industrial diversification. A central policy implication, delivered with critical clarity, is that economic underdevelopment in Albanian-majority regions is not an accident of geography but a consequence of historical marginalization and state neglect. The chapter highlights the disproportionality in infrastructure investment, labour productivity, and access to education and healthcare across regions in North Macedonia. It critiques the failure of national development frameworks to incorporate a territorial equity perspective, warning that such neglect not only fuels migration but also reinforces inter-ethnic disparities and political disaffection. Historically, the chapter performs an indispensable function by revisiting episodes of forced displacement, colonization, and demographic engineering against Albanians in the former Yugoslavia. These are not presented

as digressions, but as the structural antecedents to contemporary patterns of exclusion. This *longue durée* perspective strengthens the chapter's normative argument: without a reckoning with past injustices and their institutional residues, current policy interventions will remain superficial and ineffective. Most importantly, this final chapter advances a set of explicit policy recommendations that shift the discussion from diagnosis to actionable transformation. It emphasizes the need for targeted regional investment strategies in economically depressed areas such as Pollog, the Northeastern, and Southwestern regions. It also calls for diaspora engagement policies that extend beyond remittance capture to promote circular migration and capital investment. Additionally, the chapter highlights the importance of implementing anti-discrimination safeguards in public administration and education, particularly in historically marginalized communities. In its final assessment, the chapter challenges policymakers to abandon minimalist, reactive approaches to migration and instead adopt a structural vision of equity-led development. It calls for a break from clientelist and ethnocentric governance paradigms, proposing instead a participatory and inclusive model grounded in social justice and territorial cohesion. This final chapter serves not only as the conclusion of the book but also as its intellectual apex. It transforms empirical findings into normative critique and policy vision, situating Albanian emigration as a barometer of state failure and an invitation to reimagine post-socialist development through the lens of equity, historical accountability, and integrated migration strategy.

While "*Albanian emigrations and their effects on demographic and socio-economic developments in North Macedonia*" stands as a groundbreaking and timely contribution to the study of migration in the Western Balkans, certain limitations merit acknowledgment. The scope of the empirical survey is confined to emigrants from the southwestern region of North Macedonia, which, while methodologically sound, inevitably narrows the representativeness of its conclusions across the broader Albanian population in the country. Moreover, the book occasionally departs from the stylistic conventions of scholarly writing, employing language that is more direct and assertive than typically found in academic discourse. Additionally, the treatment of some themes appears thematically dispersed, with overlapping discussions across chapters that might have benefitted

from tighter editorial structuring and conceptual synthesis. While the application of advanced econometric techniques is commendable, further elaboration on methodological choices and potential limitations would have strengthened the empirical foundation of the study. Despite these critiques, the book must be recognized for what it is: one of the first, and arguably the most comprehensive, attempts to systematically document and analyse Albanian migration from a socio-economic and historical perspective within the North Macedonian context. Its blend of statistical inquiry, historical reconstruction, and policy advocacy represents a pioneering scholarly intervention. By bringing visibility to a long-neglected subject, it not only fills a significant void in the regional migration literature but also offers a compelling call to action for policymakers and academics alike. For all its imperfections, the book's value lies in its audacity to confront uncomfortable truths and its sincere commitment to situating Albanian emigration within the broader debates on justice, development, and demographic sustainability in the Western Balkans.