

Periphery of the Cities through the Children's Eyes

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Abstract:

This study has been conducted in three informal settlements in Albania. The informal settlements were created from the internal migration. The movement of people from rural areas in developing countries to cities, is an inescapable consequence of development and the wellbeing of children's. This study is an effort to analyse the situation in these three settlements from the point of view of the children's. This study has been based on structure questioner with children. The quantitative data comes from a survey of 102 respondents aged up to 6. The findings from the survey are richly supplemented by qualitative information of children during the process of interviewing them. The research findings include information about internal migration direction, living conditions, characteristics of families and about quality of education. The results of this study confirm that the main difficulties in the informal settlements are social economical. The main efforts of parents are going to improve the economic situation of families and less to the education of the children or to their socialization through different social – culture activities.

Key words: Internal migration, children, informal settlements

1. INTRODUCTION

"Internal migration, despite being considered one of the most important processes in post-communist Albania, remains under researched"

(Vullnetari, J, 2014)

Albania after the 90' perpetrated external migration was also characterized by internal migration. The transition period influences a lot the waves of internal migrations. This comes

after the change of political system, it was as accumulation of frustration for many years when every citizen movement was super controlled by the communist party: migration directions and levels were very much controlled and directed by the state (Caro, E. 2011). The free movement comes as a “desirable” options for the Albanians and without limits.

In the year 90' Albania resembled a place where people continued moved: from Albania to other countries, from villages to cities, from north to south, from periphery to center, from mountainous areas to plains etc. 'country on the move' (Carletto et al. 2004). The main reasons of this internal migration were economical: more chances for employment, for business and of course for a better life. Internal migration it is view as a possibility for improvement of wellbeing (Ryan et al. 2008).

The internal migration is a very important for the people who move, for their new life, new social and culture context, new realities, facing of new problems and problematics, community and environment (Phalet and Hagendoorn, 1996).

The internal migration is a process in which one are involved different actors, migratory family, indigenous families, public structures that are all part of this process that is very complex from the beginning. A traditional patriarchal Albania family is very decisive even in this process. This process it is a “Adult” decision, that for the better life take the decision to move. In the majority this process is not a consultative process with other members of families.

There are different reasons for internal migration that all goes to the possibilities for the better life. The better life it is an aim for many families but if the internal migration was well study before moving. The people who decide to move, didn't plan for it. They reflection is based in economic factors, more possibilities for the incomes and the future can be better.

The authors and researchers of migration had it a special focus on what happens to the children affected by migrations. It is a tendency to see stronger effects on children who are affected by international migration rather than

internal migration. It is very important to underline that well being is define through the standard of life and this is indicator not the form of migration. Migration affects the wellbeing of children even that the aim of it is their better future. Sen, A.K. (1992) in his capability approach, define well being in functioning and capabilities that means to being able to live a long, healthy and educated lifestyle. UNICEF establishes child well-being: Material well-being, Health and Safety, Educational well-being, Relationships, Behaviors and Risks, Subjective well-being.

2. METHODOLOGY

This situation studies these three informal settlements in Albania. The idea and proposal for the study raised to the fact that the establishment of these areas in the vicinities of big cities after the 90's has been associated with a number of problems, difficulties for the inhabitants, local authorities and civil society who had preferred to be present in these areas.

Domestic migration caused the establishment of three informal areas in 3 cities: Tirana, Vlora and Cerrik in Breglumi, Fusha Aviacionit and Malasen respectively.

Breglumi is part of Paskuqan commune and it was established mainly due to domestic migration after 1993. The newcomers in this area are from all over the country but the northern areas prevail. This area is characterized by the Roma community settlement who have emigrated in this area and have settled mainly on the river bank. They have settled in this area due to the free land and due to the presence of a garbage deposit that serves as an income resource for the families. This area is dominated by the illegal constructions of all types of buildings from one floor to 3-5 floors ones who have been built mainly thanks to the emigrant's income. In the centre of this informal area there is also a group of shelters of Roma community who live in very harsh conditions and face the most complex problems. This community has problems due to the

lack of registration in the civil status offices and this problem will persist until marriages and births will occur at very young ages.

Vlora is a seaside city and has one of the highest levels of domestic migration. The biggest area of this city established informally is the one known as Fusha Aviacionit. This area was established not only thanks to domestic immigration with newcomers from other areas but also from Vlora inhabitants who have built their own buildings in this area of 3 ha and around 5,000 households (data of urban office) but it is difficult to verify the number of the families because many of them deny to get registered. This area is characterized of many problems relevant to infrastructure and in particular: potable water, streets, sewage collection system and more worrying is the environmental situation because in this area's centre there is a garbage deposit that constitutes a serious preoccupation for the area inhabitants.

Malasen is one of the suburbs neighborhoods of Cerrik. This neighborhood was created after the 90's and the Roma community constitutes the major part of the population. The neighborhood population is heterogeneous regarding origin and economic level as well. The inhabitants are registered in the civil status offices and the children in schools as well. Accommodation and unemployment remain the main problems. These two problems have brought the decrease of the welfare and a greater poverty. Local authorities have confirmed that a part of the families have been included in the financial assistance schemes, but the majority does not meet the criteria because they have settled in this area after 1992.

The method used was a survey based in the structure questioner. The questioner was composed by 6 main parts and 22 questions in total that aims the gathering of information: a) general data, b) family - who do they live with, no of family members, status of parents, employment of parents, c) residence conditions - house property, with whom they live, physical condition in their houses, toilets and portable water, d)

education – if they go in school, drop out or never been, e) spare time – the meaning of spare time for the children and the concrete activities they do, f) personal hygiene. – if they have shower and how often they do, cleaning teeth's and hands, changing and washing the clothes.

In this study, deliberate sampling was used. An important issue for sample selection for this study was that of determining the status of the child of the suburban area, so that the participants in the study were just the right individuals. Before completing the questionnaires, the question was asked: "How many years you live in this area?". To be included in the study, the answer to the question should have been more than 3 years but also to meet the inclusion criteria as outlined below.

Inclusion criteria's: Children to take part in the study should be over age 6, no more than 1 child per family could participate, the inclusion of the children was done with family confirmation and respecting Child Protection Policy.

At the end of the data collection (about 3 months), the final number of questionnaires was $n = 102$, representing the required sample number for an approximately population of 6,000, with a confidence level of 95%, a 5% error coefficient and distribution of the 50% response.

Limitations of the study

1. Limited in three areas and it is difficult to generalized.
2. Limited only in the structure questioner with children. The information gather from the children is limited
3. It is not possible a comparison analyzing

3. RESULTS

Children questionnaire was conducted in all three settlements, an estimated number of 102 children in all three informal

settlements realized the interviews. Distribution by settlement was 27% Cerrik, 29% Vlora and 45% Tirana.

Regarding children general data the first question was about their birthday. The aim of this question was also to reveal if children were registered. In Vlora and Cerrik the situation is better because the children were registered and knew their birthdays. In Tirana roughly 55% of the interviewed children had no idea of their age and birthday. Researcher has made efforts to provide information even from parents but even they had no idea. The main reason is the lack of children registration and parents who answer by giving an approximate age. The lack of registration is due to the young age of the partners in marriage and according to law they cannot register or because they give birth to children at home and children are not provided with birth certificates.

The children in these informal settlements were interviewed also about their hometown to reveal the scale of domestic emigration in these areas. According to the data gathered from children's answers, one of the factors for the establishment of these informal settlements is internal migration. In Cerrik and Vlora areas prevails emigration toward the areas nearby the city. In Cerrik around 67.8% of respondents are from urban areas and 32.2% are from Elbasan rural areas around 40 km far away. Families have settled in Cerrik after they have managed to find a residence and Malasen neighborhood has allowed gatherings based on blood relations.

Even in Vlora many families are from villages nearby Vlora and 93% of the respondents have confirmed this and have preferred to come this area because is situated nearby the city and offers more opportunities for economic integration. In this case there is no internal migration from remote areas but only from villages around.

In Tirana the situation is more complex and internal migration is obvious from both northern and southern areas of Albania. In Tirana displays once again the situation of children

having no information about their hometown. In Breglumi area 33.3% of the inhabitants are from northern areas of Albania, 4.5% from south, 46.7% from villages around Tirana and 15.5% do not have information about their hometown. The emigration is North-Tirana oriented and less from the South. There also exist a huge immigration from rural areas toward Tirana.

FAMILY

All the children who have participated in this questionnaire live with their families, meaning with their parents, with an exception in Cerrik where the child parents were divorced, and he/she lived with his/her grandparents. Families of interviewed persons were characterized of families of medium size regarding the family member number though all the three settlements have their own characteristics.

78.6% of the children in Vlora live in families with 4-6 members and 21.4 % live in families with over 6 members. This survey reveals that there is a significant content of the extended families in these areas. The study displays also the middle family's tendency in Cerrik. Only one child live in a nuclear family with 1-3 persons and there is the case of a child with divorced parents who live with his/her grandparents. 75% of the children live in families with 4-6 members while 21.4% live in an extended family. In Tirana there is also the case of a single child living with his/her parents. 68.9% of children live in families with 4-6 members and 28.9 % live with more than 6 families.

We can see that in three settlements there is a lapse of the extended families (traditional) and it is expected a domination of this kind of families in the social-cultural aspect. In the interviewed it was more convened to question the children regarding the level of employment since they are sincerer, while adults try to manipulate the information to present a difficult economic situation in front of the people conducting the survey.

In Vlora in 82.8% of the families one of family members is employed and in 17.3% two of the family members are employed. In these settlements the parents are the ones who work and there are no cases of child labor. Two children in Cerrik affirmed that neither of the family members work and they live with the money given by their relatives. In 75% of the children families, only one family member is employed, and it is usually the head of the family. In 17.9% of the children families, two family members are employed and in this case the parents are usually employed or the oldest siblings. Their siblings are older than the interviewed children but under 18. This is a case of minor labor.

The opportunities to find a job in Tirana are higher. In 40% of the families only one member is employed, in 51% only two employed members and in 8.9% more than two employed members. In Tirana nearly 15.6 % of the children have confirmed that they work to help their parents.

Interviewed regarding the job position of their family members, the children gave us information for the employment sector. The construction is one of the main sectors in Vlora, because it is a coastal area and construction sector is important for both people and businesses. But there are also people who have a job regular position like police, security guards or officers (17.3%). There is also the case when they ensure their income from small business family (10,4%). 17.3% are mechanics while 31% are employed as steward, seamstress, barman etc.

In Cerrik 46.2% of the people are employed in sectors (others) where the majority provides their income from singing in weddings or playing musical instruments or selling second hand clothes. 26.9% are employed in the construction sector, even in this area the construction sector is an important one. In Cerrik there are several families who provide income from agriculture, around 7.7% and there are also families who provide income by gathering recyclable materials (7.7%). There are also people working as mechanics.

Employment in Tirana has two main important directions: the gathering of recyclable materials (37.8%) and 48.9% are the other categories: employment at the shoes factory, selling of maize in the streets of Tirana, second hand clothes, singing in the weddings, delivery of goods in carriages etc. 11.1% of the employed work as street sweeper in Tirana streets. These people are employed from the respective mini-municipality.

From the three centers only, the children in Vlora claim of not working while in Cerrik and Tirana there are children who work mainly in gathering recyclable material, carriage loading, or play musical instruments. According to observations many of them beg in the streets or wash the cars' windscreen but they did not accept this when interviewed. This is one of the indicators that children themselves do not want to accept it though they are forced to do it to provide income for the family.

RESIDENCE CONDITIONS

This part of the survey aimed at collecting information regarding the physical conditions such as: the number of rooms, drinking water, toilets which in all constitute the basic living condition.

According to the collected information it resulted that most children live at their houses and only a small percent of them live in rented accommodation. In Vlora 93.1% of the families live in their own houses while 6.9% live in rented accommodation. In Cerrik, 75% of families live at their houses and 21.4% in rented accommodation. One of the children has not given any information about his/her residence. In Tirana 95.6% of families live at their house and 4.4% in rented accommodation. Despite the migration and the movements of the families from their countries of origin it is evident their effort in trying to build their own houses. From the social and culture context building a house in Albania is a priority compared to the other elements. Rent is considered a problem even in cases when the economic situation is not bad.

The next question is related to the residence conditions, the number of rooms they possess and according to the data the two-room house prevail. From the statistics resulted that it dominates the two-room houses.

69% of the families in Vlora possess 3-4 room meaning that they have satisfactory living conditions. From the local survey team, it was confirmed that most of the inhabitants have houses with large spaces and in good conditions. Only 17.3% have two-room houses and 10.4% more than 4 rooms. 50% of the families in Cerrik have two-room houses and the standards are lower compared to Vlora, the survey group has confirmed that most of the houses have only one bedroom and one living-room. 42.9% live in houses with 4 rooms and 7.2% have more than 4 rooms. 15.6% of the families in Tirana live in one room. The local survey group confirmed that these kinds of families live in a single room in a or they come from extended families where each married boy lives in one room of the house. So, the residence condition in Tirana are even more difficult compared to the first two settlements. 48.9% live in two-room houses and 33.3% in 3-4 room houses.

If we refer to number of the family members for each area we can say that 75.9% of the families in Vlora have 4-6 members and 69% have 3-4 room houses. This shows that they have satisfactory living conditions. 75% of the families in Cerrik have 4-6 members and 50% of the families live in two-room houses. 68.9% of the families in Tirana have 4-6 members and 48.9% of them live in two-room houses.

From this simple comparison it appears that living conditions are better in Vlora and Cerrik and more difficult for the families in Tirana. Regarding the hygienic conditions we have highlighted two important questions related with each other: the building of the toilet and the drinking water.

From the information gathered regarding the location of the toilet we can see that the situation is better in Vlora and Cerrik compared to Tirana. 86.2% of the families in Vlora have their toilets situated indoors. Only two of the families have

their toilets situated outdoors. Two other families have both types of toilets which mean one inside the house and another outside.

75% of the families in Cerrik have their toilet situated inside the house and only 5% outside the house. The living conditions are more difficult compared to Vlora but the majority of the families have good conditions. The situation appears more problematic in Tirana where 57.8% of the families have their toilet situated outside the house and 42.2% inside the house.

We must consider that when we refer to the toilets outside the house their constructions are old and in unpleasant hygienic-sanitary conditions.

A very important indicator in evaluating the living condition of the families in these three settlements is the potable water. In Vlora, 44.8% of the families have drinking water at home but they admitted that the amount of the drinking water during the day is a real problem, 31% of the families use the family drinking water fountain in their yard, 10.4% have managed to open a well and 10.4% buy the drinking water or they take it from the fountains and transported at home by car. In Cerrik 60.7% of the families have water at home because this neighborhood has had the drinking water supply, 35.7% of the families have in their yard drinking water fountain and they have taken it from the main water supply system. Only one family has accepted that they provide drinking water from other methods without specifying it.

Most of the families in Tirana are divided in two categories: those families who have water indoors (40%) and those who provide water in the common neighborhood drinking water fountain (24.5%). The neighborhood is divided with well-constructed houses and the self-made repairs or the houses that are not in good conditions. The first neighborhood has drinking water supply system while the remaining part has managed to provide water from the main water supply system with a common fountain. 17.8% of the families provide water from the

common fountain their yard after having the financial possibility to build the sewage system while 11.1% have opened wells. 4.5% have declared that they buy the water, or they transported it from other resources.

EDUCATION

The part on education of the questionnaire is focused more on problems like school dropout or illiteracy.

The children of Vlora go to school regularly and there are no cases of drop out phenomenon. The local team of this settlement declared that education level is pleasant. Children of Cerrik also attend school but their declaration it is only formal because most of the children who attend school are illiterate. The situation in Tirana is more problematic, 35.6% of the children are illiterate and 15.6% have drop out.

To confirm the data collected from the previews question were tested some of the children if they could write and read. From the answer we were able to see the difference between going to school and learning in school. Below we have given some data.

From 28 children of Vlora who frequent school regularly only two of them do not know how to write and one of them doesn't know how to read. 28 children of Cerrik that frequent schools regularly can write but only 10 of them don't know how to read. In Tirana 18 children don't how to write and 20 don't know how to read.

We can obviously see that in three centers we have problems regarding the level of education since the very beginning Reading and Writing. Education in terms of quality is not satisfactory.

SPARE TIME

Regarding the spare time most of the children interviewed associate this concept with frequenting of school and the rest after having finished the home work. Most of the answers concerning their spare time were based in these activities: they

play with their friends nearby their houses, watch movies, read books, play with computers.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

This last part of the questionnaire aimed the gathering of data on the abilities of the children used for the personal hygiene and to find out what kind of devices they had in their families.

In Vlora 89.7% of the families have showers and 58.6% washing machines. Only 10.3% do not have showers at their houses and 41.4% do not have washing machines. In Cerrik 64.3% of the families have showers and 78.6% have washing machines. Only 35.7% of the families do not have a shower and 21.4% do not have a washing machine. In Tirana, 60% of the families have showers at home and 57.8% have washing machines. Meanwhile 40% do not have showers and 42.2% do not have washing machines.

As we can see a significant number of the families do not have the necessary devices to provide hygiene-related services for the family members and they do this using the traditional ways for both the shower and washing of clothes by hand. The children in all the three settlements claim that the washing of clothes is done mainly by the women and often they have problems with the water supply. Simultaneously even the preparation for having a shower in the traditional way (warming the water) has its own difficulties.

The children have been interviewed even about other hygiene-related elements such as: the washing of hands, teeth and shower. The children in three areas said that they wash their hands frequently especially before the meals implying that they have information on the care to be paid before eating. Regarding the cleaning of teeth, the situation in Vlora is better because they have better conditions while in Cerrik and Tirana the children try to take care of their teeth.

When answered about the number of times they have a shower during the week they said at least once a week while

the children in Tirana have it in a maximum number of one time per week due to the lack of favorable conditions.

Based on observations in the family visits it was noticed that apart from the poor conditions of the families they try to keep the environment as clean as possible and wash their children's clothes as many times as possible. The women take the responsibility for this and do the impossible for their environments and children to be clean.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Majority of Families of responders comes from internal migration: from rural to urban areas.

Families of interviewed persons were characterized of families of medium size 4-6 members.

The possibilities for employment in these areas are limited. The norm is one of family members is employed and it is usually the head of the family.

The main sector of employment of children parents are: construction, shoes factory, selling of second hand clothes and recyclable materials.

There are cases of minor labor but difficult to identify. Many of children beg in the streets or wash the cars' windscreen but they did not accept this when interviewed.

The living conditions of children are directly depending from the economic situation of family and specially from employment of family members.

Despite of economic situation most of families put all their incomes in building a house. This is a priority compared to the other elements.

Living condition and hygiene conditions (toilets and portable water) in Tirana are more difficult compared to two other settlements due to high concentration of internal migration in the areas.

In the informal settlements there is a problem regarding the education of children. It is a big difference between going to

school and learning in school, that means that the quality of education is not good. there are cases of school dropout and illiterate children.

The access of children to the social, culture and sport activities on the informal settlements are very limited.

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