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The Impact of Visa Liberalization on Kosovo's Migration Patterns

An Honors Society Project

By Urtina Zeka

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Membership in the
Honors Society of RIT Kosovo

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Executive Summary

European integration and state development are two processes that complement one another. In adherence to the Copenhagen Criteria of 1993, legal and economic reforms are compulsory conditions that have to be fulfilled by aspiring EU members. With the unfolding of the events in 2018, Kosovo is getting closer to obtaining visa liberalization. After it has successfully fulfilled the 95-point-conditions presented by the EU, on 13 September 2018, the European Parliament has voted in favor of visa liberalization for Kosovo. Besides the concerns whether Kosovo will pass the final stages of visa liberalization, another concern remains its aftermath; will visa liberalization aid economic growth or become a catalyst for mass migration. This study will analyze the potential impact of visa liberalization on migration patterns in Kosovo. Initially it was expected that the Government of Kosovo has learned the lessons from its regional neighbors with regards to illegal migration, has implemented effective informative campaigns towards liberalization limitations, and has started to address the push factors that exacerbate emigration. After a survey with 60 respondents and two interviews with experts, it was revealed that migration is a prevailing issue in Kosovo which must not be ignored. An econometric regression was run to evaluate the factors that affect emigration decisions. Among the factors identified to influence migration tendencies were age, gender, employment status, type of employment, job search, industry of employment, area of study, income, change in income from last year, family living abroad, duration of planned stay if emigrating and the reason behind it, number of people known to emigrate soon, and awareness of liberalization limitation. The income and a worsening income affect propensity to emigrate at statistically significant levels. Further, qualitative results suggest that emigration tendencies are present and are hazardous to Kosovo's political and economic stability but the benefits outweigh the cost of visa liberalization in the end.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Acknowledgements.....	4
Introduction.....	5
Background Information	5
i. Legal Framework	7
ii. Visa Liberalization Timeline	8
iii. Current State	9
iv. Propensity to Migrate.....	10
a) Legal Migration	12
b) Illegal Migration	13
c) Readmission.....	13
Methodology	19
Results.....	22
Discussion.....	29
Conclusion	38
References.....	39

List of Figures

Figure 1.....22
Figure 2.....23
Figure 3.....23
Figure 4.....24
Figure 5.....25
Figure 6.....26
Figure 7.....27
Figure 8.....35

List of Tables

Table 1.....20
Table 2.....21
Table 3.....26
Table 4.....29

Abbreviations

- EU- European Union
- MEI- Ministry of European Integration
- KCC- Kosovo Chamber of Commerce
- GLPS- Group for Legal and Political Studies
- CEO- Chief Executive Officer
- LIBE - Committee on Civil Law, Justice and Home Affairs
- EC- European Commission
- MP- Members of Parliament
- UN- United Nations
- MIA- Ministry of Internal Affairs

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Introduction

As part of the Thessaloniki Agenda, the European Union expressed its willingness to consider Western Balkan countries for visa liberalization with the aim of achieving enhanced people-to-people interaction in the region (Croat Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018). Thereafter, the majority of Western Balkans states have incorporated EU legislation into their legal frameworks and were granted visa liberalization within the Schengen zone. Since 2009 and 2010, citizens of Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina have all benefited from the visa-free regime. Presently, Kosovo remains the only country in the region that does not enjoy visa-free travel (Matias, 2018).

As of 2019, citizens equipped with a Kosovar passport can travel visa-free to only 10 destinations: Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Dominica, Ecuador, Gambia, Haiti, Micronesia, Niue, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Turkey (Gazeta Zeri, 2018). According to Henley Passport Index, Kosovo ranks the 96th among 104 countries in the world in terms of travel freedom. Grouped with Iran and Bangladesh, Kosovo is the most isolated state in Europe and one of the most isolated in the world (Henley Passport Index, 2018).

With the unfolding of the events in 2018, Kosovo is closer than ever to obtain visa liberalization. After it has successfully fulfilled the 95-point-conditions presented by the EU, on 13 September 2018, the European Parliament voted in favor of visa liberalization for Kosovo (Gazeta Express, 2018). Besides the concerns whether Kosovo will pass the final stages of visa liberalization, another concern remains its aftermath; will visa liberalization boost the economic growth or become a catalyst for mass migration (RTK Live, 2018). This study analyzed the impact that visa liberalization will have on migration patterns in Kosovo.

Background Information

European integration and state development are two processes that complement one another. In adherence to the Copenhagen Criteria of 1993, legal and economic reforms are compulsory conditions that have to be fulfilled by aspiring EU members (European Commission, 2012). EU

presents specific roadmaps to these states, the fulfillment of which marks the beginning of visa liberalization dialogues. The roadmaps are set out by the EU Enlargement Criteria and consist guidelines for sound security, fight against corruption and organized crime, asylum and migration regulations, border management, and human rights protection. Any candidate for EU membership must make progress in each of these fields through regulating their current policies and adopting new ones when necessary (European Commission, 2012).

Countries that benefit from visa-free travel are active reformers of their security policies and migration laws. They also work continuously on improving the political affairs with other countries in EU (European Commission, 2012). Different from its neighbors, Kosovo did not have a Roadmap to start the liberalization process until 2012. However, it implemented its own agenda called the Action Plan the same purpose (Ministry of European Integrations, 2012). This action plan is a document that merges the roadmaps of regional countries which were successful in terms of visa liberalization process. In 2012, Kosovo received the Roadmap and started to face challenges to implement it (European Commission, 2013).

There were some distinctions between Kosovo's roadmap and its neighbors' roadmaps. Firstly, Kosovo had to improve the affairs with its adjacent countries, with emphasis on Serbia. Secondly, it had to undertake reforms to protect minorities living in Kosovo (GLPS, 2012). The former condition, as well as the border demarcation with Montenegro has delayed the process until 18 July 2018 (Gazeta Zeri, 2018). The recent voting on 13 September 2018 has induced confusion in the Kosovar society, particularly because recognizers of Kosovar independence, such as Netherland and France, objected the decision (Politiko, 2018). One possible cause can be drawn from France's objection to Albania's and Bosnia's liberalization process in 2010, attributing this decision to the fear of illegal migration (European Stability Initiative, 2010). This argument solidifies with instances of illegal migration waves, such as the one in 2013, where young Kosovars sought employment opportunities in Western Europe, specifically in France (Gazeta Zeri, 2013). Also, the illegal mass migrations in 2015 from Kosovo became a concern not only for the Kosovar Government but for European Union as well (Top Cannel, 2015). Given the increase in unemployment in the second quarter of 2018 from 26.5% to 29.4%, the CEO of Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo expresses his concerns about youth migration. He states that

the demand for professional training has increased the last two years followed by the demand to correct and collect identification documents (RTK Live, 2018). As such, this inquiry aims to take into account the intentions of the civilians after the visa-free regime is established in Kosovo through questionnaires and interviews.

i. Legal Framework

According to the Ministry of European Integration, visa liberalization implies free movement within the Schengen zone. Visa liberalization gives the right to visit EU member states and Schengen area states for up to 90 days, every six months. It should be noted that this process does not give the liberty to work, live, or study in Schengen countries. Once the visa regime is lifted, Kosovars equipped with biometric passport can travel to EU countries, namely Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg, Germany, France, Netherlands, Hungary, Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Poland, Iceland, Sweden, Finland, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, and Malta. Kosovars can also travel to Switzerland, Norway, and Liechtenstein even though these countries are not in the EU. Excluded are the United Kingdom and Ireland which fall outside the Schengen area (MEI, Visa Liberalization).

Even though citizens would be able to travel visa-free, it is recommended that they bring along travel documents, such as their reasons for visiting the designated country, health insurance, proof of accommodation, and financial situation. This measure is taken because the border police has the right to prohibit the entry of anyone who is suspected of abusing with visa liberalization. A visa-free regime without membership in EU comes with its limitations. Kosovars cannot seek employment or engage in any economic activity during their stay in the Schengen country. For studying purposes, the citizen needs to be equipped with an additional visa which is obtained through the respective embassy. However, short-term trainings lasting less than 90 days are permitted with no special visa being required (MEI, Visa Liberalization).

When there are violations and abuse with visa liberalization, the citizen will have to bear fines, an official record of the violation, and a future ban of three to five years from the Schengen area. If there is a notable number of violations from a specific country, then the EU has the right to

suspend visa liberalization for that country (MEI, Visa Liberalization). This is an important point for this study since a new migration wave could suspend visa liberalization for Kosovo.

On procedural terms, there are three main decision bodies that influence visa liberalization process: the Commission, the Parliament and the Council. Initially, the Commission assesses that all conditions for liberalization have been met. Then, the European Parliament is mandated by the competent Parliamentary Commission (LIBE - Committee on Civil Law, Justice and Home Affairs) (Murati, 2018). Subsequently, the Council adopts the negotiating position that paves the way for the triad between the Commission, the Council, and the Parliament, in which they agree on the content of the text and put it to a vote. After the text is agreed upon, the proposal for liberalization is put to a vote in plenary session in Parliament where a qualified majority is needed. At the same time, the Council must vote on the proposal with a qualified majority (55% of EU member states representing 65% of the population). All this procedure can last 6 to 9 months (Murati, 2018).

ii. Visa Liberalization Timeline

The official procedure for visa liberalization began on February 2012. On June of the same year, Kosovo received the roadmap for visa liberalization which identified all actions Kosovo needed to take towards a visa free regime. This document consisted of 95 criteria (Schengen Visa Info, 2018). On March 2013, the European Commission adopted the first report evaluating the progress that Kosovo made regarding the roadmap requirements. The main finding was that Kosovo had advanced in some areas but stagnated in terms of combating corruption and crime (Schengen Visa Info, 2018). On July 2014, The EC released the second report. According to this inquiry, lifting the visa requirement for Kosovars exposed the Members States to migratory and security threats. On December 2015, the third report was released. The EC assessed that all but eight benchmarks were met. The Commission acknowledged Kosovo's progress and assured the government that when these conditions are fulfilled, the proposal to abolish the visa regime would be made (Schengen Visa Info, 2018). The final report was presented on May 2016. In this report, the Commission proposed that the European Parliament and the Council of EU remove visa requirements for Kosovars. Kosovo had made the liberalization talks possible through

fulfilling all of the criteria except for two: fighting corruption and ratifying the border demarcation with Montenegro (Schengen Visa Info, 2018). Four months later, the legislative committee LIBE recommended the liberalization but did not vote in favor of the negotiation initiation. On March 2018, Kosovo ratified the border demarcation agreement. It took Kosovo two years of turmoil in the political arena to approve this agreement. Violent protests, tear-gas in the Parliament room, and disagreements among MPs were present. Kosovo ratified the agreement with a majority votes of 80/120 MPs (Schengen Visa Info, 2018). On April 2018, the Commission has concluded that Kosovo has fulfilled all of the criteria in its 2018 report. According to this publishing, the government has implemented a stable record of investigations and court verdicts which tackled organized crime and corruption. A month later, the EC confirmed the fulfillment of all of the criteria. Commissioner Avramopoulos urged the European Parliament and Council to take into consideration the Commission's request to abolish the visa requirement for Kosovars. Shortly after, in August, LIBE approved the inauguration of inter-institutional talks on the finalization of the process (Schengen Visa Info, 2018). The latest developments are presented in the section below.

iii. Current State

The year 2018 is the closest that Kosovo has gotten to obtaining visa liberalization. On 18 June, the EU Commission decided that Kosovo has successfully completed all of the 95 points presented in the formal guideline for visa liberalization (Radio Evropa e Lire, 2018). On 13 September, the EU Parliament voted in favor of visa liberalization with 420 deputies voting pro, 186 against, and 22 abstaining. However, the Council of Ministers has not yet voted on this matter and visa liberalization was not in the voting agenda of 6 and 7 December (Lajmi.net, 2018). There have been four progress report issued about the progress achieved by Kosovo towards visa liberalization. These reports include statistical data on security, migration and recommendations for the Kosovar institutions (MEI, Reports). The Minister for European Integration explains that in order for visa liberalization to enter the agenda of Council of Ministers, it must go through COREPER, where the member states at the permanent ambassadors' level in Brussels are represented. The minister does not take responsibility for the

lack of liberalization as she believes that the European Union is not keeping its promises towards Kosovo given that Kosovar authorities have fulfilled all of the criteria accordingly (Telegrafi, 2018). Commissioner Johannes Hahn has asked the citizens of Kosovo to remain patient for several months so that the consent from all EU member states is obtained. According to him, the work was carried out by Kosovo and it is EU's turn to implement visa abolition. The European Parliament has voted for liberalization, while the issue is already in the Council of Ministers of the EU. He states that year 2020 is the most realistic for liberalization.

Because of these delays, Kosovars' dissatisfaction is on the rise. Visa liberalization has been promised to Kosovars since 2011 when the then-prime-minister Hashim Thaci guaranteed the citizens that the process would be finalized within 15 months (Indeks Online, 2018) As such, Kosovars perceive the lack of liberalization as unfair, isolation, and disrespect towards human rights. Students from University of Prishtina have protested in front of EU Office in Prishtina on December 2018 to express their concern towards isolation (Telegrafi, 2018). Furthermore, in a Facebook post made by High Representative Frederica Mogherini on the 70th anniversary of the UN General Declaration of Human Rights, hundreds of Kosovars have commented asking for accountability of what they call a human right violation and isolation. She then responded "I understand your concern. It seems I'm misunderstood about recent statements on Kosovo's issues regarding tax increases and army building. I have never been biased in the bilateral relations between Kosovo and Serbia. All my positions are intended to serve peace and stability in the region" (Telegrafi, 2018). Members of the opposition parties, demand the resignation of the Minister Hoxha as a sign of accountability. Some deputies, put the blame on EU authorities for not keeping their promises towards Kosovo. In either instance, it is evident that citizens of Kosovo are deeply distressed about not having a visa-free regime as their regional counterparts do (Indeks Online, 2018).

iv. Propensity to Migrate

The large number of unemployed youngsters and the fear of another migration attempt towards European Union countries, according to analysts, can be seen as an obstacle to visa

liberalization. EU member states, especially those where Kosovars are seeking employment opportunities in, fear that liberalization could be misused (Veseli, 2018).

Following the ratification of the Border Demarcation with Montenegro and the presentation of results in the fight against organized crime and corruption, Kosovo's institutions and political leaders were optimistic that the European Union would make positive recommendations. But such a decision has not yet been taken in Brussels (Veseli, 2018). Taulant Kryeziu, an expert of European integration issues says that there are several issues that have contributed to the hesitation in the case of visa liberalization for Kosovo. The reason why there is little chance for Kosovo to obtain a visa-free regime is because its justice system has not shown the commitment and willingness to deal with the fight against organized crime and corruption of high-profile individuals. Also, there is a non-positive climate within the powerful European Union countries because of the issue of migration (Veseli, 2018). The concerns that the Italian populist government has with what is called the burden of emigrants are evident. The Italian government demands that this burden of emigrants is shared with all EU member states and not borne by one country. Furthermore, the disagreements between Chancellor Angela Merkel and Christian Social Union to close the borders for immigrants strengthens the hostility towards mass migrations, whether from the East or from Kosovo. These elements will produce delays in political decision-making by the European Union in case of visa liberalization for Kosovo (Veseli, 2018).

According to analysts, the fears of migration is mutual for European Union and for Kosovar Institutions (Veseli, 2018). The EU Institutions are currently preparing for the upcoming elections and there are various political calculations of political parties within EU institutions. They are taking into account the penalties they may have if they support visa liberalization for Kosovo. The fear for the government of Kosovo is that they might not be able to control migration. By the end of 2014 and early 2015, using the border between Serbia and Hungary, thousands of Kosovo citizens moved illegally to European Union countries. The great wave of migration from Kosovo has forced the authorities in Hungary, Serbia, Austria and Germany to strengthen border controls to prevent the illegal passage (Veseli, 2018). Given that visa

liberalization can be withdrawn when there are notable violations from a specific country, Kosovo risks its visa-free regime to be taken away if mass migration occurs.

Given the likelihood of anticipated migration, by international governments, and the 2015 migration events, it is necessary to assess the Kosovar propensity to emigrate. Emigration from Kosovo started back in 1960s with the introduction of guest-worker programs, in adherence to which workers from Kosovo (mainly men) went to Germany, Austria, and Switzerland to work with long-term contracts (Kotorri, 2011). The 60s represent the first wave of emigration which was mainly economic in nature. The second phase is characterized by the abolition of autonomy of Kosovo in 1989 and the dismissal of Albanians from their workplaces. The emigration in this stage was largely political, involving politically persecuted individuals and young men seeking to avoid Yugoslav army services, but economic migration of jobless Albanians also occurred (Kotorri, 2011). The third wave of emigration was a result of population displacement during the war in Kosovo in 1999. This wave was of a political nature while after the war the emigrants sought better opportunities outside Kosovo as their properties were destroyed. Emigration in Kosovo has been both legal and illegal (Kotorri, 2011).

A more recent period of emigration occurred in 2012-2016, with focus on the illegal migration in 2015. According to data from the Kosovo Statistical Office, Kosovo had a high rate of emigration in the period 2012-2016 with an average annual of 34,145 persons. Only during 2016, 8940 people have left Kosovo. In total, for the period 2012-2016, it is estimated 122,657 people from Kosovo have migrated. This includes legal migration, but also illegal immigration to EU countries, especially Germany. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the emigration rate of Kosovo citizens, including regular emigration and illegal emigration is not alarming at the present (MIA, Migration Profile).

a) Legal Migration

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has released a report on November 2017 called the "Migration Profile 2016", which presents an analysis of migration and Kosovo policy trends related to migration (MIA, Migration Profile). The number of Kosovo citizens with valid residence permits

in EU states, according to the European Statistics Agency (EUROSTAT) represents the largest number of Kosovans who have been granted a residence permit. This group is concentrated in Germany (with 47% of the total number) Italy (12%) France (9%), Austria (9%) and Slovenia (7%) (Shehu, 2017). Reasons for obtaining residence permit in EU member states and Schengen area are family reunion, employment and education (MIA, Migration Profile).

b) Illegal Migration

Kosovo faced irregular migration during the end of 2014 and the beginning of 2015. Exit figures were very high, but no one was able to say the exact number of people emigrating in that period. This wave of emigration forced the authorities in Hungary, Serbia, Austria and Germany to strengthen border controls. Data from Kosovo's authorities, based on data provided by EU countries, also show that the number of Kosovar citizens who have illegally migrated towards EU member states and the Schengen area in 2016 there were 11,370 people (Shehu, 2017). This shows a significant decrease in numbers compared to the previous years, especially in 2015, which was 52,310. Germany is the country where the largest number of Kosovars were caught staying illegally. Both Germany and other EU member states have already made it clear that political and economic asylum for Kosovo citizens (with the exception of very specific cases) is unacceptable because the European Union has Kosovo ranked in the list of safe countries to live in (Shehu, 2017).

c) Readmission

The extradition of Kosovo citizens from EU countries continues, albeit in a small number. However, a challenge for the Kosovo authorities remains the readmission of refugees based on the standards required by the EU (Shehu, 2017).

The Government of Kosovo has so far signed bilateral agreements on the readmission of immigrants with 23 member states of the European Union. The implementation of these agreements is considered an important factor in preventing and combating irregular migration.

This process was a condition presented to the Kosovar government as part of the visa liberalization roadmap (Shehu, 2017).

During 2016, 13,030 Kosovo citizens were readmitted, of which 6519 were expelled and 5,965 were voluntarily assisted by the International Organization for Migration. Voluntary readmission was mostly carried out by Kosovo Albanians, while expulsion included mostly members of the Kosovo Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. For instance, Germany expelled 91% of illegal immigrants from Kosovo in 2016. (MIA, Migration Profile).

Officials from the Ministry of Internal Affairs claim that beneficiaries in the repatriation process are all repatriated persons who are citizens of the Republic of Kosovo and who submit applications to claim benefits from the Reintegration Program, which criteria they should meet. Under this legislation, all beneficiaries are treated equally without discrimination on grounds of origin, ethnicity, religion, race or gender (MIA, Migration Profile).

In assessing the propensity to migrate, Kotorri (2011), shows that the youth (18-24 years) is more likely to emigrate due to the high unemployment, their risk-taking behavior, and the higher benefits they can accumulate over the longer time they participate in the labor force (Kotorri, 2011). This study will hence explore whether the Kosovar youth is likely to emigrate illegally after visa liberalization.

v. Visa Liberalization Impact on Economic Development

Establishing causal mechanism for visa liberalization and economic growth is difficult. There are other factors that go hand-in-hand with visa liberalization process are the increased trade agreements, improved macro-economic trends, indexation, and so forth. However, we can conclude that the two are at least correlated (Van Costenoble, 2016). In theory, visa liberalization brings economic development through the exchange of know-hows between countries. Short term training, business networking, attraction of foreign investment, and increased tourism are all catalysts of a stronger economy. With enhanced mobility comes increased cooperation, a principle that lies at the heart of the European Union as a whole (Tavares, 2012).

Kosovo Chamber of Commerce Chairman Berat Rukiqi says the recommendation for visa liberalization is beneficial for Kosovar businesses as it increases their internationalization. Rukiqi stated that visa restrictions have affected Kosovo's exports by causing 56% of the businesses miss important contracts (Telegrafi, 2018). The Executive Director of the American Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo believes that this process will cause Kosovar producers to expand their business on the European market and at the same time increase the opportunity for the promotion of "Made in Kosova" products in EU countries. After the final decision on liberalization is made, businesses will be able to move freely, meet with companies outside of Kosovo, and meet with EU trade companies (Telegrafi, 2016). A local manufacturer would be able to easily expand his network of business cooperation and plan the sale of his/her products in EU countries (Telegrafi, 2016). Participation in symposia and fairs in EU would enable Kosovar businesses to expand their activity in terms of innovation and technological developments (Telegrafi, 2016).

According to individual businesses, the impact of visa liberalization would facilitate the growth of the market. Although it acknowledges the barriers, the shoe factory "Solid" from Suhareka manages to exports its products to several EU countries (Telegrafi, 2016). Shpetim Kuqi, an administrator at this company, explained that there were cases when he has had his visa refused, despite having applied for a business visa. In cases where he was equipped with a visa, the process lasted for up to 60 days (Telegrafi, 2016). In addition to the lengthy waits, there are also financial costs which businesses have to accrue to obtain the visas. When visas are abolished, he can send his workers on trainings abroad, which will improve the competitiveness of his business (Telegrafi, 2016).

Besides the domestic perspective, there are European organizations that agree with the positive effects of visa liberalization on economic growth. The European Migration Network has concluded that the total trade between Belgium and Macedonia, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina has increased since the countries established a visa free regime (Van Costenobl, 2016). It should be noted that visa liberalization is beneficial for countries of destination too.

According to Adolfo Sommaribas from European Migration Network in Luxembourg, countries of destination have benefited from liberalization in the past in terms of tourism (2018).

The benefits of visa liberalization are noticed in the common position of nine leading European Business Associations (Ost-Ausschuss, 2012). The German Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations, MEDEF International, and the Confederation of Danish Industry are among the organizations to acknowledge the economic benefits of visa liberalization (Ost-Ausschuss, 2012). According to Eckhard Cordes, the Chairman of the German Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations “visa barriers constrain investment and produce red tape costing hundreds of millions of Euros per annum (Ost-Ausschuss, par. 6, 2012).” He opines that businesses should opt for any growth opportunity they can get, given the low economic growth in Europe (Ost-Ausschuss, 2012). Nonetheless, this present study shows that, in most of the reports that assess the impacts of visa liberalization, migration is a serious concern for countries of origin as well as countries of destination. The section below will give an insight to the experiences of Western Balkan countries after visa liberalization.

vi. Experiences from Regional Countries

Regional countries have seen both economic prosperity and migration waves in light of liberalization. European Migration Network in Luxembourg (2018) and Belgium (2016) have addressed the economic aspects of western Balkan countries while RIDEA institute has highlighted the migratory tendencies of these countries after liberalization. These findings, with focus on those of the latter, are summarized below.

With emphasis on Macedonia and Serbia, the number of asylum seekers from Western Balkans increased from 10,000 in 2009 to 26,000 in 2011 and 30,000 in 2012. Clearly, this increase of 300% was a direct result of visa abolishment despite the informative campaigns for free movement regulations and measures taken towards the readmission and integration of emigrants (RIDEA, 2016). Some Commissioners concluded that the migration boom came as a partial consequence of discrimination towards minorities (Trauner and Manigrassi, 2014). This event highlighted some flaws of the visa dialogue. Firstly, the official awareness campaigns were not sufficient before the liberalization; they became much stronger after the migration wave.

Secondly, even if the campaigns were better organized, their effects would be limited as a result of the severe economic and social conditions of people in the region, especially of the minorities. These conditions were the main cause for the departure (RIDEA, 2016). However, the widespread number of asylum seekers from the region caused the most affected EU countries (Germany, Belgium, France, Sweden, etc.) and EU institutions to increase the pressure in the Balkan countries to prevent mass emigration urgently. EU institutions began issuing threats to reverse visa liberalization in case Balkan countries (Albania, BiH, Serbia, Macedonia, and Montenegro) did not undertake immediate measures (The Economist, 2013). The European Commission put in place a post-visa monitoring mission for Serbia and Macedonia in April and May 2011 (Kacarska, 2012). The EU also undertook additional measures such as considering the possible suspension of free movement. Such measures were aimed at putting in place a monitoring mechanism following the visa liberalization and opening the possibility of temporary visa regime for the citizens of the Western Balkan countries (Nielsen, 2013).

Thus, in May 2011, the Commission proposed amending Council Regulation No 539/2001 in order to provide a visa security clause allowing quick and temporary suspension of visa-free travel for a third country on the white list in case of emergency situations where a rapid response is needed to address a problem faced by Member States (European Commission, 2011). In practice, this implied that the EU had created a structured phase for post visa liberalization. This accompanying mechanism covers border management, document security, combating organized crime and corruption, fundamental rights, and effective implementation of repatriation agreements (European Commission, 2011). The Commission's monitoring staff and structure the European Commission is twofold. Firstly, the Commission will continue the evaluation of implementation of the measures undertaken by the Balkan countries during the visa dialogue through the Stabilization and Association Process. Secondly, monitoring will serve as a preventive mechanism against the abuse of visa liberalization by western Balkans citizens, including the development of a specific Frontex risk assessment related to the situation across the Western Balkans (European Commission, 2011). So far, the European Commission has produced five post-visa liberalization reports for the Balkan countries, which point out the problems and measures taken with regard to the implementation of the rules deriving from the visa

liberalization dialogue, and make recommendations regarding the additional measures to be taken. In terms of the causes of emigration, the Frontex assessment from 2011 suggests that the main reasons relate to low quality health and education system as well as unemployment (Frontex, 2011). The report also finds that most of asylum seekers have used road transport vehicles by private buses and entered the EU legally on the border between Serbia and Hungary. Regarding ethnicity and geographic extent, about 80 percent of all asylum seekers from Serbia and Macedonia were Roma. The rest were ethnic Albanians from Macedonia and Serbia (Frontex, 2011).

Notably, illegal migration was related to issues of marginalization, poverty and discrimination, all of which are part of the IV block of duties, which have been constantly overlooked by the Commission during the visa liberalization process. However, in addition to these 'push' factors, other 'pull' factors have played a major role in increasing the number of asylum seekers from the Balkans. According to a study by the European Stability Initiative, the problem is not the lack of information on free movement but easily accessible information on benefits for asylum seekers. (European Stability Initiative, 2013). The same study suggests that the main 'pull' factor was the increase in financial assistance for asylum seekers (in Germany), the difference in the procedure and duration of the treatment of asylum applications, as well as the different criteria applying to safe countries of origin. A survey conducted with asylum seekers from Albania shows that while the main reason for emigration was economic, other factors such as fast asylum application procedures, liberal asylum criteria, as well as easy access to travel to the destination countries are incentives for asylum seeking (RIDEA, 2016).

In short, the increase in the number of asylum seekers from Balkan countries after visa liberalization had a double effect. On the one hand, it urged the EU to establish a monitoring mechanism following the visa liberalization, which consequently increased the pressure on the Balkan countries to prevent migration and, on the other hand, shifted the EU's focus on the issues of human rights and minorities (RIDEA, 2016). Given that the Commission is now familiar with the issue of migration after liberalization, and that Kosovo can learn from the practices of regional countries, it was initially not expected that a similar problem would affect Kosovo.

Methodology

The aim of this research is to analyze the propensity to emigrate after visa liberalization through eliciting citizens' viewpoints and observing the trends of neighboring countries.

The literature covering visa liberalization has increased significantly over the past few years but is still not sufficient to unfold the Kosovar public opinion regarding this matter. Similar studies have been done in the past, such as Asllani, Misini and Bytyqi (2013). Others have dealt with the aftermath of visa liberalization based on the experiences of other countries, such as the publication by RIDEA institute cited above. There have been some inquiries in the past that dealt with migration and visa liberalization but they were conducted before the illegal migration waves in 2013 and 2015. The mass migration of 2015, the various reports of people seeking professional trainings to adapt to EU markets, and citizens allegedly preparing the documents for emigration make an updated study a necessity. For this research, qualitative and quantitative research techniques were used. Both primary and secondary data were obtained.

The secondary research of this study provided the background information about visa liberalization in Kosovo. This type of data was also gathered to evaluate the migration patterns of regional countries after visa liberalization. Secondary statistical data was used to reveal migration patterns throughout history in Kosovo and the readmission figures of Kosovar asylum seekers. Primary data was collected via a survey including 60 respondents and semi-structured interviews with two experts on visa liberalization.

Students from both public university and private colleges were surveyed. The survey included seventeen questions of which two were open questions/ continuous, one was a Likert Scale, and fourteen were multiple-choice/ categorical. The questions revealed their demographics, namely age, gender, employment status, and so forth as well as their propensity to migrate (see Appendix 1). An econometric regression was ran to estimate the relationship between propensity to migrate as the dependent variable and the reasons for visiting the EU as the independent variable. Other variables, such as employment, education, and relatives living abroad will be used to isolate the effect that employment has in going abroad. To distribute the questionnaires, I used convenience

sampling through online platforms, namely Google Forms. Table 1 summarizes the factors identified and analyzed in this study as contributors to migration:

Factors	
Age	Change in income from last year
Gender	Family living abroad
Employment status	Plans to emigrate
Type of employment	Duration of stay
Job search	Reasons for migration
Industry of employment	# of known people wanting to emigrate
Area of study	Awareness of limitations
Income	-

Table 1. Factors that influence the propensity to migrate.

The econometric model involved two continuous variables and six categorical variables. The model is presented below:

Propensity to Migrate = f (Age, Gender, Employment Status, Type of Employment, Income, Change in Income, Family Living Abroad, Knowledge about Liberalization Limitations)

$$\text{Prop. Mig.} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Age} + \beta_2 \text{Gender} + \beta_3 \text{Employ} + \beta_4 \text{selemp} + \beta_5 \text{Ry1} + \beta_5 \text{Ry}_2 + \beta_6 \text{Mignetvis} + \beta_7 \text{Libinfo} + \beta_8 \text{Income} + u_t$$

Variables	Description of Variables
Continuous Variables	
Age	Age in years
Income	Student's income from all sources in €
Dummy Variables	
Gender	1 if female, 0 if male

Employ	1 if employed, 0 if not
selemp	1 for employed in a family business or self-employed, 0 if otherwise
Ry1	1 for worsened income since last year, 0 if income remained the same
Ry_2	1 for improved income since last year, 0 if income remained the same income
mignetvis	1 if the student has family members living abroad, 0 if not
libinfo	1 if the students knows the limitations of visa liberalization, 0 if not

Table 2: Explanation of variables

To further explain the variables, it was hypothesized that the youth was more inclined to migrate, hence the age was included as a variable. In other terms, the younger the student is the more likely he/she is to make plans for migration (Kotorri, 2011). Because decisions for emigration were found to be house-hold ones and considering the patriarchal social structures in Kosovo, it was assumed that men were more likely to emigrate than women (Germenji and Swinnen, 2005). The economic conditions were identified as an important variable because this was found to be the most important driver of migration in the past migration waves in Kosovo (Kotorri, 2011). Poorer individuals are more likely to emigrate in general (Germenji and Swinnen, 2005). It was assumed that those employed in a family or self-owned business had better working conditions and were less likely to emigrate than the other sectors (Dawson, Henley, Latreille, 2009). Further, for the same reasons cited above, those with worsened economic situation were expected to migrate. Another factor that increased the chances of migration was thought to be family members living abroad whom the individual had frequent contacts with. This is because obtaining shelter and support from family members living abroad gives a sense of security and stability to the migrating individual. Having information about the limitations of visa liberalization, with emphasis on working abroad, was expected to decrease the chances of migration (Kotorri, 2011). These variables were analyzed on Stata and the results are presented in the section below. Some limitations of this study include the small sample size and its convenience distribution rather than random distribution. Another possible limitation is that the

survey was focused on the youth and did not take into account old citizens who may have had plans to emigrate as well.

Results

Survey Results

I have received answers from 60 survey participants. They were 19 to 26 of age, with one outlier of 48 years of age. Approximately 53% of the participants were women while 47% were men. As depicted in Figure 1, of those who wanted to migrate, 48% were men and 52% were women.

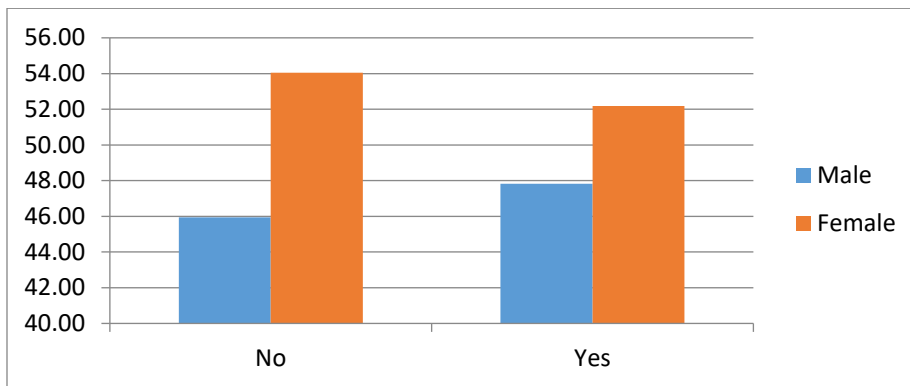


Figure 1. % of men and women who answered “yes” to migration plans; comparison between genders.

It should be noted that the representation in the sample was nearly but not equal, hence it seems that women are more inclined to migrate. By analyzing the results within the same gender, we see that, as depicted in Figure 2, 39.29% of all men had plans to migrate while 37.5% of women wanted to migrate. This means that women are less likely to migrate compared to men.

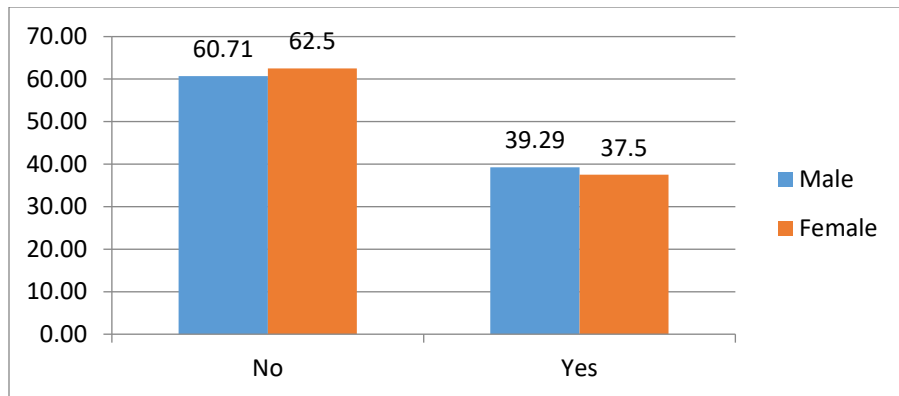


Figure 2. % of men and women who answered “yes” to emigration plans; comparison from the same gender.

When asked about the employment status, 53% of the participants were not employed the rest was employed. Of those unemployed, 69% were looking for a job while the rest were not. Of those employed, 37.2% were employed in the public sector, 27.9% were self-employed, 25.6% were employed in another private organization, and 9.3% were employed in a family business. When asked to disclose their preferred employment industry, the results varied widely, with professional services and public sector being the most preferred choices. Figure 3 shows the tendencies for migration as dependent on employment status:

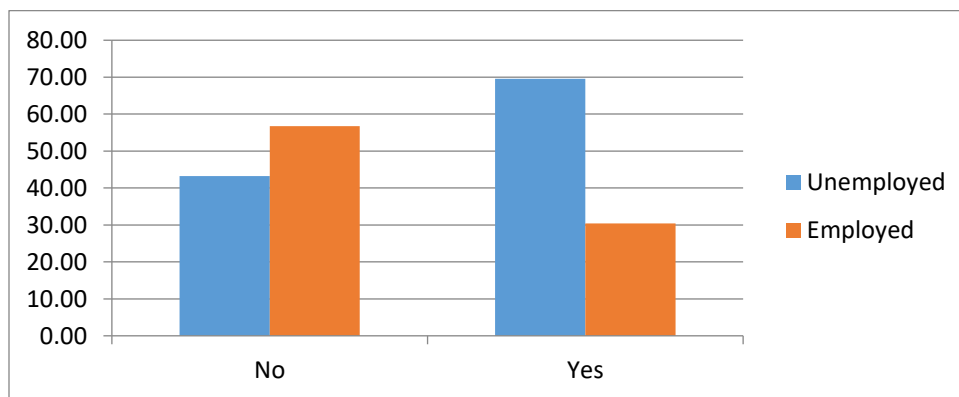


Figure 3. Comparison of employment status and migration plans.

As observed, 70% of those who had plans to emigrate were unemployed while 30% were employed.

Most of the student surveyed, namely 72.4% were studying Social Sciences and Humanities so there was not much variety in this variable. The income was an important factor for propensity to

migrate so more variation was allowed through an open question. The participants were asked to disclose their personal income from all sources in euros. The values ranged from 50 to 3000 euros with an average of 355 euros. While the income is important, notes were taken whether this income has worsened, increased, or decreased since last year. The participants whose income improved since last year accounted for 40.7% of the respondents. Those with unchanged incomes accounted for 33.9% while those with worsened incomes accounted for 13.6%. As depicted in Figure 4, 78% of those whose income has worsened since last year wanted to emigrate in comparison to 29% of those with improved/unchanged income.

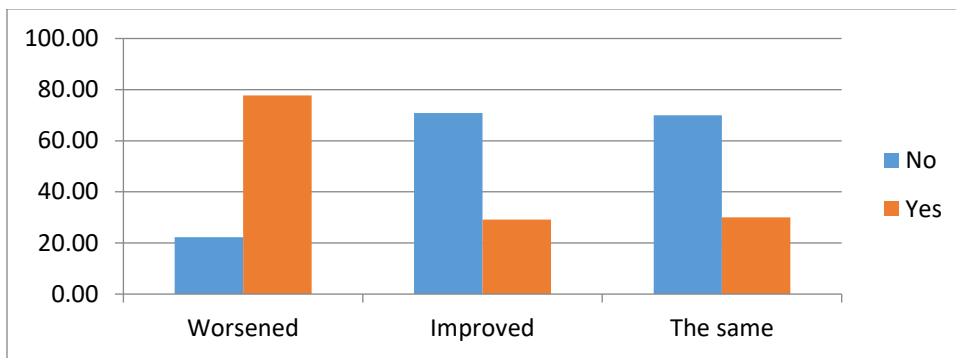


Figure 4. Comparison of change in income from last year with migration plans.

People who have family members living abroad were thought to be more likely to emigrate. Hence, they were asked three questions in this regard. Firstly, respondents were asked whether they have family members living abroad. Secondly, they were asked how many times a year they visited them. Thirdly, they were asked how often the family members visited them. Those with family members living abroad accounted for 58% of the respondents. On one hand, of those who had family members abroad, 64% claimed that they visit them less than once per annum, 30% claimed that they visit them once or twice per annum, and 6% visited them more than twice per annum. On the other hand, the family living abroad visited Kosovars much more frequently. In fact, 72% of the respondents admitted that they are visited once to twice every year, 21% were visited more than twice a year, 7% were visited less than once a year. These results signal how frequent it is for diaspora to visit Kosovo but how infrequent is for Kosovars to visit their family members living abroad. Figure 5 compares emigration plans and the presence of family members living abroad.

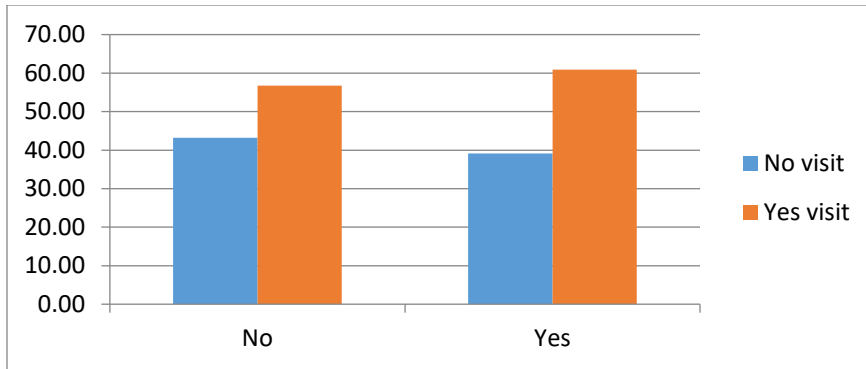


Figure 5. Comparison between presence of family members and migration plans.

As depicted in Figure 5, 61% of those who want to emigrate have family members abroad while 39% do not.

The next question intended to analyze the students' intentions about migration plans. Those who had plans to emigrate accounted for 38.3%. Of these, 56% wanted to stay longer than a year, 24% wanted to stay less than three months, while 20% wanted to stay between 3 to 6 months. This means that 76% of the migration would be illegal, given that Kosovans are allowed to stay in EU members states for 90 days at most. While the main reason for this migration is popularly believed to be economic in nature, the survey listed five other push/pull factors which respondents were asked to rank from the least to the most important in a Likert Scale. Among those were, higher salaries in EU countries, better employment, better health-care system, lower levels of corruption, better education opportunities, and the collection of funds to invest them in Kosovo. The average value of higher salaries as a pull factor was 4.2/6, better employment opportunities scored 3.85/6, better health system scored 3.15/6, lower corruption got 2.85/6, education got an average of 3.20/6, and investing capital in Kosovo scored 2.4/6.

Overall, the most important factor seems to be higher salaries while the least important is the accumulation of capital to invest it in Kosovo.

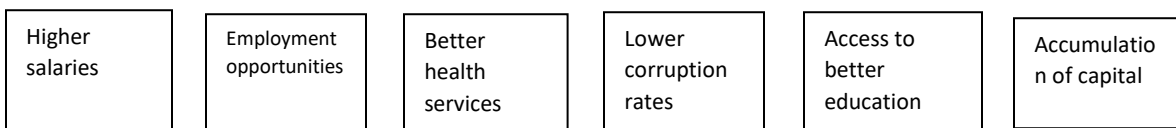
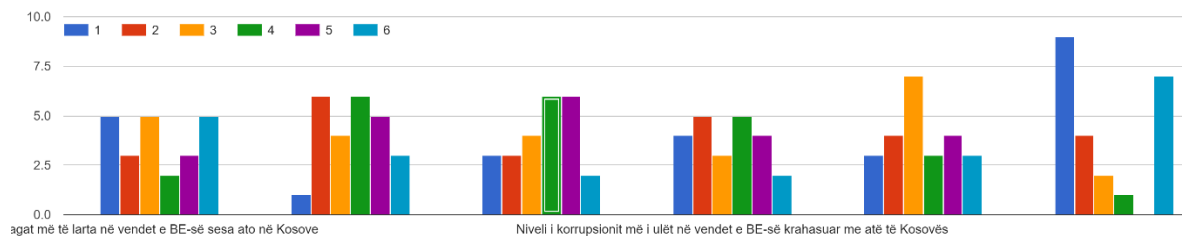


Figure 6. Push and pull factors on a Likert Scale.

The average values are summarized in the table below:

Pull factor	Score
Higher Salaries	4.20/6
Better employment opportunities	3.85/6
Better education	3.20/6
Better health system	3.15/6
Less corruption	2.85/6
Gathering capital to invest in Kosovo	2.40/6

Table 3. The average value/ score of push pull factors on a Likert Scale.

When asked how many people the respondents know who have plans to emigrate, the answers varied from 0 to 2000 and the average was 58. Because 2000 was a single outlier and was deemed as unrealistic, it was removed from the equation; the average thus dropped to 19 people. This is a notable number because it reveals the tendencies of family members or larger communities wishing to emigrate.

When asked whether students were aware of the aforementioned limitations of visa liberalization, 80% were aware while 20% were not.

Econometric Regression Results

As explained in the methodology section, an econometric regression was ran with 9 independent variables. The regression results show that, holding other variables constant, on average, as the age increases by one year, the probability of emigration decreases by 0.06. If the person is female, the probability of emigration decreases by 0.19. If the person is employed, the probability of emigration increases by 0.08. If the person is self-employed or employed in a family business, the probability of emigration decreases by 0.11.

The income was also tested as a continuous variable and it was found that ceteris paribus, on average, as the income increases by one euro, the probability of emigration decreases by 0.001.

The change in income since last year, whether it was worsened, improved, or has stayed the same was analyzed. It was found that if the person’s income has worsened since last year, the probability of emigration increases by 0.59. It was also found that if the person’s income has improved since last year, the probability of emigration increases by only 0.09.

The likelihood of migration if one has relatives abroad was also tested. It was found that if the person has family members living abroad, the probability of emigration increases by 0.03.

Lastly, if the person knows the limitations of visa liberalization, the probability of emigration increases by 0.12.

Given the results, the empirical model can be expressed as follows and the results will be summarized in Table 4:

$$\text{Prop. Mig.} = 0.219 - 0.06 \text{ Age} - 0.19 \text{ Gender} + 0.08 \text{ Employ} - 0.11 \text{ selemp} + 0.59 \text{ Ry}_1 + 0.09 \text{ Ry}_2 + 0.03 \text{ Mignetvis} + 0.12 \text{ Libinfo} - 0.001 \text{ Income}$$

Coefficient	Variable	P-value	Interpretation of Results
-0.06	Age	0.106	Cetris Paribus, on average, if the age increases by 1 year then probability of emigration decreases by 0.06. The Pca= 0.106 is greater than the Pcr=0.05, therefore we do not have sufficient evidence to reject H ₀ ; this

			means that the impact of age on propensity to emigrate is not statistically significant.
-0.19	Gender	0.204	<p>Ceteris Paribus, on average, if the person is female the probability of emigration decreases by 0.19 compared to a male.</p> <p>The $P_{ca}=0.204$ is greater than the $P_{cr}=0.05$, therefore we do not have sufficient evidence to reject H_0; this means that the impact of gender on propensity to emigrate is not statistically significant.</p>
0.08	Employ	0.664	<p>Ceteris Paribus, on average, if the person is employed, the probability of emigration increases by 0.08 compared to an unemployed person.</p> <p>The $P_{ca}=0.664$ is greater than the $P_{cr}=0.05$, therefore we do not have sufficient evidence to reject H_0; this means that the impact of employment on propensity to emigrate is not statistically significant.</p>
-0.11	selemp	0.435	<p>Ceteris Paribus, on average, if the person is self-employed or employed in a family business the probability of emigration decreases by 0.11 compared to being employed elsewhere.</p> <p>The $P_{ca}=0.435$ is greater than the $P_{cr}=0.05$, therefore we do not have sufficient evidence to reject H_0; this means that the impact of type of employment on propensity to emigrate is not statistically significant.</p>
0.59	Ry_1	0.022	<p>Ceteris Paribus, on average, if income has worsened since last year the probability of emigration increases by 0.59 compared to having the same income since last year.</p> <p>The $P_{ca}=0.040$ is lower than the $P_{cr}=0.05$, therefore we do have sufficient evidence to reject H_0; this means that the impact of worsening income on propensity to emigrate is statistically significant.</p>
0.09	Ry_2	0.541	<p>Ceteris Paribus, on average, if income has improved since last year the probability of emigration increases by 0.09 compared to having the same income since last year.</p> <p>The $P_{ca}=0.541$ is greater than the $P_{cr}=0.05$, therefore we do not have sufficient evidence to reject H_0; this</p>

			means that the impact of improved income on propensity to emigrate is not statistically significant.
0.03	Mignetvis	0.804	<p>Ceteris Paribus, on average, if the student has family members living abroad the probability of emigration increases by 0.03 compared to not having family members living abroad.</p> <p>The Pca=0.804 is greater than the Pcr=0.05, therefore we do not have sufficient evidence to reject H₀; this means that the impact of family members abroad on propensity to emigrate is not statistically significant.</p>
0.12	Libinfo	0.414	<p>Ceteris Paribus, on average, if the student has information about liberalization limitation the probability of emigration increases by 0.12 compared to not having information.</p> <p>The Pca=0.414 is lower than the Pcr=0.05, therefore we do not have sufficient evidence to reject H₀; this means that the impact of limitation information on propensity to emigrate is not statistically significant.</p>
-0.001	Income	0.04	<p>Ceteris Paribus, on average, if the student's income increases by 1 euro the probability of emigration decreases by 0.001.</p> <p>The Pca=0.04 is lower than the Pcr=0.05, therefore we have sufficient evidence to reject H₀; this means that the impact of income on propensity to emigrate is statistically significant.</p>

Table 4. Summary of econometric regression results.

While using these results as input, the following section will discuss these findings while incorporating the interviews conducted with the representatives from Chamber of Commerce and the Ministry of European Integration.

Discussion

The results presented in this study confirm that a significant proportion of the students want to emigrate, both legally and illegally, after visa liberalization takes place. It appears that the younger the individual the more likely he or she is to emigrate Given that 55.4% of the youth work force (15-24) is unemployed, and the minimum wage for this group is 130 euro (gross)

compared to 170 euro for those above 35 years of age, it can be concluded that the youth endures harsher economic situations. This minimum salary has not changed since 2011 despite a growing economy and inflation (KSI, 2016). Unemployment among the youth is known to be a push factor for emigration (Kotorri, 2011). The results in the present study support the aforementioned arguments because it shows that when the individual is older by a year the migration propensity decreases by 0.06.

Gender is a relevant variable for migration patterns in Kosovo because it is a developing country with a traditional gender roles. Men are devoted to economic affairs while women are devoted to child up bringing (Germenji and Swinnen, 2005). As such, men have more experience in job seeking and thus navigate more easily in the foreign labor markets. Moreover, in traditional societies it is less of a taboo for men to emigrate. Unless a payment scheme that favors women exist in destination countries, it can be said that men are more likely to emigrate (Germenji and Swinnen, 2005). That Kosovo is a traditional gendered society can be noticed in gender discrepancies in labor market participation. Female participation in the labor market accounts for only 12.3% in Kosovo and unemployment is also higher among women than men (ASK, 2019). Hence, it is logical that if the person is female the propensity to emigrate decreases by 0.019. However, the variation between the two genders was small and therefore not conclusive because 39.3% of male participants wanted to emigrate while 37.5% of female participants wanted to emigrate.

The results show that 53% of the participants were not employed while 47% were employed. A discrepancy was noticed between the students in private universities and public universities. One of the private universities, according to the results, had an employment of 65% compared to public universities which had an employment of 37%. This difference spilled over the migration tendencies as well because only 5% of the students in this private university had plans to emigrate while 55% of the students in public universities students had such plans.

A preference towards the public sector was observed, with 37.2% of the participants disclosing that they are working in the public sector and 17.2% wanted to pursue public administration in the future. While in the public sector in 2012, the average net salary was 384 euros, according to the latest data, the average salary has amounted to about 500 euros. Meanwhile, in the private

sector, in 2012 the average net salary was 333 euros and since then, this salary has increased by 15 euros (384 in total) per month (Veseli, 2019). According to Arian Zeka, the private sector has many difficulties in operating in Kosovo and is unable to follow the ongoing trends of increased public service wages. This is creating a situation where the public sector becomes much more attractive than the private sector due to the higher salaries and job security. Radio Evropa e Lire has conducted a study with the youth in Kosovo and they claim that it is more attractive for them to work in the public sector (Veseli, 2019). Given that there will be a higher supply for the public sector, it will risk becoming even more politicized and more difficult to get merit-based positions. As such, those working in the private sector may be pressured to seek better job opportunities abroad. Some countries are not hesitant to issue working visas to Kosovars. According to Ministry of European Integration representative, 72,000 people have applied for visa only in Germany. Croatia and Greece are also popular destinations, with many work visas being issued. This demonstrates the interest to visit and work in these places (2019). The representative from the Chamber of Commerce sees this as an opportunity for young people to open up, to gain new experiences and in the best cases, to return to the country and bring new knowledge. However, in today's circumstances, it is less likely that such a thing will happen and a negative impact can be seen because the qualified labor force as well as vocational workers are fleeing to those countries without a "return ticket (2019)".

It seems like countries such as France and Netherlands are realizing the latter possibility as they have objected the decision for visa liberalization in the EU Parliament. As assumed in the background information of this study, France fears illegal migration from Kosovo. MEI has been in contacts with countries to lobby for liberalization and French representatives have confirmed that they expect an illegal wave of migration (Interviewee 1, 2019). While acknowledging the tendencies for illegal migration as well, he states that once the liberalization takes place, illegal immigration will be hard to control but not impossible. Kosovo has the best system for document security in the region, which makes it possible for suspected criminals to be monitored more easily. For instance, it is no longer physically and legally feasible for a person to hold 2-3 different passports at the same time or to be anonymous in the law's eyes (Interviewee 1, 2019). There is little room for error as document security goes. The representative also states that the

government cannot completely stop people from migrating. Even if awareness campaigns are launched, people can emigrate, much like they did in Albania despite the numerous awareness campaigns undertaken by the government. As such, we have to alleviate push factors, manage the borders, continuously monitor abuse of visas, and cooperate with member state for the readmission of illegal immigrants (Interviewee 1, 2019).

Controlling the push factors may be a difficult task given the high unemployment rate prevailing in Kosovo. The results showed that 70% of those who had plans to emigrate were unemployed. However, in the regression analysis it was observed that the probability of emigration increases by 0.08 if the person is employed. This may be explained because employment status per se is not as important as the type of employment. As previously shown, if the person is self-employed or employed in a family business, the probability of emigration decreases by 0.011. The working conditions when self-employed or employed in a family business are commonly better since the person has a higher degree of control over finances, is more actively engaged in decision-making, and reaps the benefits more directly. The results were statistically insignificant for these two variables but there is still a logical explanation behind them.

The only variables that were statistically significant were income and change in income since last year. The average value of the income was 355 euros. This value was close to GDP per capita in Kosovo which is 325 euros. It was found that *ceteris paribus*, on average, as the income increases by one euro, the probability of emigration decreases by 0.001. This result reinforces the argument that the economic situation is the primary driver of emigration. The Likert scale confirm this point given that higher salaries as a pull factor scored the highest with (4.2/6) and better employment opportunities scored the second-highest (3.85/6). In fact, 65% of those who wanted to emigrate listed the economic situation as the most important reason for their decision. To further add to this argument, 78% of those whose income has worsened since last year wanted to emigrate in comparison to 29% of those with improved/unchanged income. This was also a statistically significant variable where if the person's income has worsened since last year, the probability of emigration increases by 0.59. The Ministry of European Integration representative claims that other factors presented in the scale are quite important, with emphasis being given to the weak judicial system (Interviewee 1, 2019). The representative from Kosovo

Chamber of Commerce also expressed the concern of migration because of these unaddressed push factors. She opines that migration will occur especially after the national programs of some of the EU countries offer full or seasonal jobs for workers from Kosovo. The problem continues to be the lack of employment among the youth and the low minimum wage. The workers expected to emigrate belong to wood, textile, construction, welding, mechanical, and medicine industry (Interviewee 2, 2019). The qualitative analysis confirmed that postponing liberalization is not an option that Kosovo should settle for, despite the unaddressed push factors.

Free movement is a basic human right but national policies should be addressing social and economic stability such as the improvement of social security scheme, as well as health and education sectors. Favoring the primary activity and secondary activity sectors would enhance production, narrow the discrepancies between public and private sector, and alleviate tax burdens (Interviewee 2, 2019).

One reason for not postponing liberalization it is its symbolisms; to acknowledge the statehood of Kosovo (Interviewee 1, 2019). The technical criteria have been met and only assumption can be made about the future. The one criteria that has not been fully implemented, although legally established, is the fight of organized crime of high-profile individuals. The advancement of this criteria is measured by convictions to investigations ratio. When investigations and court cases are high but convictions are considerably low, it is understood that the justice system is not functioning as it should. However, this should not be an issue because regional countries have obtained their liberalization without meeting up to four criteria. If illegal emigration takes place, there are monitoring mechanisms in place to track the abuse with liberalization. Progress reports will still continue even after liberalization so the government is incentivized to deal with this issue (Interviewee 1, 2019).

In the literature review, it was mentioned that Berat Rukiqi sees the positive aspects of visa liberalization in terms of business profitability (Telegrafi, 2018). The qualitative analysis of this study also supports this arguments. The main costs of visa regime is the high costs of daily operations as a result of non-visa liberalization. The biggest losses are caused to manufacturing /exporting businesses, considering the fact that many of the products exported need to be finalized at the site of their technical operation (Interviewee 2, 2019). Referring to the bottle

necks study of Chamber of Commerce (2018), the non-visa liberalization for Kosovo has affected the loss of international clients and the failure of agreements to 44% of the participating companies in the study and had impacted the decline in exports to 38% of the respondents. About 39% of companies reported that it has reduced their competitive abilities. The visa liberalization this year seems to have caused a lot of problems for Kosovar businesses (Interviewee 2, 2019).

Nonetheless, these figures are not conclusive because referring to the same report, while 44% of the business reported loss of international clients, 56% did not. 38% of the business said that they experienced decline in exports due to liberalization but 62% did not. Similarly, 61% did not feel that liberalization reduced their competitiveness (KCC, 2018). Hence, it is unclear how visa liberalization is expected to affect businesses.

When considering migration, the qualitative analysis revealed that there would be a double-effect from liberalization. Skilled labor migration towards developed countries will be unavoidable and consequently the business community will have additional burdens for their substitution and preparation of replacement staff, which will include additional costs, timely loss and will make it difficult for them to invest in other areas of business development (Interviewee 2, 2019). As labor is lost, there will be an impact on the reduction of purchasing power, and consequently, lower production for internal consumption. It was confirmed that the number of people seeking vocational training has increased, which can be viewed as a signal that labor is preparing for foreign markets (Interviewee 2, 2019). However there is the possibility that export and commercial businesses will cover the additional costs and will avoid the loss of the contracts as a result of doing business in the international market (Interviewee 2, 2019). Jose Tavares, and several other scholars claimed that tourism and trade will flourish after liberalization. The KCC representative stated that trade can be increased from liberalization but liberalization has never been a barrier for tourism. Domestic tourism has increased Kosovo's exports of goods and services but an increase in tourism per se is not foreseen to occur (Interviewee 2, 2019). To support this argument, Sommaribas (2018) from European Migration Network Luxemburg found that the tourism of destination countries has increased but not that of origin countries.

Those who seek work in foreign markets may have an easier time doing so if they have support in the host countries. Many people have connections abroad and feel more secure to seek a job in the foreign markets while others may also cause law breaches (Interviewee 1, 2019). Migration researchers identify networks as a crucial pull factor. Kosovar migrants living abroad can attract other migrants by giving out information, economic opportunities, non-monetary support (e.g. housing), monetary support, and so forth (Kotorri, 2011). It was found that if the person has family members living abroad, the probability of emigration increases by 0.03. As depicted in Figure 7 and 8, it is common for diaspora to visit Kosovo but less common for Kosovars to visit their family members living abroad.

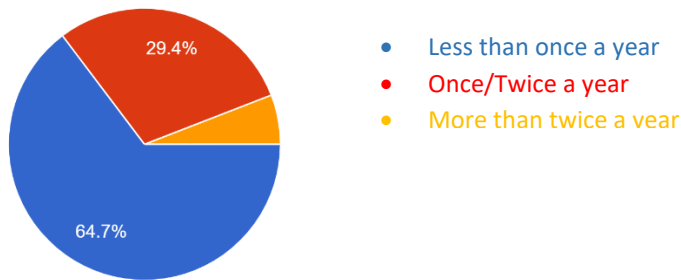


Figure 7. The frequency at which Kosovo's citizens visit their family members abroad

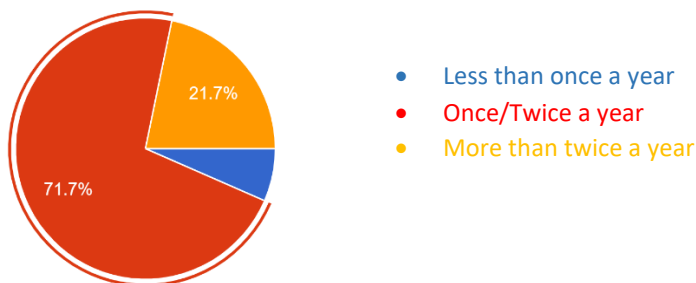


Figure 8. The frequency at which foreign citizens visit family members living in Kosovo

One possible explanation is that it is not convenient for the diaspora to host Kosovan emigrants and that Kosovars may not have the support they believe to have once they arrive in the destination country. There was not sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis so the results are not conclusive. Whether the diaspora helps emigrants find jobs or not, it is not legal for the

latter to do so, even within a short period of time. The survey therefore asked participants to disclose whether they knew the limitations that came with visa liberalization and 20% said they did not. While the majority knows the limitations, it should be noted that the sample included individuals who had access to social media (given the online survey) and conventional education (being students). This did not take into account uneducated citizens or those living in remote villages who may not have access to social media, a platform commonly used by MEI to raise awareness. Awareness campaigns have been made, especially in rural areas, but not to a sufficient extent (Interviewee 1, 2019). For instance, UNDP has concluded that the effect of the awareness campaigns remained low. The campaigns have been more frequent while Vlora Citaku was minister and while there was a higher pressure to complete the visa requirements. In the last one year and a half, there has been no awareness campaigns due to budget constraints (Interviewee 1, 2019). The marginalized communities, like Roma and Ashkali, were targeted as well, by physically visiting them in places like Fushe Kosove and Ferizaj, together with the former-minister. NGOs have helped the ministry with the preparation of campaigns but not with their implementation, except for GIZ who has implemented the aforementioned gatherings in Prishtina. There was no budget to continue with the awareness campaigns and none are being undertaken right now (Interviewee 1, 2019).

Nonetheless, even with awareness campaigns, once the visas are liberalized, the government cannot use an 'iron fist' to prevent the citizens from migrating and those who want to do so will migrate despite knowing about limitations. The government may use profiling, document security, and readmission policies but the people will not disclose the true intentions of the visit like illegal emigration openly (Interviewee 1, 2019). Indeed, the results of this study show that 77% of those who had plans to emigrate knew the limitations that come with liberalization. To specify this even further, 84% (or 27% of the total participants) of those who were planning to emigrate and who knew the limitation to liberalization wanted to stay in the destination country for more than three months. As such, 27% of the participants are consciously planning to become illegal emigrants. Even the econometric analysis shows that if the person knows the limitations of visa liberalization, the probability of emigration increases by 0.012. However, this result is statistically insignificant and is therefore inconclusive.

Looking at the results it appears that owning a business decreases the likelihood of migration. Also, as the income gets higher the probability of emigration decreases significantly. A worsening in income increases the likelihood for migration significantly. Lastly, knowing the liberalization increases the likelihood of emigration. This can be an indication of the illegal immigration that is about to take place. Or, these individual may become circular migrants, where they emigrate, return, and then emigrate again. As such, the quantitative part of my study has shown that financial situation affect propensity to migrate at a statistically significant level.

Recommendations

Knowing that the economic situation is the main culprit behind increased rates of migration in Kosovo, it is suggested that the government works towards alleviating this situation by attracting FDI, reducing administrative burdens especially for businesses, supporting small and medium enterprises and so on, but also by informing the citizens about future employment opportunities. The KCC representative believes that national policies should be addressing social and economic stability such as the improvement of social security scheme, as well as health and education sectors. Favoring the primary activity and secondary activity sectors would enhance production, narrow the discrepancies between public and private sector, and alleviate tax burdens (2019). RIDEA institute has also formulated recommendations (2016) which are integrated with my personal recommendations and those of the KCC representative.

Based on the experience of Albania, Bosnia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia following the visa liberalization as well as the special socio-political situation in Kosovo and its recent experience with migration irregularities, it is recommended that the GoK gives budget to the Ministry of European Integration to implement informatory and awareness raising campaigns, given that 20% of the sample was not aware about the limitations that come with liberalization. To organize these campaigns MEI should take into account the opinion of youth organizations and NGOs, diaspora (through the Ministry of Diaspora and the diplomatic service) as well as minority parties and leaders. The Ministry of Internal Affairs should take measures to strictly enforce border control in full compliance with the fundamental rights of citizens. Kosovo institutions should undertake measures (including trainings) to reinforce the capacity of border

police in order to ensure the application of travel rules without prejudice to human rights. Public information and awareness campaign paired with strict border controls should continue for a longer period of time. This is because in the case of Albania, irregular migration took off several years after liberalization. The Police and the Judicial System should cooperate closely in the investigation of irregular migration facilitators and other criminal groups that abuse visa-free travel. The Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Kosovo Police should consider all possibilities to establish and strengthen cooperation with the countries in the region, EU Member States, the European Commission and other EU agencies signing agreements with Europol and Frontex.

Conclusion

This study has analyzed the impact of visa liberalization on Kosovo's migration patterns as determined by gender, economic situation, type of employment, individual ties with diaspora, and knowledge, or lack of thereof, about liberalization limitation. This study involved both quantitative and qualitative research techniques, containing an econometric regression and semi-structured interviews. The initial hypothesis was that visa liberalization will not result in mass migration, given the lessons Kosovo could take from regional countries. This hypothesis was rejected after the analysis of two interviews conducted with officials from MEI and KCC and after a survey encompassing the answers of 60 individuals. The results showed that income and a worsening income affect propensity to emigrate at statistically significant levels. Both interviewees acknowledged the tendencies for emigration and the detrimental effect it can have to Kosovo's political and economic stability but the benefits outweigh the cost of visa liberalization in the end. Indeed, as the secondary research of this study revealed, enhancing people-to-people connections is an important step towards development. Traveling fosters learning, new ideas, development, and new job opportunities (UNWTO and WTTC, 2012). As such, it is difficult for a developing country to achieve the standards of developed countries if there is a barrier to expertise exchange. Ultimately, what this study has revealed is that migration pattern in Kosovo is economic-driven and is especially prominent among discriminated groups. Considering this fact and observing practices from regional countries, it is recommended that Kosovo increases funding for public awareness campaigns, establishes strict border controls, and

strengthen the cooperation with countries of destination and international agencies such as Europol and Frontex. Addressing the main push factors, such as economic situation, healthcare system, and corruption in a systematic manner is a must. For further studies, it is recommended that other variables such as level of education and discrimination are added to the analysis.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Questionnaire

This questionnaire was conducted as part of Urtina Zeka's Bachelor thesis at RIT Kosovo entitled "The Impact of Visa Liberalization on Migration." People responding to this questionnaire will remain anonymous. Their data will not be used for any purpose other than those mentioned above. This questionnaire contains 17 questions for which you are plead to answer as honestly as you can.

1. Age:

2. Gender:

Male

Female

3. Employment status:

Employed

Unemployed

4. If you are not employed, are you looking for a job? * If you are employed skip to question 5

a) Yes

b) No

5. Which of the following employment categories would suit you best: * If you are not employed skip to Question 7

a) Self-employed

b) Employed in a family business

c) Employed in another private organization

d) Employed in the public sector

6. Which industry are you a part of?

a) Production

b) Entrepreneurship

c) Professional services (accounting, finances, legal services, etc)

d) IT

e) Construction

f) Vocational jobs (hair dressing, esthetic services, auto mechanics, hospitality)

7. Which field of study are you in?

a) Social Sciences and Humanities (Economics, Law, Education, Entrepreneurship, Management, Politics)

c) Arts and Humanities (Anthropology, History, Linguistics and Literacy, Philosophy, Visual Arts)

d) Technology (Engineering, Digital Marketing, Computer Science, etc)

e) Medicine

f) Exact Sciences (Physics, Chemistry, Biology, etc)

8. Please specify your monthly income from all sources (€)?

9. How has your financial situation changed from last year?

a) Has improved

b) Has worsened

c) Has remained the same

d) I prefer not to answer

10. Do you have any family member living abroad who visits you/ you visit regularly?

a) Yes

b) No

11. If so, how many times a year do you visit them? * If it doesn't apply to you, go to Question 13

- a) I visit them less than once a year
- b) I visit them once/twice a year
- c) I visit them more than twice a year

12. If they visit you, how many times a year do they visit you?

- a) They visit me less than once a year
- b) They visit me once/twice a year
- c) They visit me than twice a year

13. Have you made any family planning to emigrate after visa liberalization is achieved for Kosovars?

- a) Yes
- b) No

14. If so, how long do you plan to stay? * If it doesn't apply to you, go to question 15

- a) Less than 3 months
- b) 3 to six months
- c) 6 months to 1 year
- d) More than 1 year

15. What makes you consider emigration to EU countries?

Higher salaries in EU countries than in Kosovo

Better employment opportunities in EU countries compared to Kosovo

Higher quality of health system in EU countries compared to Kosovo

Lower level of corruption in EU countries compared to Kosovo

Better education opportunities in EU countries than those offered in Kosovo

Capital accumulation to invest it back in Kosovo

16. How many people do you know (friends / family) who have plans to emigrate to EU countries after visa liberalization?

17. Have you been informed that visa liberalization does not foresee the free movement of citizens for reasons of employment, stay for more than 3 months, or schooling?

a) Yes

b) No

Appendix 2. Regression Results

Marginal effects after probit
 $y = \text{Pr}(\text{emigplan})$ (predict)
 $= .21969161$

variable	dy/dx	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% C.I.]	X
mosha	-.0615761	.03807	-1.62	0.106	-.136199 .013047	22.1224
gender*	-.1918692	.151	-1.27	0.204	-.487826 .104088	.510204
employ*	.0827779	.19074	0.43	0.664	-.291075 .456631	.55102
selemp*	-.1187183	.15212	-0.78	0.435	-.416863 .179427	.285714
income1	-.0009387	.00046	-2.06	0.040	-.001834 -.000043	386.735
ry_1*	.5910803	.259	2.28	0.022	.083443 1.09872	.102041
ry_2*	.0916499	.1499	0.61	0.541	-.202142 .385442	.489796
mignet~z*	.0348605	.14033	0.25	0.804	-.240177 .309898	.55102
libinfo*	.1204004	.14725	0.82	0.414	-.168213 .409014	.816327