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Migration and the Impact of Unemployment in Kosovo

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Abstract: Given how current the situation of emigration of Kosovars is, this pushes us to study this issue even more deeply and to understand what were the reasons for their emigration.

The results from the primary data from the research as well as the use of secondary data for the theoretical part have testified to the achievement of the purpose of the paper, familiarity with the current situation in Kosovo and the needs of the population, concluding findings and making recommendations for people surveyed and not only them but also all those who have an interest in this paper. This paper contributes to the awareness of Kosovo Albanians on the importance of the homeland and not emigrating to other countries.

Keywords: Migration, Kosovo, population.

Introduction

During this research we will try to study and draw results about the percentage of emigrants by classifying them based on gender, reasons for their emigration, place where they migrated, the way of their status in the country where they moved, etc.

Large population movements, especially international emigration, occurred in the late eighties with the highest intensity in the 90s and after that continue to have a high emigration trend even today.

In addition to the socio-economic impact, migration also affected the reproductive aspect of the population of Kosovo and certain areas. Therefore, elaborating on international migration in Kosovo based on these data is of particular interest¹.

¹ <http://ask.rks-gov.net/media/1379/migrimi-kosovar-2014.pdf>

Today, about one in four families have a family member living abroad, while one in four families also receive support from these individuals in the form of remittances².

The resulting migration and remittances from the diaspora have been a safety valve for many of those left behind in Kosovo, securing their livelihood in a country with the highest unemployment and poverty rates in Europe³.

The finalization of this paper was done by a questionnaire directly, so access to data was done through a survey of citizens - some families pushing them to complete a questionnaire formulated in the simplest and most accessible way, by the researcher himself.

Population migration, types, and causes

Migration means the change of habitual residence with another residence (municipality, region, state), or relocation from one settlement to another respectively: municipality, region, or another state.

In the territorial-administrative aspect, migration is divided into:

- Emigration – national/international (represents the departure of the population from a given country abroad.)
- Immigration-national / international (arrival of the population in a certain country within the state).

Migration has supported the growth of the world economy, contributed to the evolution of states and societies, and enriched many cultures and civilizations. Migrants have been among the most dynamic and entrepreneurial members of society, people who are prepared to take the risk of leaving their homes to create new opportunities for themselves and their children⁴. An immigrant can not only be considered as a workforce that will bring about the efficient functioning of the economy and the "European social model", but he is a person with his accumulated experience, his view of the world (conditioned by culture), goals and aspirations⁵. Much of Kosovo's history has been marked by violent and mass migration of the displaced population as a result of the war, where more than 800,000 people fled Kosovo as refugees. From 2008-to 2014 the EU rejected a large number of Kosovar asylum seekers that the reason for leaving was economic reasons, the fact of declaring independence did not meet the requirements of EU asylum. So, out of 13,220 asylum applications from Kosovo citizens, 6.85% were approved, while 93.15% were rejected⁶. The declaration of independence was believed to solve their economic and social problems and lead to a lower migration trend. However, this did not happen, research conducted in 2008, after the declaration of independence shows that the intention to migrate only increased, doubling from 20% to 40%⁷. The end of 2014 and the first month of 2015 mark a period of exodus, in the last months of 2014 and the first two months of 2015, the EU experienced an increase in the number of illegal immigrants

²http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/kosovo/ipa/2015/09._ipa_2014_migration_asylum_and_fight_against_trafficking_with_human_beings_20141027.pdf

³ <http://web.worldbank.org/archive/website01352/WEB/IMAGES/MIGRAT-2.PDF>

⁴ Khalid Koser – International Migration – a very short Introduction

⁵ The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin Lublin Business School, Ltd. of the KUL Development Foundation - Migration– a Challenge to the 21st Century.

⁶ UNDP (2014) Kosovo Human Development Report; pp. XII, Marrë prej: <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/khdr2014english.pdf>

⁷ UNDP (2011) Diaspora Engagement in Economic Development; <http://www.ks.undp.org/content/dam/kosovo/docs/DEED/PRODOC%20DEED.pdf>

fleeing Kosovo through the Serbia-Hungary border, and then to Western European countries⁸. We still do not have reliable data on the number of people who left the country during that period, but according to estimates, there are almost 50,000 citizens of Kosovo who have left the country illegally⁹. In mid-February, the Kosovo Ministry of Education, Science and Technology released information indicating that 5,200 students had left school to go abroad with their parents. According to the "Population Estimate for 2016," the number of the resident population in Kosovo at the end of 2016 is estimated at a total of 1,783,531 inhabitants resident number which is taken as basic data to estimate the population for 2017. The number of Kosovar emigrants during 2017 is estimated to be a total of 11,263 inhabitants, including legal and illegal emigrants. Most of the immigrants for 2017 were legal immigrants. Legal emigration was due to family reunification, marriage, finding a job, permanent relocation (mainly to neighboring countries), long-term studies with employment, etc. The balance of international migration (net migration) in Kosovo for 2017 was -5,431 inhabitants. (Latest data from KAS- Kosovo Agency of Statistics)

Table 1. Total population of Kosovo and migration for 2017

The estimated total population in all municipalities (2016)	International Migration (2017)			National Migration (2017)			Overall balance at the municipal level 2017	Total population and migration (31.12.2017)
	Immigration	Migration	Balance of international migration	Immigration	Migration	Balance of national migration		
1,783.531	5,832	11,263	-5,431	9,376	9,376	0	-5,431	1,778.100

Source: Kosovo Agency of Statistics

Overall growth

After several years, Kosovo marks a significant population growth thanks to the positive natural increase of the population with 20,406 inhabitants and the small net international migration of -5,431 inhabitants. The resident population of Kosovo, for the period 01 January – 31 December 2017 increased by 14,975 inhabitants or 0.84%. The population in Kosovo for 2017 is estimated to be 1,798,506 inhabitants¹⁰.

The reasons for migration are:

1. Ensuring a better economic future;
2. Higher standard of living;
3. Education;
4. Political reasons;

⁸ Rusila A, (2015) Peace and Collaborative Development Network "The Mass Exodus of Kosovo Albanians", Marrë prej: <http://www.internationalpeaceandconflict.org/profiles/blogs/the-mass-exodus-of-kosovo-albanians#.VRA4XY54pKU>

⁹ BYTYCI, F., & THAN, K. (2015) Dramatic surge in Kosovars crossing illegally into EU Reuters

¹⁰ <http://ask.rks-gov.net/sq/agjencia-e-statistikave-te-kosoves/sociale/vleresimi-i-popullsisë>

5. Family reunification.

The impact of unemployment on the emigration of Albanians

It is estimated that about 34% of the population live in poverty at 45 euros per month, which in other words means that they live on about 1.4 euros per day¹¹.

The private sector in Kosovo is facing low productivity, a lack of practical skills, and insufficient access to markets, capital, and technology¹².

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which represent the main business activity in Kosovo, contribute to 97% of total employment even though it has an employment capacity of mostly 1-9 employees; however, they do not provide the necessary level of assistance to reduce the unemployment and poverty rate, which was one of the main reasons for the large influx of Albanians¹³.

The most worrying situation in the labor market in Kosovo is the high unemployment rate. The average unemployment rate in Kosovo is 35.1%, while youth unemployment for those aged 15-25, is even higher at around 55.3%¹⁴.

Regarding the perception of Kosovo investors regarding the business environment in the country, the responses obtained from a survey of current and potential investors show that the main obstacles to investing in Kosovo are: lack of rule of law, corruption, and economic and political instability¹⁵.

Unemployment by gender

According to the 2017 LFS in Kosovo, there were 156,583 persons aged 15-64, who were unemployed, 113,070 of whom were males and 43,513 females. The unemployment rate was 30.5%, higher among women at 36.6% than among men at 28.7% (Graph 2.1). Compared to the LFS of 2016 in Kosovo, we have an increase in the unemployment rate by 3.0%, where this increase in men was 2.5% while in women we have an increase of 4.8%.

In a study on immigration issues, the Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) ranked the three main attractive factors of emigration were: Unemployment at (71.8%) followed by better job opportunities at 67.7%, and higher-income opportunities at 64.7 %. Although not a high percentage, family reunification is a reason for migration for 16.3% of respondents and 43.8% of women. General insecurity in the country is also perceived by 8.8% of respondents as a driving factor for immigration¹⁶. The majority of immigrants, 58.8% before migrating, were unemployed; 11.7% had permanent jobs, 7.4% were self-employed and 11.8% were students. A small percentage of 3.7% were retired at the time they decided to migrate. The employment situation has changed upon arrival in the destination country¹⁷.

Research Results or Data Analysis –

¹¹ https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1863/CDCS_Kosovo.pdf

¹² http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2014/20141008-kosovo-progress-report_en.pdf

¹³ Veseli, L., Soini, E. (2011). FACTORS INFLUENCING SMES GROWTH IN KOSOVO

¹⁴ KAS (2014) Result of the Kosovo 2013 : Labor Force Survey -Kosovo Agency of Statistics

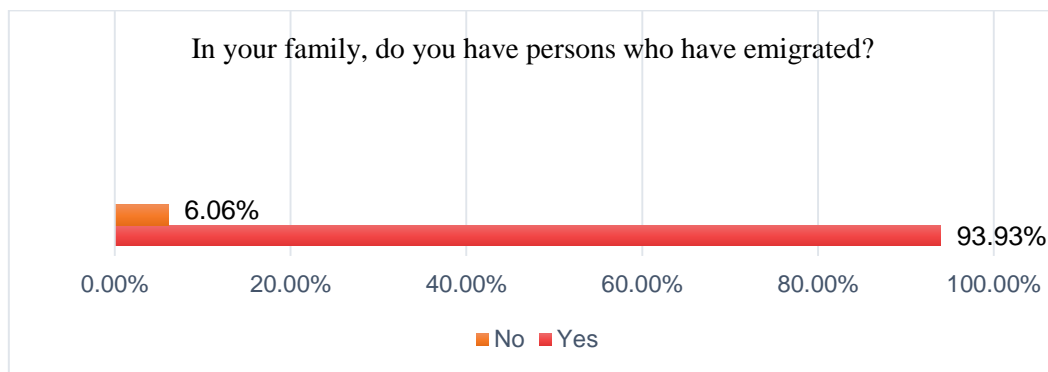
¹⁵ Shapi, K., Krasniqi, B., Mati, B., Gashi, E., (2014) Investors perception of Kosovo's Business Environment, Survey with current and potential investors, Report

¹⁶ JUSUF BUXHOVI- KOSOVA, Dardania in Ancient and Medieval Times, Volume 1, pg.36 Huston- USA

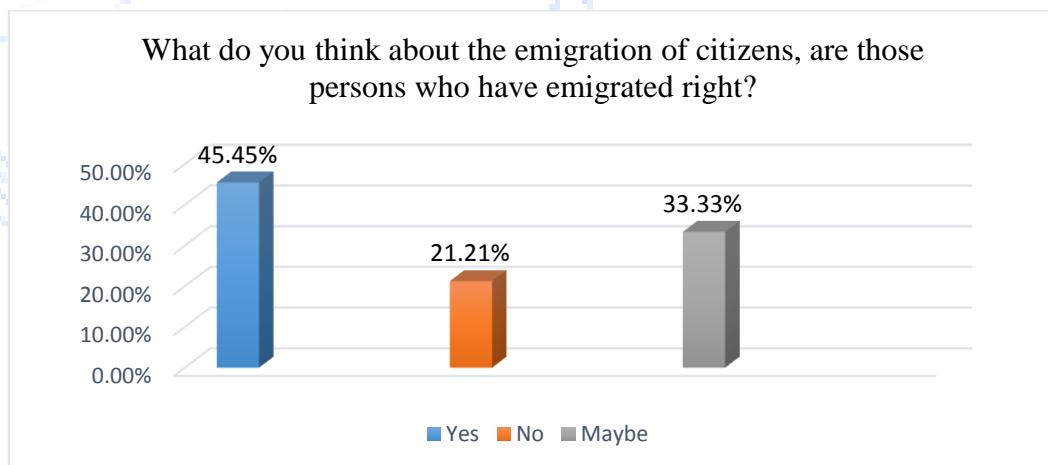
¹⁷ <http://shtetiweb.org/2015/04/23/instat-arsyeja-kryesore-e-emigracionit-eshte-papunesia/>

The research was done through a questionnaire made on the online platform. Data provision was done through a survey of 40 respondents. For the research to be as accessible as possible for the respondents, the questionnaire was made based on a simple questionnaire that contained 10 questions so that we could get the most accurate results. Also, based on these, conclusions and recommendations have been drawn.

1. People who have emigrated to your family?

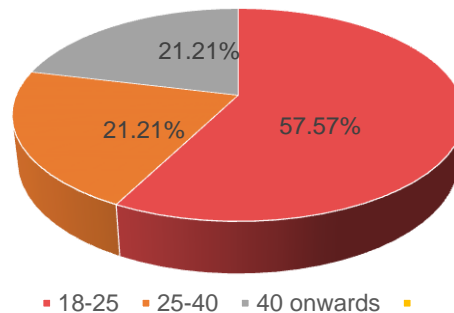


For this study, we have elaborated on the issue of how many people have emigrated to different countries of the world, as we know the situation in Kosovo and especially that of 2015 which marked the period of migrant exodus where a large wave of citizens migrated illegally abroad for economic reasons for finding a better lifestyle. In the questionnaire made by 33 respondents, it is clear that each family has emigrated abroad by one or two members, which was predicted to be so, where 93.3% was the percentage of families that had emigrated while only 6.06% had no members emigrated.



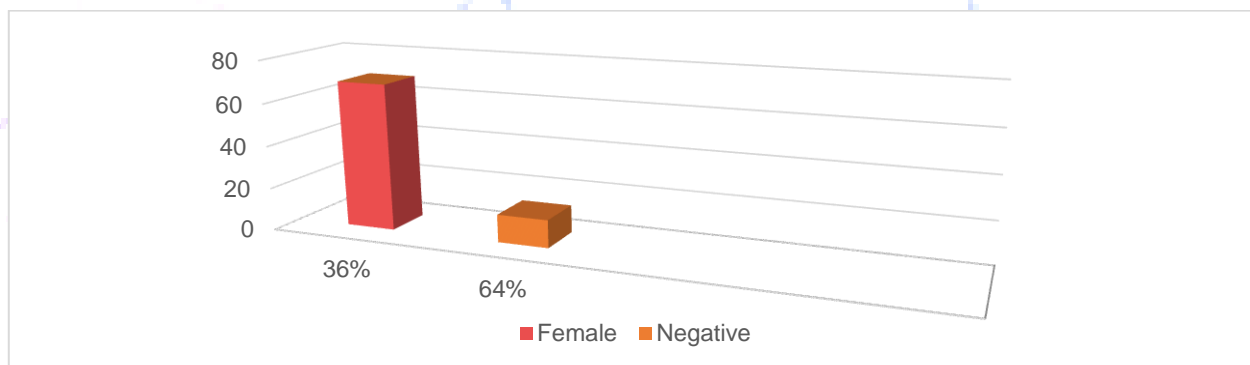
Out of 33 respondents, 45.45% of them thought that the emigrated family members were right, while 21.00% thought that it was right for them to leave because even in Kosovo there is a good income for the installments they want to work and 33.33% of them did not answer. concrete.

What age are the persons who have emigrated?



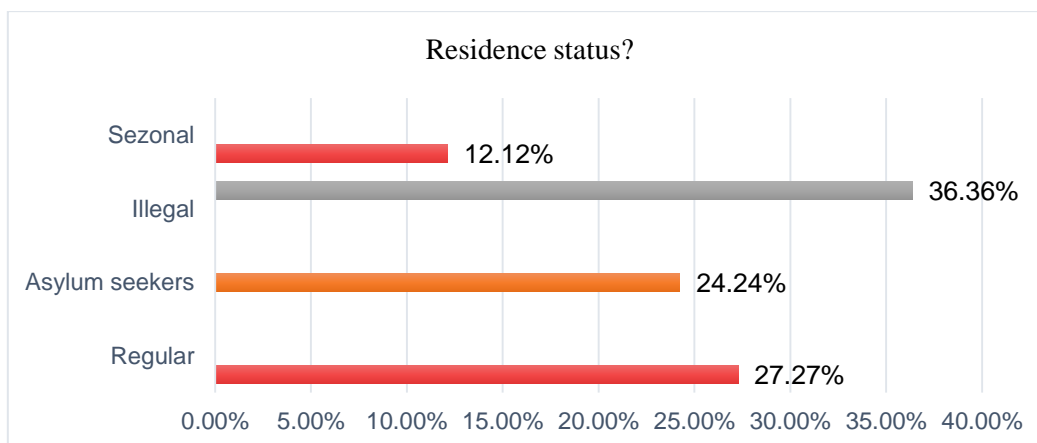
Immigration had a major impact on the population and most of these immigrants were male and young. Our survey confirms the same thing, the average age of emigrants at the time of departure was 18-25 years with a rate of 57.57%. The slightly higher age of women is argued with their departure mainly for marital reasons in the 90s with 21.21% while 21.21% of respondents were aged 40 years and above.

What is the gender of the persons who have emigrated?

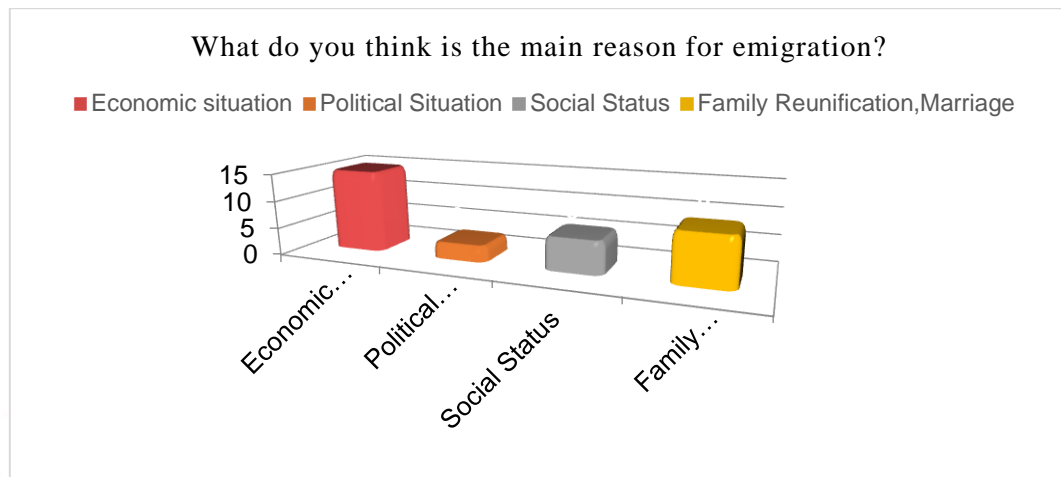


One of the questions we received is the question of how many women and how many Men have emigrated because in the 2015 influx the percentage of gender was almost equal. But in our survey, it turns out that the largest percentage belongs to males with 71.05% of emigrants and 28% of females.

Residence status?

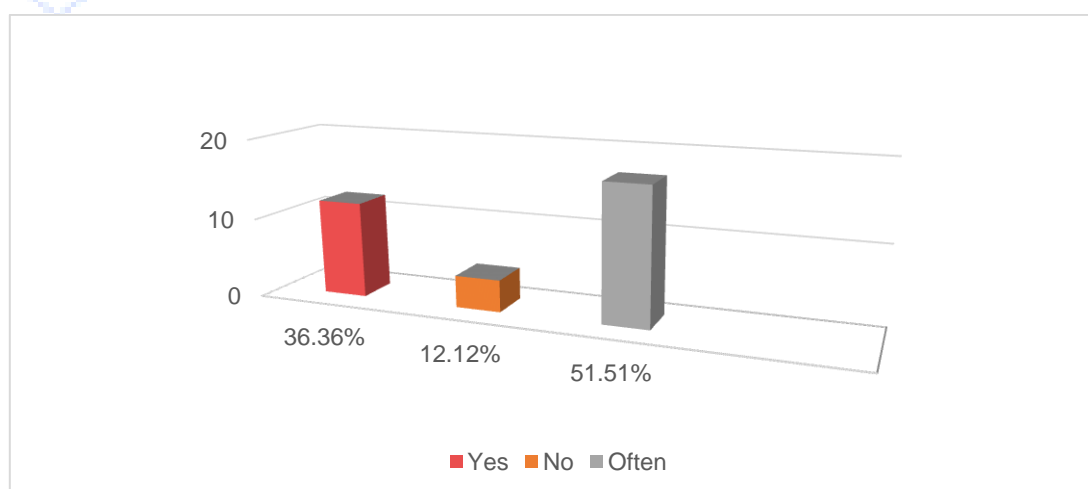


Studies show that several factors determine the direction of the international migration of Albanians. One of the main criteria is geographical proximity. This proximity and relatively easy access to the illegal border crossing has helped Albanians to travel to relatively rich neighboring countries, as it is known that most emigrants are illegal with 36.36% proximity to regular immigrants with 27.27% reasons for emigration being for family reunification, the rest of the emigrants are as asylum seekers with a percentage of 24.24% and there seasonally for employment reasons with 12.12%.

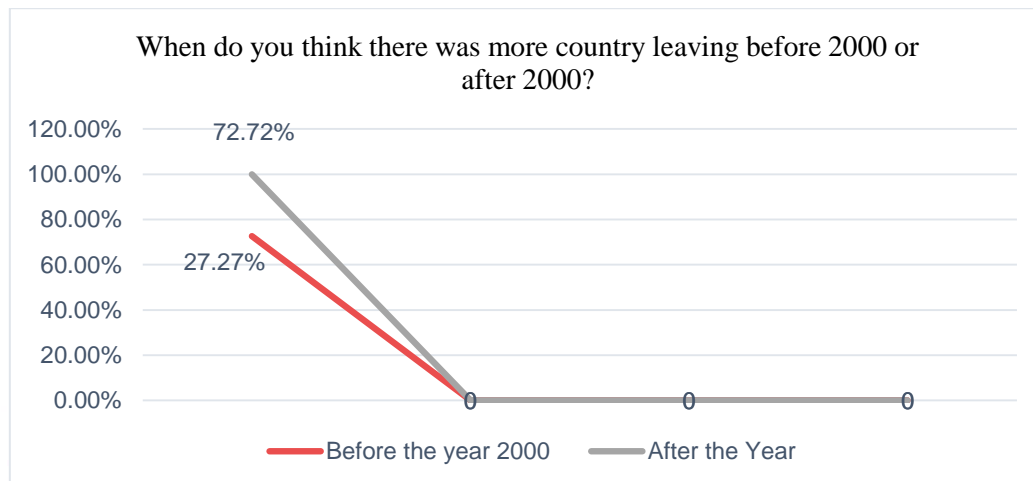


The results of the survey show that the main reason for emigration is the economic situation of the country with 46%, as most of them complain of being in poor living conditions and find it very difficult to find work. The second will be family reunification which has influenced Albanians to emigrate around foreign countries at a rate of 27%, then social status by 18% as the current social assistance package does not provide benefits for the unemployed, maternity, or benefits for children and the political situation with a small percentage of 9%.

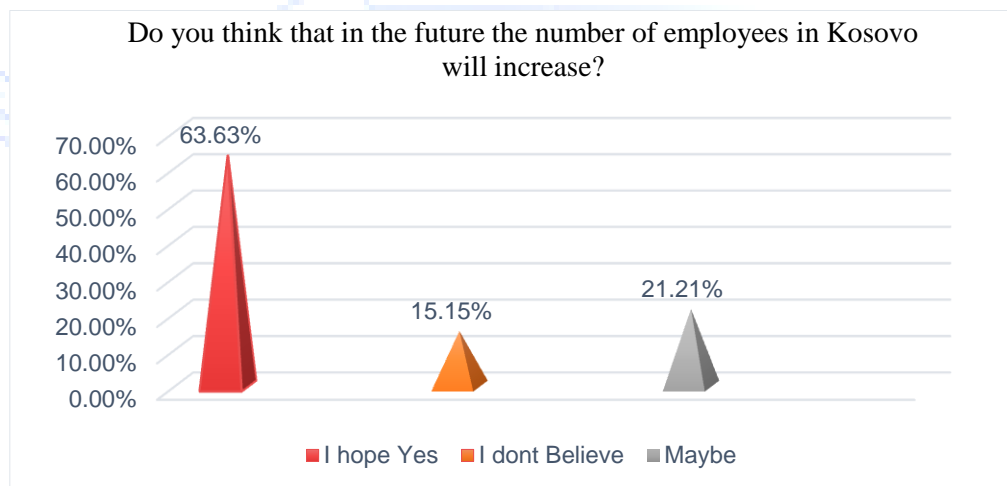
Do you think that unemployment has affected Kosovo for the emigration of citizens?



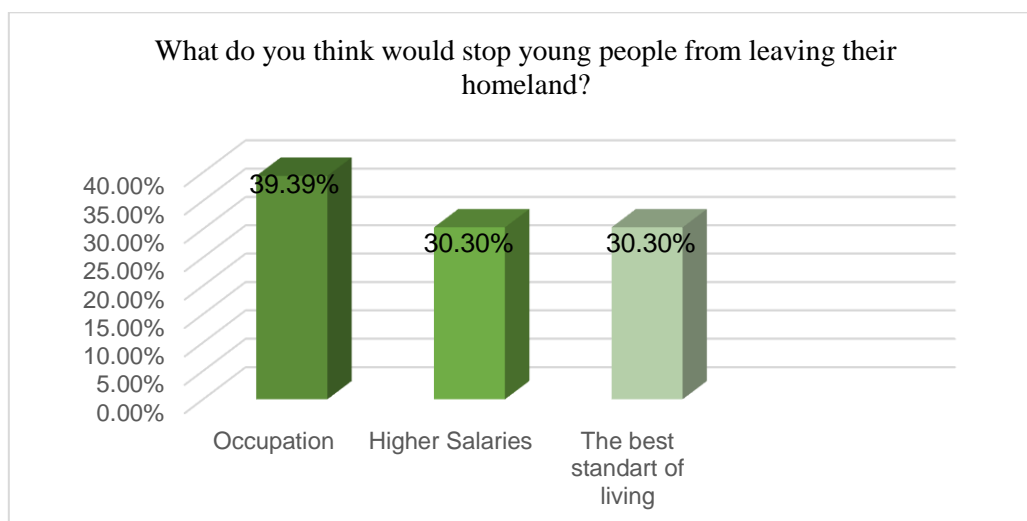
Most of the respondents answered that often almost always unemployment has pushed these young people towards more developed countries, with the opinion that in other countries they will find themselves in their profession and a better life where 51.51% of respondents believed that unemployment often has a big impact, 36.36% of respondents thought that unemployment was the main reason and a small part with 12.12% of citizens did not think that only unemployment was the main cause of emigration, they also include marriages, family reunification, etc.



Out of 33 respondents, 72.72% of them think that after 2000 there were more frequent movements of young people from our country, as there were many young people who left legally, for studies or work, as well as for family reunification. . Also, a large percentage of them with a rate of 27.27% think that before 2000 there were departures, where most emigrated illegally to find work due to the difficult economic situation.



In the end, we see that the citizens are optimistic in terms of jobs for young people. Most of them answered that they hope that the number of employees will increase by 63.63%, with 15.15% of the citizens desperate about the situation in Kosovo do not believe that the number of employees will increase and 21.21% they were safe.



Out of 33 respondents, the percentage between the answers does not differ much, as it seems that these are all very important and it would all be good for the country to develop them more. But as we see any way it seems that employment is the main issue for their stay with 50.00%, 25.00% respondents thought that it is more important to have higher salaries and 25.00% wanted a better standard of living including all.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Migration will continue to be an important part of Kosovo's economic, political and social landscape. It is estimated that over 10,000 Kosovars leave the country each year. For this reason, strengthening the engagement with the diaspora and making better use of Kosovo's potential from migration can make an important contribution to its economic development.

The Government of Kosovo must work tirelessly to address the problem of high unemployment. In particular, the government should draft strategic documents and other complementary documents that would address this issue and provide practical activities for each of the recommended measures.

Remittances from the diaspora have been and are being used as a means of security for Kosovar citizens, especially those who are unemployed and living below the poverty line.

So, migration as a force has had a significant impact on the shaping of Kosovar society. As a result, today we have a large Kosovar diaspora, which throughout history has played an important role in the development of the country.

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