

Sex imbalances in Albania: A demographic historical perspective.

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There are three areas to investigate the gender "discrimination" in Albania

- 1. Sex ratio at birth – with a view of selective abortion?
- 2. Sex differences in infant and child mortality
- 3. Differences in health and nutrition of children

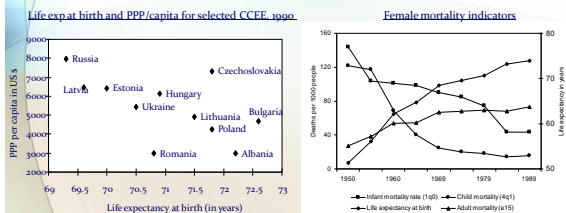
There are also three periods to investigate, with distinguish features:

- 1. The period before World War II, 1922-1938
- 2. The period under Communism, 1945-1990
- 3. The period of social and economic transition, 1990-2010

The Demography of Albania

A mortality paradox:

- a) High IMR and low $e(15)$, $e(65)$
- b) High $e(0)$ and poor compared to other EEC

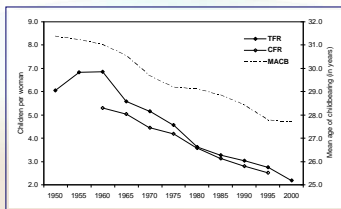


Gjonça, A. *Communism, Health and Lifestyle: The Paradox of Mortality Transition in Albania, 1950-1990*. ISBN 0-313-31586-8, Greenwood Press, Westport, US

The Demography of Albania

Dramatic reduction of fertility

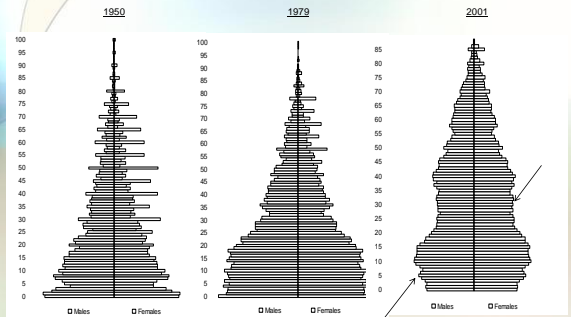
Total fertility rate and cohort fertility rate in Albania 1950-1990.



Note: Cohort fertility rates are plotted adding the mean age of childbearing for each cohort. Then the values are interpolated in order to fit the 5 year calendar periods.
Source: Author's calculations based on data from the Institute of Statistics, (INSTAT, 1992, 2003b)

Massive migration 1990 – 2001

25% of Population



1. Sex differences in mortality

- In 1950 life expectancy for males was higher than that of females
- Infant and child mortality for males was higher than that of females
- However, the situation starts to change gradually in the 1960s and by 1990 there are no abnormal gender differences in mortality in Albania

Mortality Indicators, Albania 1950-2000

	Life expectancy at birth	Infant Mortality	Child Mortality	Life expectancy at age 15	Life expectancy at age 60
Males					
1950	51.9	142.2	90.7	52.9	18.4
1960	61.7	92.0	49.6	57.2	18.0
1969	64.6	88.4	20.2	57.8	17.9
1979	65.6	73.2	16.8	57.4	16.7
1989	67.9	47.0	15.4	57.8	16.5
2000	71.5	25.3	9.2	59.4	19.3
Females					
1950	51.3	144.0	121.7	55.1	20.0
1960	62.2	101.3	68.6	60.1	19.8
1969	68.5	89.8	24.5	62.5	21.0
1979	70.6	74.8	18.0	63.0	20.6
1989	73.9	43.4	15.6	63.7	21.1
2000	78.1	21.8	9.0	65.8	23.7

1. Sex differences in mortality (cont.)

- The period 1990-2000 continued to see an improvement of life expectancy at birth for both sexes
- Infant and child mortality continued to improve and for males was higher than that of females
- No abnormalities found in gender differences in mortality in Albania by 2010

2. Health and Nutrition status among children

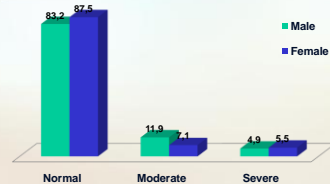
- No data before 1990 on the health of the children
- A number of surveys provide information after 1990s on both nutrition and health
- LSMS 2001, MICS 2005, DHS 2008

2. Health and Nutrition status among children

- Results on nutrition status based on LSMS 2001, showed **no female disadvantage**.
J. Falkingham and A. Baschieri (2005)
- The same analyses performed on 2008 data on DHS showed **no female disadvantage towards nutrition status**
K. Bates, and A. Gjonca (2011)

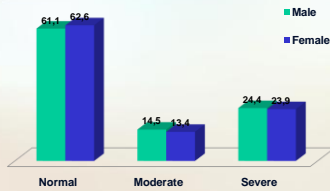
2. Health and Nutrition status among children (cont.)

Underweight (too thin for age)



2. Health and Nutrition status among children (cont.)

Stunting (too short for age)



3. Sex Ratio at Birth

- Different from Mortality and Health of children, SRB has historically been imbalanced and continues to be so.

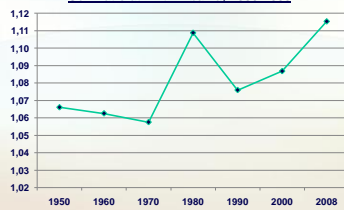
	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926
SRB	1.15	1.37	1.29	1.30	1.24

Note: consciousness with the data: A tax to register birth

T. Selenica, 1927

3. Sex Ratio at Birth (cont.)

Sex Ratio at Birth Albania, 1950-2008



Note: Data quality requires more work.

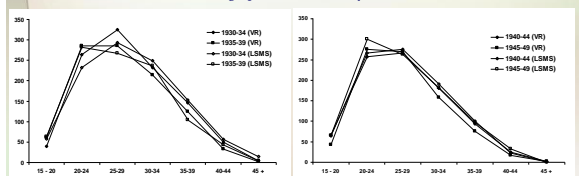
Quality of birth registration

- (i) Checking the accuracy of fertility data from vital statistics

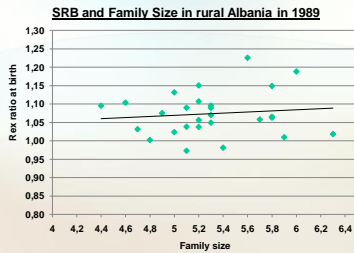
Cohort fertility rates from both vital registration and LSMS

Cohorts	1930-34	1935-39	1940-44	1945-49	1950-54	1955-59	1960-64
CFR-VS	5.03	5.03	4.46	4.43	3.60	3.17	2.92
CFR-LSMS	5.28	5.01	4.61	4.71	4.09	3.64	3.27

Selected age specific cohort fertility rates



3. Sex Ratio at Birth (cont.)



What do we know so far?

- There is **no obvious sex imbalances regarding mortality and health of children by 2010 in Albania**. The situation has improved over the last 70 years.
- **BUT, there is a large imbalance in sex ratio at birth**

??????

What can explain this paradoxical situation?

Development vs. Tradition

(Social agenda investments vs. Patriarchy)

Ideas vs. Norm

??????

What can explain this paradoxical situation?

Social Organisation and Family

The social organisation was based in a patriarchal system, which disfavoured women in all aspects of social life.

The social structure was basically tribal in the north and semi-feudal in the central and south of the country.

The central organisation was kinship and descent.

The basic unit of society was the extended family, a couple with their married sons, and their offspring, as well as any unmarried daughters.

This family was a single residential and the basic economic entity.

The size of these families was very large, and by the end of WWII some contained as many as sixty to seventy members.

What can explain this paradoxical situation?

- Cultural and traditional values: kept the sex preference going
 1. Patriarchal society - male dominated society
 2. Patriarchal society - extended family was the norm

What can explain this paradoxical situation?

- Development through social and economic policies: worked in opposite by *improving the health and mortality of children and reducing the imbalances*
 1. Universal education (particularly females - female illiteracy rate changed from 90% in 1950 to less than 5% in 1990)
 2. Full female employment - changes decision making in the households?
 3. Exclusive policy in reducing infant mortality (indirect effect - IMR came down from 143/1000 in 1950 to 40/1000 in 1990)

What can explain this paradoxical situation?

Previous research on family formation and childbearing:

Gjonca, A., Aassve, M., Mencarini, L. (2008, 2010)

It seems that "traditionalism" or "norms" persisted for the onset of family formation, whereas perhaps "modernity" and economic constraints impacted the number of children one has in Albania (i.e. effects for 2nd and 3rd births).

Gjonca, A.; Thornton, A (2011)

Albanians saw fertility level and pattern highly connected to development, but they did not see the correlation of development to marriage pattern (mean age of entering marriage)

What can explain this paradoxical situation?

Hypothesis for sex discrimination:

Development, through its "paths", such as investment in social agenda etc... brought down the gender discrimination with regards to child health and mortality, but traditional norms kept the sex preference still present?

What can explain this paradoxical situation?

More research is needed!

?????

What?

How?

Why?