

RESEARCH ARTICLE

(Open Access)**Land Use Change in the Corridor Tirana-Durrës caused by Urban Development**ANILA SULAJ^{1*}, HENRJETA THEMELKO², ARJAN SHUMELI³¹Department of Management of Rural Truisms, Faculty of Economy and Agro-business, Agriculture University of Tirana, Tirana, Albania²Department of Agrarian Policies, Faculty of Economy and Agro-business, Agriculture University of Tirana, Tirana, Albania³Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Agriculture University of Tirana, Tirana, Albania**Abstract**

Urban development in the study area is associated with the change of land use. From the data obtained in our study it is shown that along the Tirana-Durres highway there has been noticed a change in the destination of the land use. Results of the survey show that: 21.7% of surveyed persons claim that land is used for the construction of private housing where many migrant families have had their pressing needs and social and economic interests that simultaneously created various commercial activities. 54.7% of respondents claim that the land is used for agricultural purposes. Agriculture remains one of the few important sectors of the economy despite the tendency of transformation of the whole area into an industrial corridor. 20.5% of the land is used for various business activities and industries. The evaluation of the residents for the land use shows more clearly the importance of this highway on the development of commerce and industry where there is growth in the number of commercial and industrial activities.

Keywords: corridor, Tirana-Durres, urban, change, land, use.

1. Introduction

Urbanization is a global process which exerts far reaching impacts on our society. Urban life as such touches upon and affects each and every one of us and not only those people who dwell and reside in cities. An endless stream of people descends upon the cities in order to meet their own economic, social, cultural and political needs [1, 3, 6]. That alone is a dynamic process that has influenced and guided along almost all social, economic and political upheavels [10, 15]. Regardless of the fact that the majority of the destitute and poor people will carry on living in rural areas in the immediate future, more than half of the population at this point in time lives in urban areas and it is expected that by 2050 and thereafter roughly 70% of the world's population will live in cities [8, 13]. It is rightly assumed that urbanization is a very important process that has contributed significantly to the economic growth throughout the world and it is still playing an important role in meeting the main objectives of human development associated with the economic growth, employment, sustainable economic and social development [2, 4, 5, 11]. The more

urbanized a country is, the more likelihood is there for the generation of national income growth, creation of employment opportunities, the strengthening of economic development in peripheral regions as well as the intensification of activities of enterprises that manufacture goods and services that meet the direct or indirect regional needs. Since the starting point of political and economic transition in the 90's in Albania there has been a significant displacement, or better still a considerable shift in the movement of population from rural to urban area by region due to massive immigration and internal migration [5]. Rural population moved in a lightening manner from rural to urban areas primarily along the segment of Tirana-Durres corridor, in response to the low income they obtained from their farms, or from limited opportunities for non-agricultural activities as well as from the low level of infrastructure and public service development [5, 8, 19].

Urban sociologists have conducted a significant number of studies on the city in terms of its social aspects. These aspects relate closely to the population, the formation of social groups, movements,

*Corresponding author: Anila Sulaj; E-mail: sulaj_anila@yahoo.com
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institutions, complex arrangements that do exist and are embedded in the city [10]. Other related studies have been undertaken for purposes of examining the urban ecological arrangements; they have also examined closely the natural growth of the city, the concentration of population in urban communities, the use of land and so forth [9, 20].

In the economic field we are well positioned to distinguish between studies on the economy of space and the urban economy. The economists have focused narrowly on the rental theory, the theory of localization of industrial activities and services in the urban space, the theory of hierarchical distribution between poles, patterns of migration processes and economies of scale [9, 11, 12, 19]. It is now easily recognizable that the economic development does not take place almost simultaneously across all the territory of a country and if it happens at all it is highly likely to set in motion disparities between different areas of the country [3, 7]. The disparities created do tend to intensify over time, hence creating a development situation which is different from one area to another. Consequently the districts of Tirana and Durres do exhibit patterns of socio-economic indicators which are different from other regions. Based on these indicators it is abundantly clear that the development indicators have moved at a rapid pace in the central area of the country, which includes the Tirana-Durres motorway [5]. In the past 20 years the Tirana-Durres corridor has undergone demographic changes which are characterized by an increase in population size which is approximately twice as high as the natural growth due to the migratory paths, while the rural population of the areas where they come from originally is dwindling fast due to their departures in huge numbers [5, 6].

The political, economic and social transformations occurred in Albania over the recent years and have been characterized by distinct territorial dimensions. The geographical pattern of the Albanian economy is adequately clear with a growing concentration of population and of economic activity pointing towards the Tirana-Durres corridor which has brought about an increased prosperity to the existing residents of these areas and such like settlements [5, 8, 18]. The concentration of population is increasingly becoming more consolidated along the motorway, since this region is expected to remain the pull of gravity for the entire economy alongside the industrial and agro-food activities [5]. This population

increasing need to undertake a study of these proportions happened at a time when the Tirana-Durres motorway is looked at as an area which is always fluid and in constant change in terms of its socio-economic development along with its share of advantages and disadvantages. Generally speaking, there has been an utter lack of systematic empirical data on the urbanization of the country particularly little or no data on the Tirana-Durres corridor [6, 8]. Nor are there any study on local government units to assess urban development patterns and their impact on the socio-economic variables of the surrounding rural areas. The urbanization of the highway in question started after the 90's in quite a spontaneous and rather unplanned. Its occurrence surely tipped the social and economic characteristics of the area by changing the ratio of urban to rural areas.

2. Material and Methods

The methodology used in this work is based on the testing of hypotheses arrived at from the theoretical model upon which it is built, which looks at the phenomenon of urbanization as something that has significant impact on the economic, social, cultural and human development. The formulated hypothesis consisted on: "Urbanization phenomenon changed land use along the Tirana-Durres corridor". The researcher was tried to test its truthfulness. Once the hypothesis derived from the theory is tested by analyzing the statistical data by looking also at the sampling strategy, the result can be generalized for the population collected in this study. The starting point is a generally accepted approach and it finishes with individual and specific cases. As for the determination of the type of study materials and study method various sources of literature have been used by analyzing similar studies that have been conducted in other countries in which similar patterns of urbanization in both time and space have been put under the microscope. A heuristic approach is one that passes from a theory or hypothesis to empirical observations and conclusions. For intents and purposes of data collection two study-oriented questionnaires were used (structured and semi-structured questionnaires). Members of the administration were allowed adequate time to complete the questionnaire because of the amount of information that was required. A randomly sampling model is used. All residents participating in the interview were asked to complete a structured

questionnaire on a face to face mode. Data were collected for a period of one year during 2013.

Sampling

For purposes of conducting the study the probability based sampling was used, which supports the model of randomized selection in a certain population, where each sample unit has the same chance to be selected which is not to be excluded. This sampling method offered two important advantages to the study. First, the study was representative and as such we think highly of its representation. Second, this approach is a priority in terms of sampling regarding the "external validity", because this allows us to perform generalization of the findings of this study by means of the sampling strategy. Based on a population of some 85,859 inhabitants in the study areas which covers the commune of Kashar and the municipalities of Vora, Manëz and Sukth respectively, there have been efforts towards specifying the number of persons to be included in the survey in order to wind up with a good level of representation. According to above population in study areas the sample size is recommended by some studies to be not less than 398 individuals, the researcher increase the number to 595 individuals, distributed across four areas in the study, in order to compensate any potential invalidities. The questionnaires were designed by the so-called task oriented research. They are structured in five parts which contain specific questions selbased on the selected hypothesis in our study. Below we present a schematic presentation of the survey technique in which the study was conducted.

- Questionnaires used in the study

The study method consists in the type of polling conducted by using both semi-structured and structured questionnaires to evaluate the socio-economic indicators in the study areas. One part of this questionnaire contains the questions related to land use in study areas. In the case of communes and municipalities at the center of the study a semi-structured questionnaire was designed in order to collect statistical data from administration civil servants as well as from the finance and statistics offices. This questionnaire was designed to include in it questions which were aimed to obtain also information on land use in commune and municipalities in the study. As for the survey of residents in areas under the study at the focus has been

the questionnaire comprising simple and direct questions in order to render them easily understandable for residents who were surveyed.

- Questionnaire for the municipal administration

In order to collect information on demographic, socio-economic and statistical data on land use a semi-structured questionnaire was utilized for the survey of administration civil servants in the commune of Kashar as well as in the municipalities of Vora, Manëz and Sukth. This questionnaire model was made up of a series of close-ended and open-ended questions in order to allow the researcher to form a full and thorough picture regarding the situation of urbanization in the study areas and the extent of the impact on this phenomenon on land use. It also helped us become familiar with important data on the Tirana-Durres corridor. In addition a series of surveys was conducted with key persons in the administration of the areas under this study. Key persons, in this case, were considered those individuals who worked for the offices of communes and municipalities in the study, who had access to data of land use that the researcher is interested in, as well as those individuals who thanks to their knowledge, reputation and skills are members of the local community and know what is happening in and around the community. The purpose of interviewing the respondents was collection of information from a wide variety of people, because the key people are the ones who helped draft and implement the policies and strategies in the community. These experts, with their specific knowledge, can provide information about the nature of the problem and issue recommendations for solutions.

- Questionnaires for surveying of residents of the municipality

In order to evaluate the impact of urbanization on land use in areas under the study for purposes of surveying the residents were utilized the so called structured questionnaires that consist of a series of questions. For each commune and municipality, as has been described above, is used the probability-based sampling and individuals were subjected to interviews randomly in both urban and rural areas by ensuring the completion of as many as 595 questionnaires that collected the information necessary to test the hypothesis of the study. The questionnaires were designed based on the tasks of the study. The

questionnaires are structured in five parts. One part contains specific questions on the basis of the selected hypothesis in our study. Residents of communes or municipalities who were interviewed pertained to the age group from 17 years to 70 years of age.

3. Results and Discussion

A particularly care during the interviews was paid to the assessment of relationships with land for

residents in the study area. Questions focused mostly migrant residents and residents. Questions about the use and ownership of land, whether rented or is in use, etc., were addressed during the interview residents. By migrants located in these areas we got different answers. Results of the survey of land relations are presented in the table below:

Table 1. Relations with the land in the study area.

Municipality	No. of persons interviewed	Availability and terms of relationships with the land				
		Bought	Occupied without payment	In use	Rent	Others
Kashar	157	33%	17%	5.5%	2.7%	41.8%
Vorë	160	32%	10%	16%	22%	20%
Manëz	130	30%	7.5%	15%	17%	30.5%
Sukth	148	39%	13%	8%	13%	27%
Total	595	33.5%	13%	11%	14%	28.5%

Setting migrant population in the urban and rural municipality and municipalities as Kashar Vora, Manëz and Sukth is accompanied by new relationships on land. About 33.5% or about 1/3 of migrant residents have purchased land and have owned it. The survey shows that 13% of people surveyed have land area without paying. Massive population movements after the 90s were mainly conducted in lowland areas of the district of Tirana and Durres. In the municipality of Kashar and municipalities Vora, Manëz and Sukth families had been placed on the ground surface to occupy it without paying. Lack of individual ownership of land made it possible for many families to settle in these areas and build their dwellings and commercial activities. Such a social phenomenon happened in

Italy after World War II, where families from rural areas of land occupied spaces without paying [3, 5, 8]. Even in other former communist countries such as Bulgaria, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina has been a change of destination of agricultural land [3, 13, 15, 16]. According to a study area of agricultural land in Eastern European countries is reduced to the extent of 11% due to its use for construction and other purposes. Democratic processes that occur later, migrant residents became owners then gained ownership of land [8, 11]. Even in the study areas, the lands occupied in the process of legalization are going to a legal process that ends with the issuance of land ownership and construction performed [5, 12, 16]. Other data represents that 28.8% of migrants are not having land relations.

Table 2. Land use in study areas of the corridor Tirana-Durres.

Municipality	No. of persons interviewed	Used for housing	Used for agriculture	Used for business activities and industry	Other
Kashar	157	31% (48/157)	45% (70/157)	21% (13/157)	3% (2/159)
Vorë	160	18% (29/160)	51% (32/160)	26% (41/160)	5% (8/160)
Manëz	130	15% (19/130)	67% (87/130)	16% (20/130)	2% (3/130)
Sukth	148	23% (34/148)	56% (38/148)	19% (28/148)	2% (3/148)
Total	595	21.7% (129/595)	54.7% (326/595)	20.5% (121/595)	3% (19/595)

Source: questionnaire for residents

Rural and urban migration shows a profound structural transformation of the Albanian economy not

to be considered as priority agriculture and traditional industries, and towards higher productivity sectors,

including trade, services, tourism and construction. Even in areas in the study has been such a socio-economic transformation as a result of the impact of urbanization. Rural and urban migration has a long history in the world. It is this process which is accompanied by constant changes of the size of cities and creating new cities bringing new socio-economic models [1, 7, 12, 14, 21]. Change of land destination is reported by different studies in UK. Reduction of agriculture land was more evident in big cities because of enlargement of urban areas [11, 21]. On the other hand, the questionnaires to municipalities and municipal administration resulted with greater number of people who occupy land without paying their 47% respectively. Of all those who say that do not have building permits for their home, 93.7% reported that they committed pleas and are awaiting regularization of their home. More than 1/3 of respondents conduct transactions on the land stating that their economic income increased and land acquisition is associated with an investment guarantee. Those interviewed seem to be more interested in investment, where agriculture and real estate purchases are the most preferred sectors to invest. Urban development in the study areas is associated with the change of land use. The study cases reported in Europe showed that urban development caused reduction of agriculture land in Netherlands, Denmark and other developed countries [7, 20]. More evident this phenomenon was in USA and China in last decades. A large number of migrants settled in near the urban areas changed the land destination and transformed rural areas in urban zones [4, 16]. Moreover, changes in land relationship and destination is witnessed by similar studies in other developed countries where agricultural land has been reducing significantly and the relationships are patterned on the model of agglomeration economy where from limited land area is garnered huge incomes.

4. Conclusions

Urban development in the study area is associated with the change of land use. From the data obtained in our study it is shown that along the Tirana-Durres highway there has been noticed a change in the destination of the land use. Results of the survey show that:

- Referring to 1993 there is a reduction of agricultural land along the corridor Tirana-Durres

is about 20.5%. This has occurred by increasing the area occupied by the sectors of the economy which have far more productive and commercial activities, services, industry, etc.

- In both sides of highway are located a large number of business activities creating the more chances for employment. It has been concluded that along this corridor land is going to be used more for industrial proposes and not for agriculture.
- Urban development of this corridor is going to be associated with ecological impact because of reduction of green areas.

5. Recommendations

- From the discussion and the data derived from this study it is recommended that a better balance between common and private goods should be struck along the Tirana-Durres corridor. In addition, this should also take care of the mutual combination of public and private interests through the urban management where land use should be more rational to preserve both the agricultural land and green spaces.
- The further development of the corridor calls for the design and implementation of long-term strategies where urban planning and regulation should be enforced in order for it to serve the urban economy and market requirements, the business real estate and housing which will in turn result in better living conditions and a healthier environment.

6. References

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