



Public transport and its privatization in East Europe: the case of Tirana, Albania

Dorina Pojani^{1*}

¹ *Polytechnic University of Tirana, Albania*

Abstract

The purpose of the article is to discuss the operations of the public bus sector and the impacts of its privatization in Tirana, the capital of Albania. In addition to a synopsis of public transport operations in post-communist East Europe, the first part of this article presents an overview of public transport operations in Tirana from 1990 to the present day. The second part of the article discusses the findings of three sets of transportation surveys.

Keywords: Tirana; Albania; East Europe; Public transport; Bus transport; Public service privatization.

1. Introduction

The purpose of the article is to discuss the operation of the public bus sector and the impacts of its privatization in Tirana, the capital of Albania. The first part of this article presents an overview of public transport operations in Tirana from 1990 to the present day. The second part discusses the findings of three sets of transportation surveys.

Due to the absence of academic literature on transportation issues in Albania, much of the information in this article was obtained from transport-related studies conducted by various consultants for Tirana in the course of the last twenty years and press reports on urban transport. Other information was obtained through interviews with representatives of formal public transport companies and informal public transport operators.

From 1944 until 1990, an exceptionally repressive communist dictatorship governed Albania. During communism, private car ownership was forbidden. As most destinations within the capital were easily reachable on foot due to its relatively small size (300,000 people on 12 km²), walking was a chief form of travel throughout that era. In addition, a substandard public bus system, bicycles, a few motorcycles, and a few taxis for special occasions provided passenger transport. A small fleet of horse-drawn carriages was in use for goods transport. The poor quality of public transport in Tirana

* Corresponding authors: D. Pojani (dorinapojani@hotmail.com)