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From the village to the city

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6

WINNERS OR LOSERS

Adjustment Strategies of Rural-to-Urban Migrants in Albania

*“With cities, it is as with dreams: everything imaginable can be dreamed...
Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears”*

(Italo Calvino, 1972)

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the process of adjustment undergone by rural migrants to the city at a micro-level. Rural migrants are expected to fully adjust to the urban lifestyle, setting aside their traditions and culture. However, as the migrant population increases in an urban area, migrants create their own communities with their own lifestyles and values, and thus there is an ongoing debate about whether this process entails the ruralisation of the city or urbanization of migrants. While becoming urban and being part of the city is desired, the reality is that joining a migrant community and adjusting to other migrants is more important. According to the resource-based model, migrants need *personal, material, social* and *cultural resources* to satisfy their needs, goals and demands. Socio-cultural clustering constitutes the main social resource, creating a support system for migrants. The longer the rural migrants reside in the city the better their adjustment strategies. We also found that economic security and willingness assist the adjustment process and that the younger generation is perceived as being better adjusted.

6.1 Introduction

Since the 1950s, the countries of the developing world have been experiencing an unprecedented process of urbanization and migration. Only in the last two decades has Albania faced this phenomenon, experiencing sweeping economic and social changes. The impressive fact, however, is not the length of time, but rather the intensity of the urbanization and migration process which is transforming Albania from a predominately rural to an urban society. The people who left villages to settle and work in the cities are the pioneers of these transformations, with internal migration flows mainly being from the remote north towards urban centres. Tirana, the capital of Albania, has been the most attractive destination.

The dominant characteristic of rural-to-urban migration in Albania is the collective nature of the movement, which contrasts with the international migration of individuals. People leave the village as a family to settle in the city. The different backgrounds, traditions and cultural norms of rural migrants are confronted by those of the urban population, making it difficult for the migrants to adjust (Çabiri et al. 2002). Media and host society expect rural migrants to fully adjust to the urban lifestyle and set aside their traditions and culture. However, chain migration, which characterizes internal Albanian migration, triggers socio-cultural clusters in urban areas, in which migrants create communities with their own lifestyles and values, making it difficult to integrate into urban life.

The adjustment process is a multifaceted phenomenon and requires both macro-level and in-depth, micro-level research and analyses (Erman, 1998). Bearing in mind the complexity of investigating this process, we focus on the main actors, the migrants. Although mass internal migration and rapid socioeconomic changes have been amongst the most dynamic phenomena of the Albanian transition, the complex issue of migrant adjustment to urban communities is scarcely addressed (Bërxfholi, 2006), and the actual human stories and voices of migrants are absent from recent migration research on Albania. This paper aims to listen to and present the migrants' perceptions, feelings and experiences to enhance our understanding of the migration and adjustment process from an individual perspective rather than in terms of national policies and the host society's point of view.

Taking an ethnographic approach and focusing on rural-to-urban migrants within the context of emerging urbanization, this study aims to: (i) investigate the migration and adjustment process of rural-to-urban migrants, (ii) detail the experience and paths of early and late migrants²⁹ in their new environment and (iii) explore the differences in perceptions between generations.

To contextualize this work, the theoretical approach taken in this paper will first be discussed, followed by an introduction to the geographical context of the research, that is, the

²⁹ Early and late are terms used by the migrants to define the length of residence in the area. The early migrants are considered to be those who came to Kamza between 1990-2000. While the late migrants are considered to be those who came after 2000 (definition derived from migrants perspectives).

Municipality of Kamza (MoK), a fast growing suburb of Tirana, Albania. The empirical core of the paper will explore the migration process from the decision to move to the settling and adjustment process, with migrants being regarded throughout as the main actors in creating livelihoods, developing the area in which they settle and in the overall adjustment process. The final section will discuss some points for future research.

6.2 Theoretical approach

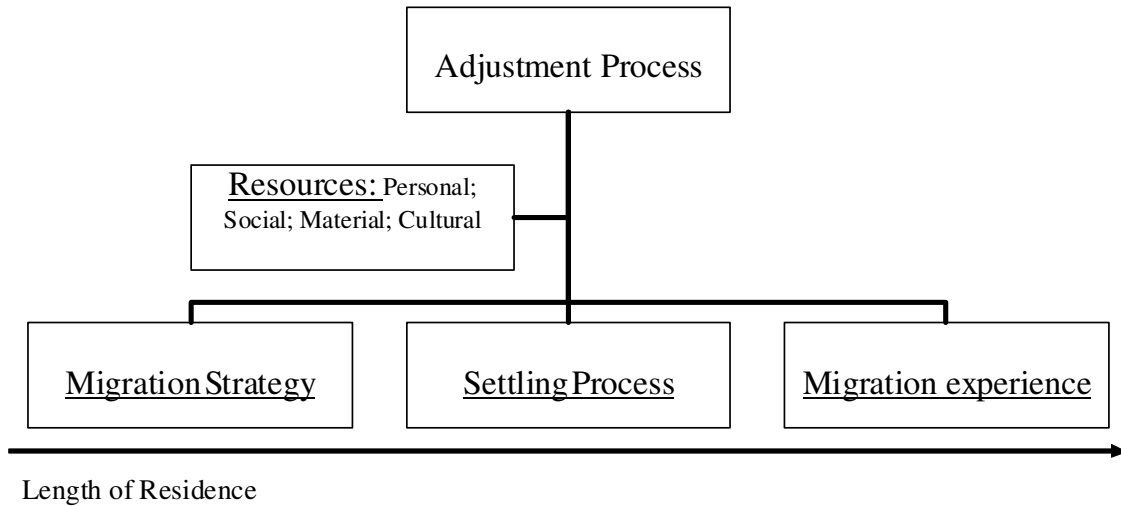
This section will discuss the two key concepts of this paper, migration and adjustment, based on two main approaches, the resource-based model and assimilation theory. When people migrate, they are expected to integrate into both the existing migrant community and the host society (Bosswick and Heckmann, 2006). This process has been referred to as integration, assimilation, acculturation, inclusion and adjustment (Bosswick and Heckmann, 2006). There is a large body of literature on the integration of immigrants. However, as King et al. (2008) rightly point out, this is not the case when it comes to internal migration, especially rural to urban migration. While there are numerous studies concerning the integration of Albanian immigrants in host countries such as Italy and Greece, there are very few studies that focus on the adjustment process of rural-to-urban migrants. The discussion of the latter in the media and academia revolves around the dilemma of the *ruralisation of the city versus the urbanization of the migrant community* (Çabiri, 2002; Ypi, 2006). Moreover, migrant views are absent from this discussion (Bërsholi, 2006; King et al. 2008). We use the term ‘adjustment’ to describe the process by which individuals attempt to pursue their goals, satisfy their needs and respond to cultural differences in a new environment (Ryan et al. 2008). The term is preferred to ‘integration’ because it encompasses the whole migration process and the individual experience of migration. As early as 1962 Mangalam (as cited in Schwarweller and Seggar, 1967: 665) defined adjustment as:

A dynamic state in which the actors in a given meaningful interactional system are able to live in relation to other members of their significant membership group, satisfying their basic needs, fulfilling the responsibilities of their major role and realizing the value ends of the system while maintaining the identity and integrity of the actors’ individual selves.

The ‘migration experience’ is considered to consist of observations, encounters and the general undergoing of events over the course of time, and more specifically from the moment the migrants arrive in their new location. To build an understanding of the adjustment process, we explore the migration process and experience using the resource-based model (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984; Berry, 1997; Hobfoll, 1998, 2001; Ryan et al. 2008), examining the resources available to and used by migrants (see Fig. 6.1). According to this model, migrants require resources to satisfy their needs, goals and demands. These may be *personal resources*, which are

physical or psychological in nature; *material resources*, which include money, property, housing and personal possessions; *social resources*, which include emotional and informational support, tangible support and a sense of identity and belonging; and *cultural resources*, which include skills, knowledge, traditions and beliefs. In the pre-migration and migration phases, individuals and families lose access to previous resources, while in the post-migration phase they attempt to regain and replace these resources.

Figure 6.1 Conceptual model of the adjustment process



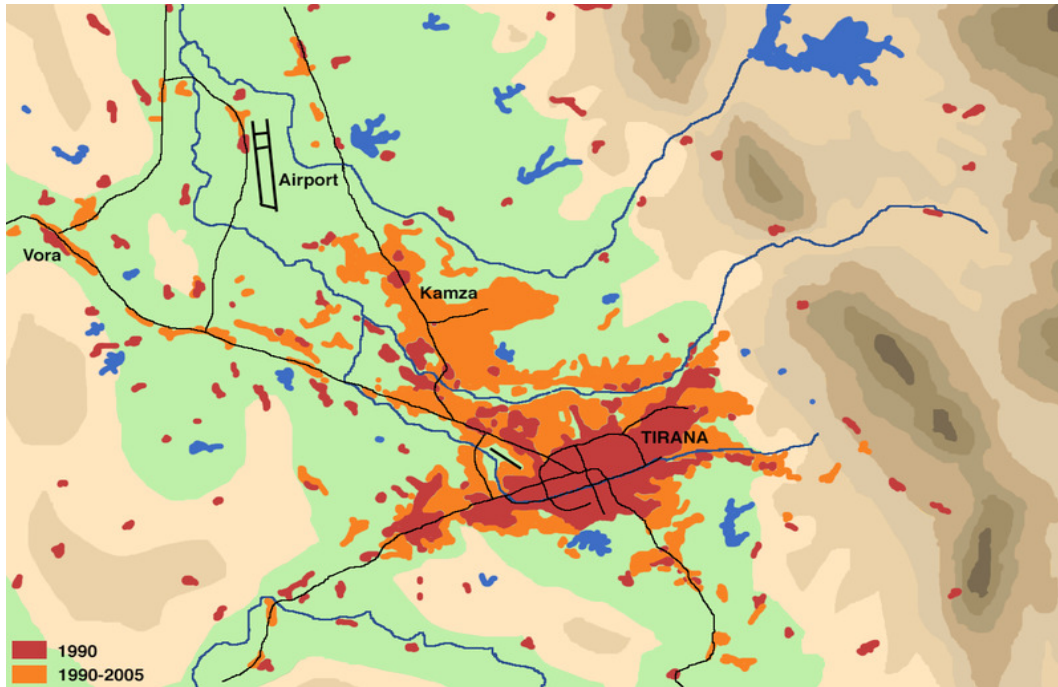
In addition, based on the assimilation theory of Gordon (1964) and Alba and Nee (2003) we utilize the concept of length of residence. Migrants follow a ‘straight-line’ convergence, developing similar norms, values, behaviours and characteristics over time. The theory expects those immigrants residing longest in a new environment, as well as members of later generations, to show a greater degree of assimilation than more recent arrivals. Those migrants who have resided longest in the new environment will also have had the greatest opportunity to gain new resources.

To understand the migrant adjustment process we first need to explore the migration decision process. With the humanist approach, we see the migration decision as based on individual values/goals and expectations, (Boyle et al. 1998; Kothari, 2002), which are also influenced by the environment and socioeconomic conditions (De Jong and Fawcett, 1981). Finally, the overall literature on migration focuses mainly on the migration of individuals rather than households (Mosse et al. 2002; De Haan, 2002). Internal migration in Albania is not only a response to regional economic and social disparities, nor does it only involve the migration of workers (INSTAT, 2004). Rather, it largely involves the permanent migration of an entire household (Cila, 2006).

6.3 Situating the research: Suburban Kamza

Internal migration patterns indicate a distinctive regional trajectory, with people moving from rural areas in the north-eastern region of Albania towards the peripheries of urban areas in the central region of the country, especially the capital, Tirana.

Figure 6.2 Population development in the region of Tirana and Kamza from 1990 to 2005



Source: Albinfo, 2007

According to recent estimations, the Tirana agglomeration accounts for approximately 75 percent of the country's total urban population (World Bank, 2007). Kamza, a new suburban area of Tirana, represents a unique case of urbanization, experiencing a dramatic population increase in the last decades. It has been referred to as 'the most dynamic community' of Albania (Ypi, 2006). In the early 1990s, Kamza was agricultural farmland owned by the State, with approximately 6,000 inhabitants (MoK, 2002). After freedom of movement and land reform were introduced, Kamza experienced a massive increase in numbers through squatter settlement and a general population influx and its population grew tenfold by 2002, to 60,000 inhabitants (Aliaj, 2002), reaching an estimated 100,000 inhabitants in 2009 (MoK, 2002, 2009) (see Fig. 6.2).

Kamza represents a case of indiscriminate urbanization fuelled by large migration flows and it has developed into a 'melting pot' where people from different backgrounds, traditions and cultures come together and cohabit (Aliaj et al. 2003). Such characteristics identify Kamza as a

'laboratory for internal migration studies in Albania' (Bërxfholi, 2008, personal communication)³⁰.

6.4 Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach which allows us to analyse the experience of migration in all its complexity, over time and in the space within which it occurs (Holdaway, 2000). We have gathered data from in-depth interviews, participant observation, informal interviews and field diaries. This approach permits a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the lives of those being studied; an approach to migration studies that is rare in Albania (Bërxfholi, 2006).

This paper focuses on rural-to-urban migrants at four sites in the MoK, three located in Bathore and one in Koder Kamza³¹. These sites were chosen due to our connections with gatekeepers. Guided by a pilot study conducted over three months (August–October 2008), the field work was carried out between March and October 2009, during which a series of personal interviews were held and participant observations made. The use of qualitative methods allowed us to gain access to the essential aspects of the lives of the migrants and also facilitated the identification of adjustment strategies.

- *In-depth interviews*

In-depth interviewing is considered a *privilege*, allowing the researcher to communicate extensively with the study participants while gaining an understanding of aspects of their lives in-depth (Liamputtong and Ezzy, 2005). We conducted 40 in-depth interviews (22 women and 18 men) to gain insight into and explore the experiences and perceptions of migrants regarding the adjustment process. All of the respondents had migrated from rural areas to the city in the last two decades. More than 70 individual and group conversations were also conducted. Women were interviewed in social centres and in their homes, while men were interviewed mainly in bars.

The migrants had various levels of education, some were better-off than others and they came from different age groups. This enabled us to obtain a wide range of opinions, which also allowed for some comparison. Three women and two men were the key informants. They introduced me (first author) to the social centres, neighbourhoods and acquaintances. The other informants were identified using a snowballing technique. The in-depth interviews were carried out in Albanian and tape recorded with the oral consent of the respondents. These were transcribed and then analysed using Atlas.ti software. Transcriptions were conserved in Albanian with the aim of preserving their originality, including metaphors and idioms. The quotations which are used in the findings were translated into English.

³⁰ A term used by Russell King (2005).

³¹ The fieldwork was conducted at eight sites in the Municipality of Kamza (chapter 4). For this paper we focus on four sites

- *Participant Observation*

According to Schensul et al. (1999: 91), 'participant observation represents the starting point in ethnographic research'. This entails the researcher spending time observing and interacting with the population under study (Herbert, 2000: 551). The researcher is able to study a culture or people in their natural setting and understand their behaviour on this basis. Observation was carried out congruent with the approach by DeWalt and DeWalt (2002). The research was carried out through daily visits and by temporarily residing in Kamza. I spent 2-month period residing in Kamza to take part in daily activities, rituals, interactions and events (e.g. community, schools, meetings, going shopping, and festivities) and thereby learned about their culture and daily customs. I visited migrants in their homes, where we had coffee and chatted, I participated in the informal gatherings (indoors and outdoors) and social activities undertaken mainly by women and youths. Settling myself in the community and experiencing their everyday routine has allowed me to understand the mechanisms of their lives, the way they think and behave, their mentality, the way they interact with each other and different aspects of their lives and personalities.

6.5 Migration and adjustment strategies of rural-to-urban migrants

Migration strategy – Personal and material resources

As for most internal migrants in Albania, the migrants in Kamza moved with the whole household, leaving everything behind to make a life in the city, with no intention of returning. However, despite obvious similarities, there are also distinct differences between early and late movers, especially with respect to their motivations. In line with Rao (2001), who distinguishes between migration for survival and migration for a better life, we found that early migrants took the decision to migrate out of necessity, while late migrants left the village for a better life in the city. In short, push factors are associated with early migrants, pull factors with late migrants. The complexity of push factors is linked to the difficult conditions in the rural areas, where life became a matter of survival. In their narratives, early migrants describe the need to escape the miserable conditions which had plagued them for decades, making life unbearable and forcing their decision to migrate (Mosse et al. 2002).

People were forced to leave. The teachers had gone from schools; the doctors had gone from the hospitals. There was nothing left. My sister-in-law died in hospital there because they didn't have the proper drugs and then it was too late. The people die there and therefore are forced to go, more than a desire for a better life. (Leta, 46)

We came here because of the difficult conditions in the village, the harsh climate and poor infrastructure. The schools were too far from home, the same for the hospital. The roads were closed by the snow. We were isolated and went through a lot of difficulties. These were our primary reasons. (Lume, 27)

Once my wife was sick. We took her on a stretcher and walked 3 hours to take her to the hospital. While my brother died on the way to the hospital, he was 42 years old. All these things forced us to move. (Ali, 58)

An interesting push factor was the fear of *remaining alone*. In the 1990s, the most serious population decline occurred in the rural north, especially in the remote villages high in the mountains, with more than 50 percent (in some cases almost 70 percent) of the population in 1989 not registering in the same district in 2001 (INSTAT 2001).

Everybody has gone from the village. In my neighbourhood we were left with just two families. When the other family left, we were alone. We couldn't live alone... how could we survive? (Ali, 58)

It was also the people that pushed us to move. We saw that all the people were going and we thought that if everybody is leaving it must be better there (in Tirana). (Mira, 45)

All the people had gone and nobody had the will to stay longer, this fact made the decision to stay difficult, even for the people who had the will to stay. (Lina, 29)

Although early migrants spoke of better opportunities in the cities, we found pull factors to be more predominant among late movers. Gezim (54), an early migrant, accurately captures the different motives that triggered the early and late migration processes:

Nowadays people come to have a better life and not to escape from the village. Once upon a time we came to run away from the poverty, not thinking much about what we would find here. Nowadays the people come with a plan, after they have built a home, found a job and have the means to start. At the beginning we came without anything, we used to sleep in wooden, even plastic barracks without knowing where we were and what we will do...we knew nothing, we left everything in the hands of God.

One major pull factor was Tirana itself. In the Albanian context, the city has great psychological significance, which is embedded in a wider social, economic and political context. The lure of Tirana originates from the communist era, when there was a ban on migration. The transformation towards democracy allowed the people the freedom to move and finally realize their migration intentions. Living in Tirana provides a feeling of upward social mobility. Migrants believed that their children would benefit from the migration, having a better future, and that they themselves would be happier as their children would be better able to support them in their old age. A Lina (29), a young mother explains the importance of coming to Tirana:

Finally it was possible for us to leave the mountains for the plain. Where can you find a place better than the capital? You know 'afer qytetit afer mbretit'.³²Here, there are better schools for children and opportunities for their future. If the children have a brighter future ahead we are also happy.

However, why move to the outlying suburbs rather than Tirana city? Kamza became a favourite destination of migrants because is situated near Tirana and there was plenty of free/cheap land which lowered the cost of migration (Aliaj, 2002).

We wanted to move to Tirana. As near as possible to Tirana at the lowest price. Nearer Tirana the land was very expensive and the people couldn't afford the price, while here it was cheaper so the people settled here. We decided to come here because it was cheaper and we couldn't afford very expensive land, we had to build a house so had to spend a lot, land and house we couldn't manage.(Mira , 45)

A surprising finding is a political and ideological dimension to the migration process. During informal conversations, these dimensions were perceived to be factors facilitating migration, such that the sporadic growth in the northern rural population in central-urban areas was, in the end, a politically motivated means of supporting a new political structure. In an interview with an expert in the field of migration, this political dimension was described:

In an ideological and political sense it was thought that this extended group of newcomers was a supporter of political structures in power. This supporting group would serve to strongly assist in the creation of a balance between the left and the right wings, thus creating a political power base near Tirana.

This perception was also shared by the migrants, though they were very guarded when discussing this issue. Avni (38) talks about the political factor involved in migration:

A. Here everybody has occupied the land of somebody else. This is not our land and when they want they can send us back from where they took us.

E.Ç. Who are they?

A. They are those filthy politicians that brought us here. They told us that all the north³³should come here because there is plenty of free land. And so everybody came here.

Both push and pull factors become stronger over time – push factors because fewer people remained in the villages and pull factors because of the positive changes in Kamza, stronger social networks and a better information system.

³² 'Near the city near the king', the original Albanian saying is 'Near the sea near the king'

³³ The north has historically supported the right wing in Albania.

Settling process – Social resources

Despite the desire of early migrants to escape poverty, Kamza was a poor peripheral region. Facing this reality was difficult. In the beginning, expectations were not fulfilled and migrants could only reduce their vulnerability and deal with daily stress using the resources at hand. At this stage of the migration process, early migrants lacked most resources:

My God, when we first came here, I was very disappointed. It was not what I dreamed of; it was the wrong place to be ... no water, no electricity, no people ... empty, cold, soundless ... we wanted to leave ... but where? (Shpresa, 37)

We had to start everything from the beginning, to build a house, to build a community, to build Kamza...only God knows how difficult it was to settle (Lulzim, 46)

Using their cultural resources people started to cluster in neighbourhoods according to origin. This confirms the findings of Lucas (2000), who suggests that migrants initially settle in ethnically similar neighbourhoods. Migrants spoke of the vital role that these social and cultural resources played in the settling and adjustment process. It is important to be part of these neighbourhoods as they generate material and psychological resources, a requirement shared by early and late migrants. These resources were indispensable to the decision to migrate, the destination choice and the settling process:

The people that were coming here were asking where the people from their own area were settled. For example here in this quarter there are only Pukjan [people from Puka] and only they could settle here ... not that there is a rule and that we do not accept others but, you know, the people feel better when they trust each other. (Hasime, 45)

Despite these similarities, the migration process generally followed different paths for early and late migrants. Because of a lack of resources, the settling process was more difficult for the first group, as later migrants could use the social resources already established by early migrants as a feedback loop for generating an information system (Mabogunje, 1970). Thus, late migrants went through a more organized and less costly migration process. Using material and social resources, this group could buy land, build a house, establish their networks and find a job, all before migrating:

My aunt still lives in the village. However, she bought land here in Kamza 10 years ago, she is also building a house. They want to come after they have everything ready. They are thinking through everything carefully before coming and not as we did that threw two planks in the back and left without even knowing where. (Nertil, 25)

Both [early and late movers] had difficulties settling. But those who came first came to live or die! We came from hell ...We had our minds set ... anywhere was better than where we used to live. The desire to move away has strengthened our will to change this place [Kamza] for the better and to feel at home. (Roberti 47)

To tell the truth, the beginning for us was easier. When I came here I found a city. Everything had been built, the schools, the streets, sewers, health centres, the bus lines ... almost all you need to live decently. But for those who came in the beginning it must have been a nightmare ... they have built everything from scratch. It was horrible ... they used to live like wild people. (Leta, 45)

However, the creation of social resources, through cultural clustering in particular, is more characteristic of early migrants. For late movers it was more difficult to utilize and develop such social resources as their residential choices were more limited:

If I had come before I could have chosen my neighbours, like those who came first. They settled near to their people but we couldn't because we had to take what was left. It is important to have people around that you know your family ... now here we feel alone. (Lume, 41)

Migration experience – obtaining resources and strengthening adjustment over time

According to classic assimilation theory, longer term migrants show greater levels of adjustment than shorter term migrants. Over time, migrants are able to regain or construct personal and material resources facilitating the adjustment process. However, in the case of rural migrants to Kamza we can question whether being part of the establishment of the area or finding everything already in place was more beneficial. Adjustment is perceived a gradual process associated with early migrants, it is triggered by and occurs simultaneously with the development of the destination, which originally lacked basic facilities and information (Abu-Lughot, 1961; Weiss, 2000). Early migrants came to Kamza with unrealistic expectations and found an agricultural landscape with no signs of urbanization or infrastructure. They had to build everything from scratch. Hence their goals and needs changed, with food and shelter becoming their first priority:

I have seen people that came here with big hopes of finding everything. They were very enthusiastic, but many were disappointed. Those who came first and saw everything changing, getting better, have developed their lives gradually, these people are truly adjusted. They have learned out of necessity how to react to things, to changes, to problems and difficulties. (Bora, 39)

The people who came later had the advantage of '*finding things ready*' and going through a more rapid adjustment process, as Ana (34) claims:

I must say that even if we are better adjusted, we needed more time to reach this ... while today the people need less time to adjust ... they found things ready, which we did not ... they have the examples to follow, us!

Early migrants use personal and social resources to satisfy their needs and feel adjusted. They have a stronger sense of belonging, attachment to place and social influence. Late migrants create status by means of material resources, such as housing and economic security (see Fig. 6.3).

Figure 6.3 Resource gain for early and late migrants using the resource-based model

Early Movers 1990–2000	Late Movers 2000–2010
Resources: <u>Migration decision</u> Personal Psychological	Resources: <u>Migration decision</u> Information system Networks Chain migration
Resources: <u>Settling Process</u> Attachment to place Clustering Family and social ties Cultural	Resources: <u>Settling Process</u> Material Housing Information Local context
Resources: <u>Migration Experience</u> Belonging Social networks Identity Length of residence Material Cultural Local Context Higher Social Status	Resources: <u>Migration Experience</u> Material Social Networks Status Cultural

However, adjustment depends more on social and personal resources than material resources (see Fig. 6.3). Early migrants, whilst accepting being better adjusted, always remind you of their difficult migration experience considering the experience of later migrants to be easier due to the lower emotional and financial costs. Late migrants agree that it was more difficult for the early migrants and realize that they found everything in place; however, they also claim

that the best residential locations and work opportunities had already been taken, with all the businesses already established, and so on. Migrants spoke of the benefits and constrain they perceive arising from earlier or later migration:

Early Migrants:

Those who have made it here are the ones who came first. Although we had nothing, we fought beyond the impossible and actually created a livelihood here. The people these days come with a lot of plans, a beautiful house and pockets full of money. The richest are coming no ...but find it difficult to adjust.. funny to say, but the rich somehow have to adapt to the 'poor' [laughs]. (Lana, 43)

Those who came first are better adjusted here. We have gone through all the possible difficulties and we deserve to call this place our home. We have learned everything at our own expense. We know that we are alright now but we also remember perfectly what we have been through...it has been a long and slow learning process. Those coming now do not see this place as home but as our home [early migrants]. We know where and when to go, we know this place. All these years we have made friends and are surrounded by trusted people...this makes us feel at home and not a guest. For the newcomers it will be difficult to connect with people as we have...we have gone through difficult times all together and that has created a closer bond. We have deep friendships and not superficial ones. We have experience and this makes all the difference. Time is everything...through time we have become more adjusted. (Ladi, 51)

Late Migrants:

They [early migrants] have all the jobs, they have the shops, they have the land and sell it to us...they know people....It is true that at the beginning it was very difficult for them, but I really wish I had been through all these difficulties and was like them now. I could have carried water for kilometres, I could have carried wood from the forest...I could have lived for ages in a barracks...but at least now I would have a job...I would feel fine with myself...have friends to talk to...and not cry every night missing my home in the village. (Sanie , 38)

When we came here, the people were already acquainted with each other, used to the place...for us it was difficult. I felt the urge to adjust to everything and everybody quickly because I felt that I had to catch up with the others. But it is not that easy...this process has to take its time and you have to respect the norms, rules that the others have set for you...you are the outsider. (Shqipe, 36)

Being part of the development of the area, building Kamza together with the municipality and NGOs and actively participating in the decision-making process concerning investment in the

area, enabled the early migrants to establish a feeling of ownership. This makes many of the late migrants feel like outsiders and to consider the early migrants as part of the host society.

Here I feel at home. I am vendaliqe [indigenous] now. When I compare the beginning with what it is now...I feel part of all this, part of everything, part of this transformation...I have grown up together with Kamza...I am vendaliqe. (Nazmie, 42)

Over time the situation of migrants has visibly improved. In 1990 there was no basic infrastructure and the migrants had to live without sewerage, electricity or running water for many years (Aliaj et al., 2003). Now, one can see improvements. Natasha (42) talks about the changes over the years:

If somebody had told me 15 years ago that Kamza would be like it is now I would have never believed him. At that moment, you thought that it would always be that way. Nowadays there is nothing missing. We live the same way as they live in the city.

The adjustment process is a complex phenomenon which needs time and passes through various stages. Initially the migrant community is comprised of different people sharing the same environment. In this new community people mingle together, adjust to each other, learn from each other and further adjust to an urban way of life. People first need to adapt to the different origins of those around them, then the larger urban context. The latter is perceived to involve an adjustment by the whole community and not just individuals or households. To adjust implies finding a place in the community and it is important not to feel like an outsider, *a migrant!* If you feel like a migrant and perceive the surrounding community as better adjusted means that you are not adjusted. Ali (58), a long-term migrant discusses the process:

Is not easy to merge different cultures, traditions, habits and customs, and to expect a harmonious cohabitation among them. We all are different. As a first step we need to adjust to each other, to create a unique community and then to integrate as a community into Tirana.

To feel part of Tirana is important. The final step in the adjustment process is to understand and adapt to the city's lifestyle. In the city, women must work for the family to survive, girls must go to school because all their friends do (Çaro et al. 2010) and money must be brought home at the end of the month because there are no neighbours or kin to help. Values such as individuality, nuclear family and anonymity gain importance, making urban life more than simply geographically closer.

The generation dimension – replacement of resources

In addition to obtaining new resources, there is a simultaneous process of resource replacement, especially cultural resources. Migrants start to change their traditions and cultural norms, adapting new ones, becoming increasingly similar to the host society. In the new cultural setting, they gain new skills, knowledge and learned behaviour. Migrants are willing to accept changes, and even revolutionize their traditions and mentality, but they are also concerned that they will lose their traditional values:

We need to change; we need to be responsible and to accept new rules imposed by the city. But we shouldn't lose our identity, our values and good traditions. Are these elements which make us unique and we need to conserve them. (Nasip, 56)

In the adjustment process there is a clear distinction, not only among early and late migrants but also among different age groups. Younger migrants are more willing to replace their cultural resources. Particularly those born in Kamza or who migrated as children feel more *at home*. They say '*We are from Tirana*', and interact with the host society. It is important for them to both feel and be part of the urban society, to have *tiranas* friends and speak like them. They tend to imitate their *tiranas* peers: '*They teach us how to behave, how to speak and what to wear*'. Ermali (21) sees networks with friends from Tirana as a very important factor in his adjustment:

You should have friends from Tirana. They know the way of living here, they know how the things work, they know what you should do to be like them, they can help us who came later to integrate into Tirana.

E.Ç. How do they help?

Just being with them, to see how they act, we learn many things. They can advise us on what to wear and how to act. I have experienced that it is important to be friends with them because they help you.

Middle-aged migrants (30–50 years old) are flexible in relation to keeping or challenging traditions. Older migrants are more conservative and more prone to retain their traditions, but have less power to influence the other generations (see also Vullantari, 2009; Çaro et al. 2010). Nostalgia impedes their adjustment process (Erman, 1998; 2001). Altin (28) nicely sums up the generational dimension of the adjustment process:

As I see it, youths feel more at home here. Our parents are somewhere in between, from one side pushed to follow their children and from the other side still immersed in their traditions and roots. Our grandparents feel nostalgic and have to give up strong connections to their origins. I believe that those born or who will be born here will be the most adjusted of all.

Middle-aged migrants have stronger community connections, while younger migrants have a greater willingness to interact with the host society.

I can see that I have changed a lot here. I had the will to change. I think that the most important thing is to have the will, and then you can make everything happen. I have a lot of difficulties in front of me. I speak in a dialect so I can't say I am from Tirana...my origins influence how others judge me. I am trying to change this. I am staying with friends from Tirana; they are teaching me how to speak like them.
(Dritan,22)

However, most migrants retain a sense of being rural despite the many years they have lived in the city. Through clustering and settling in the suburbs, people can share the traditions and norms of the villages. This accords with Tittle and Stafford's (1992) assumption that people living in suburban areas are more homogenous, have stronger social bounds, show less anonymity, less deviant behaviour and display less urbanism. These characteristics, together with nostalgia, strong connections through kinship, land and the house back in the village, prevent migrants from creating an urban identity.

6.6 Conclusion

The migrant adjustment process is seen as both a complex experience of learning to live in a new and different culture, community and environment (Phalet and Hagendoorn, 1996), and as a means of developing wellbeing (Ryan et al. 2008). In this context, values such as attachment to place, developing cultural norms, family ties, social networks and length of residence are of major importance. In this paper, we examined migration based on the individual perspectives of migrants, rather than looking at the broader process of integration, whereby immigrants become accepted into a society (Hackmann, 2005). Adjustment is the process by which migrants become familiar with the new environment, the migrant community and host society. Its complexity is expressed over time and within a spatial context. According to the resource-based model, the possession of various resources is central to the migrant adjustment process (Ryan et al. 2008). We found that during the migration process migrants lose, gain and replace various resources in order to satisfy their needs and shape the adjustment process.

From a migrant perspective, feeling adjusted grows stronger in space and time. The intertwining of these two dimensions was the basis of our analyses. We found significant distinctions among early and late migrants. These two groups, prompted by diverse factors and resources, have followed different paths in the migration and adjustment process. These factors shape an on-going debate concerning who is better adjusted and why. Three main adjustment levels were recognised by migrants. These change and develop over time: adjustment within the migrant community, adjustment within generations, and as the final goal,

adjustment as a community within the wider city. Length of residence is acknowledged by the migrants as a key element in their adjustment process, even taking into account the considerable differences in resources between early and late migrants.

When people move, especially when this is *forced*, from poor towards more prosperous areas they lose some of their resources. In our case, early migrants are characterized by the loss of personal, cultural and social resources. In the process of settling in, migrants gain new resources to cope with everyday necessities and fulfil their expectations. Social and family networks, neighbourhood and community, work and economic security, housing and land, as well as replacing cultural resources and developing a new identity are the most important resources for feeling adjusted. Of these, social and personal resources are regarded as the most important. While material resources provide status and a better life and are therefore significant, to have a sense of belonging and to feel adjusted, attachment to place, self-esteem and hope are central.

We can draw some generalizations in relation to the migrants of Kamza. They perceive that their life has changed in the city. Migrants feel increasingly content with their achievements while their lives will benefit from these positive changes. They are engaged in a process of legalizing their homes (Çaro, 2010), participating in decision-making at the local level, women are working, the young are attending university and have a growing sense of belonging and attachment to place. Moreover, there is increased awareness within the migrant community that they are better informed, more individualist, more open-minded and more confident than they used to be. This empowerment of migrants has developed over time and is facilitated by their experiences. However, while the migrants feel more adjusted within their community and environment, they do not yet feel urban or that they come from Tirana, and as such their adjustment to the broader context is continuing. Social networks outside the migrant community are poorly developed. Migrants perceived cultural differences, such as dialect, traditions and different ways of life as the main reasons hindering interaction. Adjustment is not only a matter of time and material and social resources but also a matter of personal resources, willingness, feelings, individual characteristics, learned behaviour and values. To adjust, one needs to be willing to learn different behaviour – to change and develop. Such willingness is considered very important by young migrants, who see their origin and dialect as impediments to complete adjustment but who are also more vulnerable to the assimilation process than others. In conclusion, this paper can be considered a contribution towards the understanding of the complexity of the adjustment process from a translocal and micro perspective.

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