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From the village to the city

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Document Version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2011

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Caro, E. (2011). *From the village to the city: the adjustment process of internal migrants in Albania*. [Thesis fully internal (DIV), University of Groningen]. [s.n.].

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8

‘I AM THE GOD OF THE HOUSE’ **Rural Men Situating their Masculinity in the City**

*“Në shoqëri me struktura fisnore statusi superior fitohet jo në bazë të aftësive,
por në bazë të organeve gjenitale”*

*“In a patriarchal society, the superior status in the household is achieved
based on genitals not on skills”*

(Naser Aliu, 2009)

ABSTRACT

Migration triggers significant developments in gender norms and identities. However, scholars have mainly focused on its impact on women, overlooking its importance in shaping men's identity. This paper focuses on male migrants, aiming for a better understanding of the interaction between gender and migration. We explore the strategies used by rural migrant men in the city to renegotiate traditional masculinities in the context of their spatial dislocation and wider socioeconomic developments and urbanization in a suburb of Tirana, Albania. The analyses draw on qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews, participant observations and field notes. Using an ethnographic and reflective approach, this paper reveals that masculinities confronted with modernization are shifting and being reshaped in the new urban environment where generational differences and the emancipation of women are now apparent. The paper also draws attention to the places where shifting masculinities are performed, arguing that gender identities are in continuous flux in space and time.

8.1 Introduction

This paper examines the strategies used by rural migrant men to negotiate their identities in the city through shifting performances of masculinities. The study is positioned in the context of wider socioeconomic changes taking place in a suburb of Tirana, Albania. The experiences of men and the role migration plays in shaping their masculinities has received far less attention in the academic discourse than the experiences of women (Datta et al., 2009). Bringing men into gender and migration studies is increasingly becoming essential to understanding the interactions of migrant men and women and their positions in society. These approaches facilitate men's involvement in women's empowerment (Chopra et al., 2000) and add an important dimension to gender studies (Dimova, 2006).

Gender interactions and socially constructed identities, as described in this paper, are based on the gender schema theory developed by Sandra Bem (1984). According to this theory, gender schemas are socially constructed and used to interpret interactions, positions and events (Bem, 1984). According to Bem (1981a, 1984), our gender schemas are embedded in a cultural context and built upon different cultural norms and traditions. However, these identities travel with migrants and they can be reproduced, reinforced or shifted in the chosen destination (Pessar, 2005; Pessar and Mahler, 2003).

In patriarchal societies the characteristics and position of men and women are predetermined (Williams and Best, 1990; Street et al., 1995). Patriarchy is a system which privileges men, giving them the leading role in society (Khan, 2009). Dislocation from such patriarchal societies (villages) and relocation to modern cities disrupts this dominatory structure and affects men's subjectivities in various ways (Cohen, 2006). In more modern urban societies, a patriarchal system where 'men dominate, oppress and exploit women' (Erman, 2001) is no longer a norm. Men from more traditional societies living in cities are trapped between rural patriarchy and the city's modern social structures (Aboim, 2009). Without the support of the patriarchal system, they attempt to retain their position by shifting their performance of masculinity in domestic and social spaces.

This paper initially provides some brief background information on masculinity, patriarchy and gender relationships in Albanian culture. This is followed by an introduction to the Municipality of Kamza (MoK), a fast-growing suburb of Tirana, Albania, where the research was undertaken. We then describe the methodology and the data used in this paper as well as discussing the researcher's positionality and the masculinities perceived in domestic and public spaces. The empirical core of the paper addresses men's negotiation of their masculinities in the new environment with respect to generations, individual characteristics and the role of women.

8.2 Theoretical considerations

Masculinities and femininities are constantly in flux and changing over time and in space (Coles, 2009: 30), as are gender roles, which are increasingly being renegotiated and restructured from macro and micro structures and are dependent on political, social and economic transformations (Aboim, 2009). Seidler (2006) explains that women's struggle for emancipation not only revealed the domination of men over women within patriarchal society but also showed that masculinity and femininity are interdependent: the empowerment of women would lead to the shifting of hegemonic masculinities. Hence, understanding the performance of masculinities in time and space should be complemented by an assessment of the changes in the performance of femininities (Dimova, 2006). The traditional and inherited patriarchal masculinity of rural migrants in Albania accords well with the concept of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005), defined as:

Configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women. (Connell, 1995: 77)

This hegemonic masculinity is more expressed in rural areas rather than urban areas, where is supported not only by men but the society overall. The identities of men and women, their roles and duties, are fixed and clearly divided, or as Connell (1995: 82) describes it, are 'patriarchally divided'. This paper not only draws on Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity but also the concept of a *field of masculinity* used by Cole to examine shifting masculinities as a result of migration. Within the *field of masculinity* we recognize the domination and subordination of women by men and of men by men (Cole, 2009).

A patriarchal society benefits men, providing them with the right to command social power and prestige (Cole, 2009). However, when rural men migrate, they come across different performances of urban masculinities, which in turn lead them to question their own performance of masculinity (Cole, 2009). Rural men in the cities are confronted with economic difficulties and a more modern society and start to question their role as breadwinner and provider (Elmhirst, 2007). Moreover, migrant women start to work and their emancipation shapes masculinities, changing traditional gender norms and affecting the status of men as the main provider (see Thompson, 2003; Elmhirst, 2007; Chapter 5). Traditional masculinities thus tend to shift towards other forms. When threatened to a subordinate position in public places, migrant men reset to hyper-masculine positions within the household itself and migrant community as a way to get back their power. In relation to the spatial dislocation and the shifting of hegemonic masculinities in suburban Tirana this paper addresses the core question of how migrant men negotiate their identities in their chosen destination and shift their performances of masculinity when confronted with the migration process, their spatial and cultural dislocation, and the empowerment of women.

8.3 Traditional masculinities in Albania

If you are born a male you are lucky ... but if you are born a female you will have to deal with it all your life. (Sofia, 36)⁴⁴

Gender relationships, especially in rural Albania, have a complex grounding in a strong inter-generational patriarchal system. To understand the position of rural men in Albania and whether migration shifts this position, it is necessary to recognize that it is embedded in historical, regional and cultural settings. According to Munn (2008), the changes to gender identities following the demise of the Communist regime in Eastern Europe have been poorly addressed. Discussing gender in the context of Albania has meant exploring the position of women in relation to violence and subordination and their emancipation and empowerment (e.g. Caro et al. 2010; Vullnetari, 2009; Culi, 2002; King et al. 2006). This academic discourse ignores men or simply assigns them fixed patriarchal roles. Balkan men in general and Albanian men in particular have been stigmatized and strongly stereotyped by various European host countries. According to Shwander-Sivers (2008), in various historical European studies there is a common notion of ‘Albanianism’, with Albanian men often referred to as ‘violent, primitive, traditional and patriarchal’ (Shwander-Sivers, 2008: 47).

In a traditional society with strong cultural norms, Albanian men hold a privileged and dominant position compared to women (Çuli, 2000). The complex variations of culture and tradition found in different regions of Albania are reflected in the variation in gender ideologies and traditional patriarchies (UNDP, 2005). The north and the rural areas in general are more conservative and are known to have a strong clan-based tradition (INSTAT, 2004; King et al. 2006). The preference for sons is strong, especially in the rural north. The birth of a boy is generally accompanied by happy celebrations, while the birth of a girl prompts the wish: ‘Herë tjetër me djalë’ (Hopefully a boy next time). Mothers gain status and respect by bearing boys, while they may be considered incapable of bearing boys to carry on the family name if they first have a girl. Moreover, it is very important for men to have a son, as daughters draw comments which may threaten a father’s masculinity and question his sexual performance.⁴⁵

Northern Albania mainly functions on the basis of *Kanun*⁴⁶ – the assignment of ‘rules, measures and norms’ amounting to law (Tarifa, 2008). These laws regulate all aspects of life in Albania, including gender relationships and the role of men and women in society and the

⁴⁴ Female respondent.

⁴⁵ In rural Albania and especially in the north it is widely believed that having sons depends on the ability of men to perform sexually. ‘He doesn’t know how to use his weapon’ (Sdi te shkrepj pushken) is a comment that follows the birth of a girl and which directly questions the father’s performance of masculinity.

⁴⁶ ‘For all their habits, laws and customs, the people, as a rule, have but one explanation: “It is in the Kanun of Leke Dukagjini”’ (Edith Duram, 1909).

family. According to *Kanun*, a man is regarded as *Zot i shtëpisë* (God of the house)⁴⁷ and has complete authority over all members of the household (Çaro et al.2010). Women must be subservient, endure their fate and bear children, while men receive inheritance, benefit through succession practices and control the society (INSTAT, 2004).

According to Boeschoten (2007), Albanian migrant men construct their narratives based on patriarchal values and a subjective sense of superior masculinity compared with the host society. They increasingly face contradiction and conflict from the emancipation of rural women in the city and their attempts to preserve the transferred traditional norms and gender roles (Boeschoten, 2007; Çaro et al. 2010). In this paper we are mindful of these phenomena in our focus on a group of men who had moved from the rural north, and who narrate their own experiences of the migration process as being both rewarding and difficult.

8.4 Situating the research: suburban Kamza

Albania's internal migration patterns indicate a distinctive regional trajectory, with people moving from rural areas in the northeast towards the peripheries of urban areas in the central region, mainly within and around the capital Tirana. 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 emerging on the outskirts of Tirana, represents a unique case of urbanization, with large increases in population over the last decades, and is referred to as 'the most dynamic community' of Albania (Ypi, 2009). In the early 1990s, Kamza was an agricultural farm owned by the State with approximately 6,000 inhabitants (MoK, 2002). After freedom of movement and land reform were introduced, Kamza experienced massive numbers of migrants moving to squatter settlements, with the general population growing tenfold to reach 60,000 in 2002 (Aliaj, 2002), since increasing to an estimated 100,000.

Kamza represents a case of indiscriminate urbanization fuelled by large migration flows from the rural north. It has developed into a 'melting pot', where people of different backgrounds, traditions and cultures have come together and now cohabit (Aliaj et al., 2003). Such characteristics qualify Kamza as a 'laboratory for internal migration studies in Albania' (Berxholi, 2008, personal communication).⁴⁸

8.5 The study

This study explores the experiences and adjustment strategies of rural-to-urban migrants in Albania, focusing specifically on migrant men and their experiences of migration. Research was conducted at 6 sites in Kamza Municipality. Four are located in Bathore and two in Koder Kamza. These sites were chosen due to our connections with the 'gatekeepers'. The results are

47 'God of the house' (*Zot i shtëpisë*) is often used to identify the head and the decision-maker in the household. See also King and Vullnetari, 2009.

48 A term used by Russell King (2005).

based on a pilot study conducted over three months (August–October 2008) and eight months of field work (March–October 2009), during which a series of personal interviews and participant observations were carried out. The adoption of an ethnographic approach facilitated the access to the lives of migrant men and the identification of change through extended observations and narratives by men.

- *Participant Observation*

According to Schensul et al. (1999: 91), ‘participant observation represents the starting point in ethnographic research’. The research was carried out through daily visits and by residing temporarily in Kamza. I (as first author) rented a room in the house of one of the key informants and lived there for three months. I spent each day in the community, attempting to establish contact with people. Following the example of DeWalt and DeWalt (2002: 1), I took part in daily activities, rituals, interactions and life events to become acquainted with and learn about the culture and daily customs. I visited people in their homes, where I had coffee with women and tried to establish communication with men. I observed men in domestic and public spaces such as bars, at home, on the bus and in the street. Moreover, I was asked to participate in youth activities and social events, allowing me to observe the differences between fathers and sons in the ways they performed their masculinity. Settling myself in the community in this way enabled me to understand the mechanisms of these people’s lives, the ways they think and behave, their mentality, the interaction between them and different aspects of men’s lives and personalities.

- *In-depth interviews*

In-depth interviewing is considered a *privilege* whereby the researcher is able to communicate extensively with the study participants and learn about aspects of their lives in detail (Liamputtong and Ezzy, 2005). During the fieldwork, 15 in-depth interviews were conducted with men and 25 with women. All of the participants were from rural areas, mainly the north. Most men were interviewed in bars and only five young men were interviewed at the social centre. The men expressed a strong preference to be interviewed in a bar because they perceived this as their space and as somewhere they could perform their masculinity. The men had various levels of education and economic status and were of different ages. This allowed us to gather a range of opinions and provided the basis for comparison. The informants were identified using a snowballing technique, starting with the help of social workers operating in the area, who identified two young men who became the key informants. They in turn introduced me to their families, to other male friends, the neighbourhood and acquaintances. The in-depth interviews were carried out in the Albanian language and tape-recorded with the oral consent of the respondents. They were then transcribed and analysed using Atlas.ti software. The transcriptions were conserved in their original language with the aim of

preserving originality, including metaphors and idioms. The quotations used in this paper were later translated into English.

- *Field diary*

Diary-based research is widely used by feminist researchers (Elliott, 1997). Field diaries help to document certain social and cultural settings, making visible experiences which are often hidden (Elliott, 1997). During the whole fieldwork process I kept a daily diary which recorded my thoughts, emotions and experiences, as well as quotes, reported discussions or accounts of events which had made an impression. It became an inspiring and revealing record of the migrant community, shedding light on their everyday life, memories, experiences, interactions, costumes and traditions.

8.6 Researcher positionality

A reflective approach in form of an auto-ethnographic narrative (Ateljevic and Hall, 2007) was employed to reflect my positionality (E.C) while conducting the research, revealing how, as a woman, I experienced the performance of the masculinities of migrants in suburban Kamza. According to Falen (2008), undertaking ethnographic research may be both rewarding and exasperating, depending on people's willingness to cooperate and your own positionality as the researcher, in terms of the language/dialect used, sex, age, economic and social status. Despite believing that a credible understanding of the phenomenon under research has been gained, the risk remains of excessively transmitting the researcher's personal background. In this regard, the researcher's gender is considered to be one of the factors which can influence the fieldwork process (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2002).

In addition, in any study involving qualitative methods, results also depend on the willingness and availability of study participants. As a women researcher, finding men ready to be interviewed proved to be a far bigger problem than expected, especially those who were middle-aged and older, though young men (aged 17–30) were more accessible. During visits to the area I rarely saw men in the houses, with the women explaining that they were at work, at the bar, playing at pool tables in Kamza, or had emigrated. I perceived men as distant and as avoiding me, a perception reinforced during one of my first visits. Heading to a social centre in the area, I was taking photographs in one of the main streets when I found myself suddenly confronted by four hostile adolescent males. I was rudely asked: 'Why are you photographing the garbage of Kamza? To put it in the newspaper to show to foreigners?' I felt both frightened and angry and tried to escape without too much explanation. I said that I was just an Albanian student and I meant no harm, especially to my country. The experience affected my optimistic attitude and convinced me to take things slowly and become more familiar with the people, especially the men. Over time, the young men demonstrated a growing interest in me, being an outsider, female and living in the West.

My key informants and women participants told me that men do not take women and especially women researchers seriously. One of the key informants described the probable reaction of male migrants:

Men would never state their business to you. You are a woman and they don't take women seriously. Moreover, you have short hair and are not married; our men do not like modern women. They may talk to you, but not for more than five minutes. (Leta, 43)

Expressing themselves to a woman and participating in field research was perceived by men to be 'girly' behaviour and a threat to their masculinity. Initially I found men indifferent, or domineering and authoritarian and felt restricted purely due to my gender. It took me time and effort to arrange the first interview with a man, and many times I considered engaging a male research assistant to conduct the interviews with men. However, as a woman researcher I also found it a personal challenge to involve the men. When I finally conducted the first in-depth interview with a man (Viktor, 56), I discovered that my perceptions had been misguided. It is true that men demonstrate their masculinity by being dogmatic, domineering and obstructive compared to women, but when they start to talk, their narratives flow, and as the interview proceeds their trust increases.

I also discovered that being unmarried and having short hair also concerned older women. This was not expressed explicitly but could be sensed from remarks suggesting I let my hair grow and have children as, according to them, I was getting old (I was 29 at the time). Another issue was living and working in the West, which could suggest wealth and social status incompatible with the migrants. However, being an Albanian who had grown up in the north and then migrated to Tirana as a child, I could establish an 'acceptable' position. After visiting their home environment and establishing a rapport it became natural to say that I worked abroad, and this seemed to evoke pride in me which forged a closer bond. The connection to people and understanding of the local context became stronger and led to continuing contact with the community. In time it felt comfortable visiting the neighbourhoods, with people stopping to talk, men included, and greeting me with the traditional four kisses and not just a handshake.

8.7 Asserting masculinities in space

As mentioned above, one of the hindrances encountered during the fieldwork was involving migrant men and assessing their responses while experiencing the spatial performance of their masculinities. According to Datta (2008: 190), gender performances identify masculinities and femininities and are created by power structures (see also Van Hoven and Mijering, 2005). Human geographers have elaborated on the idea that gender identities and performances are in continuous flux, not only in time but also in space (Gorman-Murray, 2008). In line with these studies we argue that male performances of masculinities are expressed spatially in both

public and domestic spaces. Certain spaces in a given environment gain major importance in constructing gender identities. Traditionally, however, women have been defined as belonging to the private space and men to the public (Gorman-Murray, 2008). We found that migrant men adjust their strategy of asserting their masculinity in space. In the following section we will focus on performances of masculinity in public and private spaces.

The bar – a public space for performing masculinities

The bar is one of the spaces where migrant men perform their masculinity, usually starting and finishing their day there. The interrelationship between bars, alcohol and the performance of masculinities has been widely reported (e.g. De Visser, 2009; Cohen, 2006; Whitehead, 2002). In Kamza, the bars are exclusively used by men for socializing and performing their masculinity. In the rural context, especially in the north, women are obliged to stay at home or within the neighbourhood. Their social spaces are domestic or, more recently, social centres. Migrant men use the bar to perform masculine behaviours such as drinking alcohol, playing pool and betting on football, and the bar is perceived to be a traditional masculine space (Khan, 2009). Almost all the men in this study emphasized that the activities undertaken in their spare time were masculine, generally referring to drinking and hanging around with other male friends.

E.Ç. What do you do in your spare time?

R. Well ... what men do ... meet friends in the bar, read the newspaper, gamble and drink raki.⁴⁹

Within the migrant community, the bar is perceived as a 'public-masculine domain' (Datta, 2008). It is uncommon for women to enter these masculine spaces and such an event will usually attract comments and jokes concerning her from the men. As you exit the bus at the crossroads in the centre of Kamza it is clear that the bars are full of men at the bar, drinking and discussing politics, economic issues and about women passing by. The main reason for most of the interviews being conducted in bars, as opposed to home or the social centre, was related to the men's performance of power, the bar being regarded as an exclusive space which women would rarely enter. Another reason for them choosing the bar was to be seen by other men with a woman – an uncommon event – as a new way of expressing modern masculinity and an example of shifting traditional masculinities. This behaviour was perceived as an expression of urban masculinity.

The bars in Kamza are very basic constructions which only men enter and exit. There are newspapers on the tables, usually sports papers. Men generally have a coffee and a raki in the morning before work and again in the evening. As you enter a bar you will be enveloped

⁴⁹ A traditional strong alcoholic drink made from grapes or other fruit.

in a cloud of smoke and there is a strong smell of coffee and alcohol (at all times of the day). Plain tables and chairs, plastic and sometimes broken, are scattered without order throughout the place. The walls are greyish and there is strong smell of cigarettes. A TV in the corner shows the news or a football match (depending on requests). I often entered these bars to conduct in-depth interviews with a man.

In the interview with Naspi (53), his preference was to 'talk' over a coffee in one of the bars of his choice. As we (Nasipi and myself) entered his favourite bar, his posture changed, he smiled, looked confident and made sure he greeted all his acquaintances in the bar. I wanted to sit in a quiet area; however, he directed me to the centre of the bar. As we sat down, another man (Ali) approached us. A couple of days before I had visited Ali's house and so Nasip invited him to sit with us. Now everybody was watching. Ali came closer and said to me 'don't worry about them, they are just *rural people* and have never seen a city woman in their lives'. The waiter came and they ordered a coffee each, while I had a beer. There was giggling all around, while from the next table I heard 'So she is the man of the table', then everybody started to laugh, including myself (Observation, June 2009).

Relationships between research participants and others are regulated by the positionality of the researcher and the power relationships which develop (Datta 2008). As a modern woman from the city I was able to enter a bar used only by men and order an alcoholic drink. It was apparent that this event gave my companions a position of power in relation to the other men. In order to regain dominance, the other men negotiated their masculinity by intimidating my companions, joking that their choice of drink was an admission of subservience. Sitting with a woman in a *men's place* had been considered to be a successful display of dominant masculinity in relation to the other men, but their choice of what to drink with a woman had undermined their idealized version of masculinity.

The house – a private place for performing hegemonic masculinity

His [her husband's] word is law in the house. (Maria, 35)

Gorman-Murray (2008) argues that masculinities and domestic spaces are interrelated and dependent (Blunt 2003). In terms of hegemonic masculinity in Albania, men are regarded as the main providers and 'God of the house' (*Zot i shtëpisë*). This term was frequently used by both men and women. As heads of the household and breadwinners the man's authority is unquestionable. This is regarded as the role of a 'real man' with power over all members of the household.

While it is important for migrant men to retain this power, the migration process and women's emancipation through work disturbs this gender-based power relationship. Men have to accept that working women is the only strategy to overcome economic hardship, leading to a shifting of the traditional role of provider. For Elmhirst (2007), a growing body of literature

identifies the shifting masculinities resulting from economic hardship threatening men's role as the sole providers. In line with Silberschmidt (2001), we argue that migrant men in Kamza who find themselves in this situation use domestic violence towards women as a means of maintaining their dominance within the household. In patriarchal societies, violence by men against women is a common means of domination (Anderson 1988; Sugarman and Frankel, 1996; Jewkes, 2002), and there is particular concern about its prevalence in patriarchal countries within the western Balkans (Burazeri et al. 2006). While domestic violence is triggered for different reasons, in patriarchal societies and in cases of shifting masculinities, violence is used to reinforce gender positions and maintain domination in response to threats to masculinity (Sugarman and Frankel, 1996; Bourgois, 1996; Moore, 1994; Wood and Jewkes, 2001). Data on Albania shows that men in less powerful socioeconomic positions and those of rural origin are the most likely to perpetrate domestic violence, mainly in relation to emancipated women (Burazeri et al. 2006: 236).

Among rural migrant men in Kamza, domestic violence is tolerated as a form of education and communication (INSTRAW, 2006). Among migrant men and women the notion of verbal violence is not recognized. The narratives also revealed that men regard violence as being a necessary means of teaching members of the family how to behave.

Well I think that is necessary to show my wife her place. I don't beat her because I want to hurt her; I do it because she doesn't understand otherwise. When she disobeys me, when she does not listen, she needs to learn who the man is at home; otherwise she will *jump over my neck* (*do më hypi në qafë*). (Informal conversation, Astrit, 46)

Meanwhile, migrant women who experience domestic violence, verbal or physical, in most cases attempt to hide it, especially from outsiders. I heard stories of violence from women but always in terms of the experiences of neighbours or kin, never their own. Apart from the physical violence towards women, which is the most common expression of domination in the domestic domain, there are other ways that men express their authority. In my visits to the homes of some participants, I often experienced male dominance, apparent in the division of domestic space.

Today I meet Nada in the street, we have become friends. I often go to her home to have a coffee and chat with her and her sisters-in-law. Usually I go there in the morning when no men are around (they are at work). Today she invited me for dinner and I accepted. For some time I had also wanted to meet the men of the family. Nada lives in an extended household of five brothers with families and children, with the father-in-law acting as the head of the house. The brothers usually work in Greece but at this time of the year they come home, trying to invest their savings in Kamza. As I entered the house Nada's husband approached us. He greeted me coldly with a handshake though Nada was very enthusiastic to introduce me (it was clear that they have talked a lot about me and what I was doing). We

entered the kitchen where the women were gathered, some cooking or cleaning and some talking. The men remained in the living room watching a football match and discussing it loudly. I wasn't introduced to any of them. Time after time loud requests came from the living room for raki and appetizers. Whoever made the request determined which woman would serve. After the dinner was ready and the table set we had to wait for the football match to finish before the men would eat. When I finally thought that it was time to be introduced to the men the women moved into another room with a small TV and armchairs. Two of the women stayed in the kitchen to serve the dinner to the men while the rest of us remained chatting and watching TV in the guest room, drinking orange juice. The men's dinner lasted about 2 hours and Nada, embarrassed, tried to explain that this was the way they dine: 'Men have to eat first you know, then when they finish we can eat. But when they sit, they also talk and discuss, so the dinner may continue for 3 hours. We women then eat after they leave the table ... when they feel like, you know ... this is the way, we can't change it', she added in a resigned tone.

A contrasting phenomenon is the important effect of shifting household types – moving from extended to nuclear – on shifting gender performances and power relationships in the private space. In general migrants to the city tend to form nuclear families. This new form of private-domestic space gives women greater power in the house, while men become more concerned with household chores. Moreover, men in nuclear families feel more independent and less subordinate to authoritarian fathers and tend to spend more time at home with their wives and children. There is also greater affection between husband and wife.

When we came here we built our house and small family. Everything was different then. I was myself, independent, and happy. My husband was not ashamed to stay at home with us (children and her), to show affection and behave like a father and a husband with feeling. We spend a lot of time together and are a real family. (Ana, 32)

8.8 What happens when women go to work?

The understanding of what it means to be a *real man* was constructed by men narratives and by observing their behavior in public and private spaces. Men spoke of the traditional roles of provider and dominant figure in the family. Men and women spoke of different motivations for migrating. Men made the decision to migrate in order to work and provide economic security for the family. They projected themselves as independent, courageous and active. Men perceive the migration process as a sacrifice undertaken for the family's wellbeing. In contrast, women spoke of escaping the control of the extended family and the burden of unpaid domestic work in the village. Women expressed more willingness to adjust to the urban way of life, while men talked more about the hardship and sacrifices endured to make a living in a new environment. In line with other research, we found that male migrants find it more difficult to adjust to shifting identities and gender roles (Datta et al., 2009). In general, men

feel more frustrated in the chosen destination than women.

While we cannot yet speak of an independent migration of women in Albania, the disruption to the gender identities and power relationships existing prior to migration has led to women migrants experiencing rising level of emancipation in the city also due to their engagement in the workforce (Chapter 7). This has led to economic and social independence within the household and wider community. Gender roles are shifting in this new environment, leaving little space for men to perform an economically based domineering role in relation to women. Rural men do not feel 'hegemonically masculine' in all the domains they inhabit in the city. Thus, hegemonic masculinities are shifting to different, more urban forms.

Although migrant men still attempt to assert their masculinities in these spaces, they are becoming more aware of the fluidity of their identities and of the significance of the emancipation of women. Men understand that women have gained power in the city and they also recognize, implicitly, that they have lost their patriarchal power through shifts away from hegemonic masculinity. Sabiti, a highly educated male migrant, talked about the empowerment of women in the city:

I think that women adjust more easily than the men. She came here from a closed and conservative environment. She used to stay at home, she was not sent to school. When she came here, things were different, the mentality was different. She took this opportunity and tried to adjust and also to change the men in the same direction. If it was up to us (the men) she would stay at home ... but they made us believe that we made the decisions when we just make the decisions that they offer us (laughs). Things have changed; men and women are more equal.

Moreover, in his narrative, Altini, a young man attending university, was resigned to the empowerment of women in the city:

We didn't have a washing machine in the village ... women were washing machines ... what about here? Here we do have one ... here the women don't accept being washing machines.

However, men do not perceive that a woman working outside the home signifies her independence and empowerment, but find it to be the result of necessity and as temporary. Wealthy or emigrant men speak with pride if their wives can stay at home or are able to give up work. This is considered to be a sign of economic and social status and as indicating an ability to perform masculinity properly and provide for the family. Moreover, the migrant community and government institutions often facilitate the perpetuation of the patriarchal system by reinforcing the stereotypical image of men as the decision-makers and women as subservient. This makes it easier for men to re-establish their masculinities and difficult for women to become emancipated. For example, Agron (39), who is an illegal immigrant in

Greece, is not able to return to Albania due to documentation problems. However, he wants to buy land in Kamza to build a house, as his family has been living in a *barrack* for 10 years. His wife, Majlinda (32), is the only one who can negotiate with the owner of the land, but she is confronted with two remarkable problems. Firstly, the owner of the land refuses to sign the contract without Agron's signature, as he does not consider Majlinda's signature to be *official*. Secondly, the clerks working in the municipality refuse to give her the necessary documents without her husband being present.

8.9 Changing masculinities: Youth

'Masculinities are configurations of social practices produced not only in relation to femininities but also in relation to one another' (Pyke, 1996: 531). In this respect, dominant, subordinate and marginalized masculinities have all been recognized (Connell, 1995; Coles, 2007). A change of place often influences power relationships generally, not only between men and women (Çaro et al. 2010), but also among male migrants and urban men, placing the migrant men in a subordinate position (Bailey, 2010). These changes are also visible within the family between fathers, sons, fathers-in-law and sons-in-law. We observed a clear continuity in and inheritance of the mentality, traditions and behaviour from father to son and from mother to daughter. This continuity is stronger for men, with the father usually attempting to transfer the power and authority within the family to the eldest son, who then gains power and authority over his sisters until they marry, when the power over them is transferred to the husband. This hegemonic masculinity of the father, so strong in the village, is not always so dominant in the city. While men attempt to preserve their hegemonic masculinity in order to maintain their dominant role over women (Coles, 2009), they face obstacles in modernized urban settings. This is especially the case for young men.

On my trip to the north with a group of youth from Kamza, it was interesting to note the differences among our group (people who live in the city) and the people who live in the village. Genci (18) was walking next to me; he was wearing jeans, sneakers and a T-shirt like every normal teenage boy in Tirana. He was carrying his bag and the bag of Adelina (16), his sister. Genci pointed to two girls and a man in front of us. The girls were young, maybe 16. Both of them were wearing a scarf, long sleeves, trousers and skirts (traditional clothing for women in the north). The man was older, probably their brother. The girls were carrying some containers of water while the man was walking in front of them carrying nothing. When they passed us the girls looked at the ground, while the man greeted the boys in our group and flung a quick look at us, the girls. I completely forgot about Genci next to me. He pulled my arm and showed me the two bags that he was carrying and said, jokingly, 'If I was still living here I would be a man and Adelina would carry all my things ... look at what I have become ... what a shame ...'. Everybody started laughing. (Observation, July 2009)

Young women in Tirana (the host society) are considered by young migrant men to be very well educated and potential friends with whom to have interesting conversations. However, the young women in Kamza were perceived to be lacking these skills and merely talking to or spending time with a girl from the community could suggest an intention to marry. In the best cases, the girl's brother or father would approach and warn the young man off if there were no serious intentions. It is very difficult for a young man to have female friends outside Tirana. Their performance of masculinities differs from their fathers, with the young men especially disagreeing with the mentality and patriarchal attitude of their fathers in relation to the treatment of their female contemporaries. They would like girls in Kamza to be able to go out more and be less traditional. However, when the girl in question is their sister their opinions change. They consider that a sister should stay at home, marry a good man and have children, while other girls should be more emancipated and open-minded.

Thank God I have no sister ... I would go crazy trying to protect her and keep her at home ... this way I don't have to worry ... thank God I have no sister. (Soni, 20)

The new forms of masculinity developed by young men achieve domination in different ways. According to Aboim (2008), having sexual control over as many *dashnore* (lovers) as possible is a source of power over other men. Moreover, young men use fashion and other urban elements as symbols of being modern and powerful. In line with Aboim's discussion, we found that among the younger generation, sexuality, money and fashion are gaining great importance in the performance of masculinity. Hence performances such as getting a tattoo, wearing fashionable jeans, or having a particular haircut and playing the tough guy have become the new forms of masculinity.

Today at a birthday party Andi arrived with his girlfriend from Tirana (host population), Leda. Andi is regarded as the coolest guy in the youth group. He wears branded jeans and the latest sports shoes. He is also the leader of a band that some of the guys started some time ago. The band is called 'Gangsters of the War' and has five members, all of whom have tattoos and almost the same haircut. They clearly reveal their dominant masculinity towards the other youths, usually taking what they want and giving orders. They look down on other peers and have gained the attention of the girls of the group. But Andi is regarded as the leader among the guys, most importantly because he has a girlfriend from Tirana. He uses this fact to show off among his peers, so when he enters the room he kisses Leda drawing everybody's attention. The entire time he is kissing and hugging his girlfriend he is also scanning the room and his friends, and everybody looks at him with admiration. He has become the centre of attention and the envy of all his friends. (Field notes, May 2009)

Patriarchy is losing its importance in the urban context, while the role of men as the sole provider has become untenable among the changing values of the city. Here it is apparent that young men are shifting the traditional forms of masculinity and are adopting new methods of performing masculinity in the modern context, and in this generational shift, new masculine values are gaining importance and gender relationships are changing.

8.10 Conclusions

Migration generates significant changes for men and women (Ghosh, 2009). While the majority of research on migration in Albania shows that men are the main actors in the migration process, this study attempts to understand how, following the migration process, rural men negotiate their traditional masculinities in a new, modern environment where the authority and power of men is being increasingly questioned (Aboim, 2008). This paper has attempted to depict the links between migration, changing livelihoods, the emancipation of women and shifting masculinities in the context of massive levels of migration from the rural and traditional north towards the urban environment of Albania's capital city.

The rural north of Albania is traditional and patriarchal and men have long been considered to have total authority over the household and within the community, while women have been made subservient. However, according to Coles (2009) masculinities and femininities are in constant flux in space and time and when men and women from traditional societies move towards more modern urban societies, the performance of their masculinities and femininities changes as they adapt to the new environment. We investigated the spatial dislocation of traditional masculinities, examining the strategies rural migrant men used to retain their patriarchal position in the city through the performance of hegemonic masculinities.

According to Morell (1998) masculinities are changeable and challenged over time and in different cultural settings. In the city, confronted by modernization, host masculinities, generational differences and the emancipation of women, traditional masculinities begin shifting as they are reshaped in the new urban environment. Based on an ethnographic approach this paper reveals that when traditional rural men migrate, their patriarchal identity often becomes marginalized, leading to an associated loss of authority and power. In response, men attempt to preserve their traditional role and maintain a dominant position in the household and within their migrant community.

Two particular observations serve to illustrate men's efforts to regain their patriarchal and dominant masculinities in public and private spaces. Firstly, in a situation where economic difficulties make it essential for women to work, men cannot retain their role as the sole provider. In such circumstances, men use the strategies of physical and verbal violence towards women to maintain their hegemony and the privileges of patriarchy. In relation to the broader migrant community, men perform these traditional masculine behaviors in masculine spaces such as bars. Secondly, even considering the attempts made by men to regain their

traditional masculinities in the new environment, patriarchy is losing its importance. In the new urban context, masculinities are shifting across generations, with new masculine values gaining importance in the context of changing gender relationships. Young men are shifting their masculinities from traditional forms and attempting to assert themselves as modern men, shifting their performances of masculinity, using sex, modern fashion and other urban elements as symbols of modernization, power and masculine behavior. In addition to this, also women emancipation adds to the changes of the performance of traditional masculinities (Thomson, 2003).

As men and women migrants negotiate their identities, rejecting or keeping some traditional elements while adapting or discarding new modern attitudes or ways of life, an in-between space is being shaped which is neither rural nor urban (Berxholi, 2008 personal communication; Kokona, 2008, personal communication; Cila, 2006). In these in-between spaces between tradition and modernization, between hegemonic masculinities and emancipated femininities, gender identities are in continual flux and negotiation.

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