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### From the village to the city

Caro, Erka

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# 10

## CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

*“Man was bound to spread to new regions, partly because of his innate migratory tendency and partly because of Nature's stern urgency”*

(Huntington Ellsworth)



## **10.1 Introduction**

The body of literature on Albanian migration has grown quite quickly over the last few decades. This growth is related to the growing socioeconomic and political importance of migration numbers, but also to the facts on the ground. Accordingly, migration in Albania has come to be one of the most fundamental economic, social and political features of Albanian development and transition. Within the migration process, the adjustment of migrants is very complex phenomenon (Schwarweller and Seggar, 1967; Erman, 2001; King et al. 2008; Rayan et al. 2008). According to Crul and Heering (2008), the migration and adjustment issues for newcomers are the leading challenges of heterogeneous cities (p. 19). Tirana, the fast-growing capital of Albania, is a heterogeneous city affected by inflows of migration. Nevertheless, although the literature on Albanian migration is becoming increasingly abundant, there have been fewer studies of internal migration and hardly any dealing with the adjustment process of internal migration. Accordingly, the aim of this thesis was to understand and unravel the adjustment process of rural migrants moving to the cities, more specifically Tirana. The adjustment processes of rural-to-urban migrants in Albania result in a phenomenon as complex and diverse as the integration process of international migrants to foreign countries. This thesis has brought new insights in line with existing studies, to aid our understanding of the adjustment process of internal migrants, gender and generation differences, the importance of personal, social, economic and cultural resources, the length of residence, and the intertwining of internal and international migration. Additionally, while this study has answered some questions, it has simultaneously raised many others requiring investigation. In this final chapter, I will present my main conclusions and findings. I will connect and review the findings to the objectives and research questions established at the beginning of this thesis. Moreover, I will summarise and discuss this study's achievements, the new insights it offers, and its strengths and limitations.

## **10.2 Migration and development in Albania**

Before presenting the findings of the micro-level research in Kamza, I started by providing detailed background information and an account of the migration process in Albania before and after the 1990s. Through a careful review of most of the existing body of literature on Albanian migration, Chapters 2 and 3 provide a greater insight into the central role of migration in the developmental issues in Albania. Exploring migration from a historical perspective not only sets the basis for a better understanding of contemporary Albanian migration but also adds to the body of knowledge available, especially with regard to internal migration, of which there is as yet limited data and research available.

The specificities of migration in Albania prior to the 1990s, specifically during the 45 years of the communist regime, are explored in Chapter 2. This historical account is presented in order to construct an understanding of contemporary Albanian migration. The ban on

international migration and the control of internal migration during the 45 years of communism impacted on the various ways internal and international migration developed, especially in the post-communist years.

Setting the scene for understanding the migration movements since the fall of the communist regime, Chapter 3 investigates the central role of migration in the social and economic development of Albania. It establishes the historical, economic and sociocultural background to Albania, and links this to a chronology of internal and international migration flows. There are simultaneous connections and influences between the economic and political transformations in Albania and migration levels, patterns and directions. During periods of political and economic unrest, large flows of people moving within and from the country were reported, while in times of economic stability, migration figures were relatively stable and decreasing. Thereby, Chapter 3 answers the first research question 'How has the transformation process in Albania since the 1990s affected the levels and patterns of migration over time?'

Moreover, in Chapter 3 we see, from a macro-perspective, that internal migration occurs as a second step, following a wave of emigration. This is further confirmed in Chapters 6 and 9, which show, through a micro-level analysis, that an international movement is the first step in a household's migration process, followed by the internal migration of the rest of the household. Chapter 9 explores how international migration acts as a financial and social support system for the internal migration of the rest of the household. Therefore, there are other motivations that drive the migration decision process and destination choice in addition to the political stability and economic growth that channel migration flows (Chapter 3).

Additionally, migration can be a development factor for countries, like Albania, going through political and economic transitions. Migration has many significant impacts on social, economic and demographic change in Albania, both in origin and in destination areas. In Chapter 3 the main negative and positive effects of migration are listed thereby answering the second research question 'What is the effect of migration on the social and demographic changes that followed the transformation process?' The main conclusion of this chapter is therefore that *the mass migration following the transition period of the 1990s was determined by political and economic developments, and developed into a facilitator of social and demographic changes*. This conclusion it is in line with many other authors (see King, 2003; 2004; 2005; Barjaba, 2000, Vullnetari, 2007; Doka, 2005; Bërxfholi, 2000).

As King et al. (2003) propose it is important to understand how to benefit from the positive effects of migration and how to minimize the negative ones. Given the intensity and magnitude of migration flows in Albania, it is important to control the negative impact on socioeconomic and demographic variables, while emphasizing avenues to benefit from this process. As suggested in chapter 3, in order to direct mass migration and benefit from it, there is first a need for a stable political environment and homogeneous economic development across different regions in Albania.

### **10.3 Adjustment process of rural-to-urban migrants**

Having set the ground in Chapters 2 and 3 for understanding internal migration from a historical perspective and as a facilitator of the demographic, social and economic dynamics of Albanian society, Chapter 5 is the starting point for introducing the micro-level research conducted in Kamza, Tirana, and in exploring the adjustment process of rural migrants. Throughout this study, rural migrants are regarded as the main actors in creating their livelihoods, developing the area in which they settle and in their overall adjustment process. Therefore, Chapter 5 provides a general overview of the research sites in Kamza and the main actors, the migrants. The aim of this chapter was to build up the basis for understanding and exploring the strategies rural-to-urban migrants use to adjust in the city, focusing on their social, economic and demographic contexts. Moreover, Chapter 5 reveals some of the sensitive issues migrants are confronted with in their everyday lives, such as legalization problems and difficulties in building their physical and social capital. It also explores the migrants' achievements and their perceived satisfaction with their new environment. Rural-to-urban migrants thus perceive that their lives have improved in Kamza compared to their villages of origin, with Kamza's better access to infrastructure, facilities and physical social and economic capital, such as housing, social networks, work and education opportunities.

In Chapter 6 more insight is provided into the migration and adjustment process of rural-to-urban migrants. It reveals that a collective form characterizes internal migration, as the whole family moves from the villages to settle in Kamza. In addition, Chapter 7 confirms that the decision to migrate is taken in the family and is a collective decision. The migration motivations of rural-to-urban migrants are various; however, there is place to make some generalizations. The majority of rural migrants arriving in Kamza originate from the north and north-east of Albania, which are also the poorest regions in the country. People leave these poor regions mainly because of push factors: for instance, lack of resources, poor infrastructure and poverty (Chapters 5, 6 and 7). Nevertheless, in time the motivations of internal migration have changed; while early migrants were mainly pushed away from the countryside to come to the city, late migrants were pulled towards the city (Chapter 6). This finding is the answer to the third research question: 'How do rural-to-urban migrants take the decision to migrate and what are the migration experiences and paths of migration of the early and late migrant?'

Once in the city, rural migrants start to settle, become familiar with their new environment, the migrant community and the host society. In other words, they start to adjust. Chapter 6 introduces the conceptual model for the adjustment process. According to this conceptual model, which is based on the resource-based model (Ryan et al. 2008), migrants at different stages of their migration process and depending on their personal characteristics require different resources to feel adjusted and to satisfy their needs, goals and demands. Hence, early and late migrant's adjustment is a complex process that happens over time and within a spatial context. The second part of Chapter 6 discusses the different experiences and

paths of early and late migrants, emphasizing the importance of the length of residence in a destination, thereby answering the first part of the fourth research question 'What are the differences in the adjustment perceptions between early and late migrants?' As such, one of the main conclusions of this chapter is that *adjustment of migrants is a process that grows stronger in space and in time*. Therefore, the longer rural-to-urban migrants reside in a destination, the stronger and broader their perceived feelings of adjustment.

In addition, during the migration process, migrants may lose, gain and replace various resources to satisfy their needs and shape their adjustment process. In chapter 6, the main resources needed by migrants to feel adjusted are explored. These resources are social and family networks, neighbourhood and community feelings, work and economic security, housing and land, as well as replacing and revolutionizing cultural resources and developing a new identity. 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, an attachment to place, self-esteem and hope are central. Adjustment is therefore 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. There are three main adjustment levels recognised by migrants: 1) adjustment within the migrant community (micro and meso level); 2) adjustment among generations (macro and meso level); and 3) adjustment as a migrant community within the host society and wider city (macro level). All the levels of the adjustment processes develop over time and in space. Nowadays, the migrant community in Kamza feels increasingly satisfied with its achievements in the city. Migrants are engaged in a process of legalizing their homes (Chapter 5), participating in decision-making at the local level, the women engage in work, whereas more and more young people attend university and have a growing sense of belonging and attachment to place (Chapter 7).

There is increased empowerment of migrants, which has developed over time and is facilitated by the community's experiences. However, while the migrants feel more adjusted within their community and environment, they do not yet feel urban or part of Tirana, and as such their adjustment to the broader context is a continuous process. Migrants, especially the youth, perceive cultural differences, such as dialect, traditions and different ways of life as the main reasons hindering their interaction with the host society. One of the aims in the second part of chapter 6 was to detail the experiences and paths internal migrants from a generational perspective, in their new environment. Answering the second part of the fourth research question 'What are the differences in the adjustment perceptions among generations?' Chapter 6 shows that young migrants are more willing to learn different behaviours and to integrate with the host society in Tirana while older migrants are more willing to adjust within the migrant community in Kamza. The diverse adjustment outcomes and migration experiences for different age groups are explored also in Chapters 7 and 8.

#### 10.4 Differences in the experience of migration between men and women

The transition of Albania from a socialist regime towards a democratic one has increased the gap not only between urban and rural, rich and poor but also between men and women (UNDP, 2005). This thesis demonstrates that internal migration has brought profound changes for the men and women who have moved from rural areas to urban areas. The gender dimension of internal migration in Albania, different experiences for males and females rural migrants and their diverse strategies in negotiating their respective positions and power relations in a new more modern environment – which the city is – are the issues dealt with in Chapters 7 and 8 of this thesis.

While trying to understand the interaction between gender and migration in Albania and to explore the differences in experiences for men and women migrants, at first I was focused on women migrants and chapter 7 deals specifically with women. However, narratives of women migrants made it clear that there was a need to understand male migrants as well. Hence chapter 8 deals specifically with male migrants and answers the seventh research question of this thesis ‘What are the strategies used by rural migrant men in the city to situate traditional masculinities in the context of wider socioeconomic developments and urbanization in their new urban environment?’. Both chapter 7 and 8 show that men and women, but also young and older migrants, experience the migration process differently, while simultaneously migration outcomes are distinct in relation to gender and generation. In the Albanian migration literature the migration process is often regarded as a male thing, in the sense that international migrants are usually men and the internal migration decision is taken by men, with women following (Lazaridis, 2000; Carleto et al. 2004). In contrast, Chapter 7 of this thesis reveals that the migration decision process it is a family process in which women have a crucial role, thereby answering the fifth research question ‘How do women and men participate in the household migration project?’ The active role of women in the migration decision process could be discovered only by building strong trust relationships, since – as explained in Chapter 4 – in-depth information can only emerge through an ethnographic approach. The increasing power of women in the migration decision-making process signals the start of the emancipatory process for women migrants following their move to the city. This is related to Chapter 7 that deals with the sixth research question ‘What types of emancipation strategies do migrant women employ in the new environment? Migrant women in the city demonstrated that they have the agency to promote their ambitions through gaining control over their own bodies, their appearance and their social lives, and having their own earnings through hard work, social achievement and a willingness to adjust to city life. The main conclusion in Chapter 7 is that *through the emancipation of rural women in the city, where they have more opportunities to gain social and financial capital, the patriarchal organization of the Albanian rural household starts to break down and women progressively claim more power in the decision-making process within the household.*



Nevertheless, patriarchal structures are deeply rooted in rural Albanian society and it is not an easy task to break these structures. To change the patriarchal framework of the rural household in the city would be impossible without the emancipation of the flip side of the coin, i.e. the men (Harvey, 2002). Indeed, in line with Harvey (2002), Chapter 8 incorporates the voices of men in order to frame their micro-perspectives in the macro-cultural context of Albania and explain that factual emancipation and change in traditions involve both genders. While Chapter 7 demonstrates how migrant women struggle to revolutionize their traditional position in the household, Chapter 8, apart the emancipation process especially for young men, shows how rural men struggle to maintain their traditional position. In the city, in a more modern environment, women have greater opportunities for emancipation, and as their position is reinforced while the authority of men starts to decrease. However, both men and women migrant experience modernization and emancipation in the city with women being more willing to give up their traditional roles within the household and men struggling to keep that traditional role. Gender roles are shifting also through generations as young men and women are more eager to adjust to the city way of living. In conclusion we can say *rural-to-urban migration is potentially an emancipatory process for both woman and men migrant*; however, to benefit the most from this process in Albania, gender-inclusive policies must be implemented to enhance women's situation, in particular, and the socioeconomic conditions of all migrants in general.

### **10.5 Linkages between internal and external migration**

Exploring the adjustment process of rural-to-urban migrants in Albania enhanced the need to incorporate into the analyses the central role that international migration plays on internal migrant's livelihoods. Therefore, Chapter 9 of this thesis came as a necessity to investigate further the 'linkages between international and internal migration from the internal migrant's perspective and the importance of such links in the process of development of the migrant community'. From the literature review and public debate, we know that international migration is a crucial economic source for the people left behind (De Soto et al. 2002; Fullani, 2006; Gëdeshi, 2002). However, there are few contributions (see King, 2005; Vullnetari, 2009; King and Skeledon, 2010; King et al., 2008) that unravel the developmental potential of intertwining internal and international migration. In line with these studies, Chapter 6 and especially Chapter 9 show how international migration has enabled the part of a family left behind (usually in rural areas) to move to more prosperous urban areas. The first main conclusion of this chapter is that *financial remittances have not only been a source of survival but also a source of development, contributing to the improvement of living conditions of rural-to-urban migrants*. (see also Vullnetari, 2009)

Social capital is essential not only for the adjustment process of rural-to-urban migrants but also for the whole of their migration process. Internal migration in Albania happens in a chain where people follow other people to their destination of choice. After

arriving at their destination, rural migrants tend to settle in social clusters in order to maintain their social networks (Chapter 6). These social and cultural clusters are the primary aid in the migrants' adjustment process (Chapter 7). Chapter 9 goes one step further and incorporates into the analyses the importance of social networks abroad. Social remittances in the form of diffusion of ideas, skills and care from the country of destination to the country of origin shape and facilitate the adjustment process of rural migrants, and inter-gender and generational power relationships within the household. While, Chapters 7 and 8 explore the emancipation of women, the empowerment of youth and the challenged masculinity of men in the city; Chapter 9 considers the emancipatory impact of migration from rural to urban areas on the migrants, adding the role of international migration with its social and financial remittances. Hence, the second main conclusion in Chapter 9 is that *emigrants' money, new skills, behaviours and experiences diffuse from the destination countries back to their origin, enhance the independence, empowerment and livelihoods of internal migrants.*

However, this is not always the case. Internal migrants; especially women and youths, often become very dependent on social and financial remittances (Chapter 7 and 9). The dependence of internal migrants on financial remittances often acts as a barrier to their adjustment process and their integration into city life and urban society. In many cases women are forced to stay at home and refrain from working, only because there is enough money from abroad and there is no need. Financial remittances can thus also reinforce the patriarchal system in the migrant's household.

Moreover, in the case of return migration the migration process continues with an internal move, meaning that emigrants do not return to their area of origin but usually to the city, where the rest of their family have already migrated (Chapters 6 and 9). Although at an individual and community level, this results in the concentration of social and financial capital in certain places (Fuga, 2004), and therefore development for these regions and communities; at the macro-level this means further social and economic discrepancy among the rural and urban (Vullnetari, 2009). In line with Vullnetari (2009), Chapter 9 shows that internal and international migration have facilitated the polarization of Albania through the concentration of skills, financial and social capital into the big cities, especially Tirana, accentuating the differences between rural and urban and especially among Tirana and the rural north.

Nevertheless, this research focuses on the individual and community level and it shows that financial and social remittances are not only living strategies for internal migrants but also a household security system. International migration combined with internal migration has built up a social economic and security system for rural migrants, acting as a source of development and hope for a brighter future but at the same time has created an economic dependency of migrants' households.

## 10.6 Policy Recommendations – From the voices of migrants

The rural-to-urban migrants in Kamza, throughout their migration process, have relied heavily on their own resources (Chapter 6). There has been little support from the Municipality, NGOs and CBOs and a modest or no provision for migrant's wider social, educational and housing needs from the State (see also Cila, 2006). Strangely enough, the first to enter into the informal settlements of Kamza Municipality was not the State but the World Bank in 1997 with the Urban Land Management Project (ULMP) (Kokona, 2008 personal communication; Cila, 2006). Before that, for almost 7 years the migrants in Kamza had to be self-sufficient with no help from the State of other stakeholders.

To make migration work for development and development work for migrants, and not only in the case of migrants in Kamza, there is a need to include the role of various stakeholders and policymakers as well as the implementation of successful migration policies. This research started with the aim to reach out to the individual – to migrants – to explore their migratory movements and their perceived feelings, as stated in Chapter 1. While there was no stated goal to develop policy recommendations, there was a clear goal to bring across the migrants' voices. What occurred is that migrants did talk about their concerns, issues, and fears, and in turn about the importance of policymakers. At the core of this research are the people and their lives. My aim has been to relate migrants' experiences, thoughts, fears and desires. In this section, I would like to put forward their thoughts, fears and desires in the form of policy recommendations emerging from the migrant community of Kamza. Migrants feel that through improvements and investments by local government, NGOs, CBOs and other involved actors, their lives and adjustment process would greatly improve. I have discussed the issues that resulted from my research and raised by the migrants, at the municipality level as part of a workshop organised by the Municipality of Kamza with the participation of various NGOs operating in the area. Therefore, the following recommendations are generated as an intertwine of migrant's concerns and desires with ideas and issues that emerged from the discussions with stakeholders at the municipality level. The recommendations are listed accordingly to the addressed stockholders, first at the meso (municipality, NGOs and CBOs) and then at the macro level (State).

### 1. *Active participation of migrants in decision-making and policy implementation, especially at the meso-level.*

The adjustment process of rural migrants cannot be the responsibility of only one actor, neither the migrant community, local authorities nor the State alone. There is a need for collaboration among the micro, meso and macro-levels in order for a holistic approach to be adopted. Constructing routes for cooperation among the migrant community, the municipality, civil society, donors/NGOs and CBOs could be much more effective in assisting the migrant community through their adjustment process. Starting from 1995, migrants have been the main actors in creating their livelihoods in Kamza, not only individually but also as a

community (Chapter 5). Thereby, having built their community, including both physical and social resources that set the grounds of their livelihoods in the city (Chapter 6), the local authorities ought to listen to the migrants voices/concerns and desires and integrate the migrant community in every policymaking and implementation initiatives that aims to improve the living conditions of migrants. Strengthening community-based initiatives (see also Co Plan, 2002) and partnerships among different involved actors NGOs, CBOs, the Municipality and local residents would improve living conditions for the migrant community of Kamza. The migrant community in Kamza expressed eagerness to actively participate in the decision-making processes of the Municipality regarding investments in the area or other community based activities. At the same time, I encountered good will to include the migrant community in the decision making process, also from the part of the CBOs, NGOs and the municipality officials. I hope that this collaboration will take place. The active participation of all groups of interest in the decision-making process and policy implementation would enhance further developments for the migrant community of Kamza.

## 2. *Improvement of conditions through investment in physical infrastructure and public security*

Rural migrants come to the city not only for the employment opportunities, but also for modern and different lifestyles, social networking, and opportunities to conduct active and entertaining lives (Chapters 6 and 7). However, it is not easy to get to and from Tirana, and even though public transport has recently become available, its quality and quantity does not meet people's needs. Local government should invest in improving the existing physical infrastructure. Availability of transportation would facilitate the urban integration and social inclusion of the migrant community and will likewise add to the available human capital, as people will be able to reach resources – economic, social and cultural.

Moreover, public security must be improved, which has a strong gender dimension in the case of the migrant community (Chapter 7). Accordingly, though the whole migrant community in Kamza should be recognized and dealt with as a vulnerable group, women migrants in particular need attention from local government. I have shown in Chapter 7 that public security for women, i.e. being able to commute to the city and within Kamza without being accompanied by a man, is of great importance to women migrants. They feel that such security would greatly improve their social lives and generate more opportunities for their employment.

The migrant community in Kamza also craves for more community services, cultural and leisure activities. In the conditions of limited public transportation and connections to Tirana and within a community that still lives in-between the traditional and the modern (chapter 7 and 8) especially the youth and women need to have a greater variation of social and cultural activities and entertainment opportunities within Kamza. The role of CBOs with this regards has been important. Yet the Municipality of Kamza should finance further programs that aim at cultural integration of the migrant community.

### 3. *Improvement of the education system and investing in human capital*

One of the push factors that drove rural migrants to the city has been the inadequate quality of education in rural areas (Chapter 6 and 7). Moreover, now in the city one of the most important concerns of migrant parents is the quality of education and future opportunities for their children (Chapters 6, 7 and 9). Therefore, investments in schooling and human capital should be one of the key areas for improvement in Kamza. In the short and long term, these investments would generate more skilled generations than can meet Tirana's labour market requirements.

As the migrant community of Kamza spoke of push factors of migration such as lack of an education system and human capital in the origin areas, the older generation did not have any other choice but leave in order for their children to get a proper education. Thereby, investments in education should not be focused only in the migrants' suburban destination areas but also in their rural areas of origin. Such investment could enhance the willingness of people to remain in rural areas, providing better opportunities and giving people a choice other than migration. In this case, internal migration would be more triggered by pull factors and opportunities that the city offers rather than push factors such as lack schools and human capital in the origin areas (chapter 6 and 7). Investing in education and human capital, especially in rural north, would trigger a more selective migration (mainly youth) rather than the migration of whole villages and rural communities resulting in a complete depopulation of these areas (chapter 6). Therefore, such measures could help the management of future migration flows.

### 4. *Recognising the migrants and complementation of the legalization process*

Rural migrants did not arrive in Kamza because of any government migration policy. As discussed previously (chapter 5 and 6) they were illegal and occupied the land where they built illegal settlements. Everything happened over a short period, with immense intensity. The situation escaped the State control and in a blink of an eye, a new human reality with a many problems, fears and desires, was created in the fringe of the capital city, Tirana. The main macro-factor impeding the adjustment process for the rural migrants was the illegal status of their physical capital. For several years now, the migrant community in Kamza has been recognized and their settlements are gradually being legalized. According to Potsiou, (2010:12) 'the Albanian government believes that the State cannot punish someone who has provided for him/herself what the state has failed to do'. With such a *motto* the legalization process of the informal settlements began in Albania. Hence, the lack of migration policies and any macro-plan for the accommodation of increased fluxes of migrants towards Tirana has been justified based on the theory that allowing informal and squatter settlements was the right approach to "address service provision, improve the image of the State, stimulate the income of remittances and as result improve the economy of Albania" (Potsiou, 2010: 14). Therefore,

legalization of the illegal settlements was part of this theory. However, at times the results justify the means; by building on my previous discussion (Chapters 5, 6 and 9) the process of legalization is recognised as the most important measure that the government has taken to the benefit of the migrant community. Starting from 2006, the Albanian government set up a national Agency for Legalization and Urbanization for Informal Zones (ALUIZNI) and the legalization process began.

Yet, the legalization process is still (in 2011) going through a never-ending chain of formalities and bureaucracies while the migrant community of Kamza is skeptical and do not trust words, preferring to see deeds. The migrant community often feels *manipulated* as the legalization issue is often used as ‘propaganda during electoral campaigns’ (Cila, 2006: 36). Hence the government ought to accelerate the procedures of the legalization and enhance in people trustworthiness. At the same time, the recognition of migrants and legalization process will enable the municipality of Kamza to register all the newcomers and update its statistical data. These measures will in turn help policymakers and will facilitate planning for the medium and long-term regarding the physical infrastructure required.

Another issue worth noting here regards the role the State should play in channeling the use of financial and social remittances internal migrants gain from emigration. In chapter 9 is shown that often, internal migrants are economically dependent on financial remittances of international migrants. The financial remittances are mainly used for everyday expences or for building physical capital. They are a source of wellbeing and development but not in their full potentials. The dependence of internal migrants on financial remittances often acts as a barrier to their adjustment process and their integration into city life and urban society. In these situation, is the responsibility of the State and the Municipality to create the conditions in order for financial remittances to be more a source of development rather than a source of survival. A more a financial friendly environment must be created in order for the internal migrants to invest financial remittances, for instances to set up small private businesses or other projects, such as self-employment or education of children. Moreover, in case of return migration, the State should make their reintegration into Albanian society easier.

5. *Assisting migrants through the adjustment process and implementation of development programmes in the informal settlements.*

On the one hand, urbanization is a phenomenon that brings development, but on the other hand, if it is not controlled it becomes unmanageable and may degenerate into poverty and social turmoil. In the case of Albania, where urbanization has become unmanageable, there is an immediate need not only to manage the flows of rural-to-urban migration but also to accommodate and integrate these migrants into urban life (Çabiri, 2000). The migrant community of Kamza and the illegal settlements experience countless problems and concerns. Though crucial, the legalization and recognition of migrants is not enough to secure development and adjustment for rural-to-urban migrants. The adjustment process is a

multifaceted and complex phenomenon (chapter 6). Migrants perceive that they can only get to a certain point in the adjustment process, they can build some physical capital, social and psychological capital within their migrant community but adjustment at the macro-level – improved social and economic status and integration within the city of Tirana and the host society – will need to be assisted through projects and developmental policies. At this point the State has to intervene by implementing development policies and most importantly, by recognizing the newcomers as part of Tirana. The government must assist migrants in achieving their adjustment and integration with the host society. This can be done through investments in the physical and human capital, such as in the transportation system, employment opportunities, anti-discrimination policies, gender inclusive policies; possibilities to establish new businesses, possibilities for women to work and to grow professionally; education opportunities. The successful implementation of such policies has the potential to decrease the migrants' vulnerability, help them build further social and financial capital, and integrate better within the city.

#### *6. Management of poverty and migration flows from rural areas*

Migration negatively impacts both origin and destination areas (Chapter 3 and 5). While there is overpopulation in urban areas in Albania, especially in Tirana, there is increasing depopulation in rural areas, especially in the North (Chapter 3). The rural areas of Albania, especially the North, are in such a state of poverty that migration appears the only hope and strategy for survival (Chapter 6). According to Çabiri (2000), the mass migration from rural areas, especially of young people, is destroying the demographic and social structure of the rural population (p.51). Moreover, the abandonment of land and houses results in degradation of the land and infrastructure (Bërxfholi et al. 2006). Chapter 6 of this thesis shows that people are forced to move from villages because of poverty and difficult conditions. Many migrants, especially the older generation (Chapters 6 and 7), would have chosen to stay in the rural areas if it were possible for them to earn a living there. However, remaining in their places of origin would have meant an extra burden for the children of the older generation, who would have had to care for them in their old age, as generally in Albania, and especially in rural areas there is no social care or any other sorts of care provided for the elderly. It is the obligation of the State in collaboration with local authorities to lessen and channel future migration flows and moreover to implement development strategies for rural areas in Albania to narrow the gap between urban and rural areas (see also Ellis and Harris, 2004).

#### **10.7 Achievements of this study**

This research emphasizes the importance of switching attention away from migration statistics and figures to the migrants' voices, feelings and narratives, of exploring the individual level rather than the macro level, and of going beyond the bare facts to explore the mechanisms of migration and the adjustment process at the individual and household level.

In this sense this research makes a contribution to the body of migration literature in a number of ways. First, it emphasizes the importance of examining internal migration in time, adding a longitudinal perspective to the migration process. This was achieved by constructing migration histories of households and introducing the concept of length of residence to the migrant adjustment process. Moreover, using a vast body of literature, I have constructed a detailed chronology of internal and international migration in Albania. The adoption of a historical perspective, especially for internal migration, adds to the limited body of literature on internal migration in Albania. Such historical perspectives of pre-communist and especially of communist Albanian migration are essential because, as this thesis shows, there are clear links back to the communist period that suggest that contemporary Albanian migration is closely related and affected by past migration history.

Second, this research has applied a multi-method ethnographic approach which was very useful in understanding and exploring the migration process, starting from the decision-making process, settlement, networking and the adjustment process.

Third, a large part of this research focuses on intra-household gender relationships, with a generation perspective ascertaining the different experiences of migration for men and women and different generations. Migration in Albania needs to be studied from a gender perspective as there are enormous differences between the experiences of migration for men, women and the different generations.

Fourth, this research draws attention to the importance of studying internal migration in relation to international migration. This approach has enabled me to understand the combination of strategies at a household level and the ways household members make use of internal and international migration to improve their lives.

Fifth, by focusing on one case study and one specific migrant community, this research is an in-depth analysis that provides fine-grained knowledge of the migrant community, the details of its members' lives and their migration history.

#### ***10.7.1 Limitations of this study and further research***

This is an ethnographic study with a specific focus on a particular area and community. Even though this is one of the strengths of this thesis as a very detailed ethnographic study of a single community, it also comprises one of its main limitations, as it is specific to a particular society and country and it narrows its vision and applicability. In other words, this research cannot be generalized to other regions and migrant communities in Albania or elsewhere in the world. Nonetheless, it offers in-depth understanding of the subject and study population and has potential for comparison with similar study populations in various regions. This represents a trade-off decided at the study's inception. After reaching an in-depth understanding of the subject phenomena and study population, there is a need for a more complex analysis at various analytical levels and in multiple places. This approach will broaden our understanding and will facilitate generalization and the external validity of the findings.



Additionally, this research would have been more complete if migrants' places of origin and the people they left behind had been taken into consideration. A follow-up study in northern Albania of the people left behind would be one avenue for research to explore. This would thus make both sides of the coin – the people who migrate and people who stay behind – accessible, bringing new, interesting insights into migration studies in Albania. Comparative studies from other areas that are sources of internal migrants in Albania would contribute to the academic understanding of the mechanisms of internal migration.

Of course, another route for further research is complementary research into the host societies. To channel and formulate policy recommendations regarding the adjustment process of rural migrants, the host society should be included in the studies. Since research into the host society (meaning the urbanites) is very limited within the internal migration Albanian literature, almost nothing is known about the host society's perceptions of, feelings about and acceptance of rural migrants. Our understanding of the process of rural-to-urban migration would be incomplete without including this group into the analyses.

Another key area for further research involves more work on the evolving dynamics of internal and international migration, return and circulation. The nature of Albanian migration has changed and diversified over time. Various types of migration should be studied in relation to each other. Only in this way can we make clear statements about the potential that migration – internal and international – has for development.

Through this thesis, we have seen that going into a community and conducting in-depth research is a valuable approach that generates new insights and yields interesting results. Considering the limited number of ethnographic studies of Albanian migration, there is a need to conduct more in-depth and accurate fieldwork in various migrant and non-migrant community settings. The generation of a rich, qualitative dataset on migration in Albania would create opportunities for the application of mixed methods and the triangulation of data sets and methodologies in migration studies.

Finally, creating a more inclusive body of knowledge about migration in Albania will assist policymakers in better understanding the migration process, the migrant's position, feelings and needs, and their actual position, which would in turn result in more successful policy implementation and promotion. Research will inspire effective migration policy implementation and decision-making, which should result in stabilising the migrants' socioeconomic conditions and improving their lives.

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