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'I am the God of the House': How Albanian Rural Men Shift their Performance of Masculinities in the City

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ABSTRACT
Migration triggers significant developments in gender norms and identities. Cultural and spatial dislocation influences the ways people renegotiate their gender schemas and shifts the performances of masculinity and/or femininity. Scholars have mainly focused on its impact on women, overlooking its importance in shaping men's identity. This paper focuses on rural migrant men moving to the city. It explores the strategies they use to renegotiate traditional performances of masculinities in the context of their spatial dislocation and wider socioeconomic developments and urbanization in a suburb of Tirana, Albania. Using an ethnographic and auto-ethnographic narrative approach, this paper reveals that traditional performances of 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.

1. Introduction

Through this study we attempt to understand if traditional performances of masculinities are transitioning in the urban settings, and how they are performed differently in different spaces. We argue that rural men attempt to keep intact their traditional roles in both domestic and public spaces. Although research on men and masculinities has been progressively claiming focus in feminist studies,[1] yet 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.[2] Previous studies that have examined the link between migration and masculinities have specified the different performances of masculinities in domestic and public spaces.[3] However, 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.[4] These approaches facilitate men's involvement in women's empowerment,[5] and add an important dimension to gender studies.[6]

Gender interactions as socially constructed identities, as described in this paper, are based on the gender schema theory developed by Sandra Bem.[7] According to Bem, gender

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schemas are socially constructed and used to interpret interactions, positions and events.[8] Our gender schemas are embedded in a cultural context and built on different cultural norms and traditions.[9] However, these identities travel with migrants and they can be reproduced, reinforced or shifted in the chosen destination.[10]

Albania is a traditional society and characterized by patriarchy, especially in the rural areas. In traditional (patriarchal) societies the characteristics and position of men and women are predetermined.[11] Patriarchy is a system which privileges men, giving them the leading role in society,[12] and providing them with the right to command social power and prestige.[13] Dislocation from traditional societies and relocation to modern cities disrupts this structure of dominance and affects men's subjectivities in various ways.[14] In more modern urban societies, a patriarchal system where 'men dominate, oppress and exploit women' is no longer predominant.[15] 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.[16] They feel trapped between rural patriarchy and (are forced to adapt to) the city's more modern social structures.[17]

We use Butler's notion of gender and masculinity as a performance. Butler views performing as a doing that constitutes a being; an activity that creates what it describes. She maintains that gender identity is not a manifestation of natural attributes but rather the product of actions and behaviours, that is, performance. Butler stresses the reiteration of acts in the production of a gendered identity.[18] She asserts 'there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender'.[19] She claims that gender identity such as femininity and masculinity is a performance which is constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results.[20] Butler rejects the idea that individuals are free to choose which gender they are going to enact. She argues that individuals have a limited number of 'options' from which to make a constrained choice of gender enactment, and that 'The script' is always already determined within the regulatory frame.[21] She further maintains that gender is a corporeal style and act which has cultural survival as its end, since those who do not 'do' their gender correctly are punished by society.[22]

Masculinities and femininities are constantly changing over time and in space,[23] as are gender roles, which are increasingly being renegotiated and are dependent on political, social and economic transformations.[24] Moving from rural to urban areas, with less support from the patriarchal system, men attempt to retain their traditional position by adapting their performance of masculinity in domestic and social spaces.

In relation to the spatial dislocation, and attempts to retain the traditional masculinities through struggling to avoid shifting of traditional masculinities in suburban Tirana, this paper addresses the core question of how migrant men negotiate their identities in their chosen destination and maintain the traditional masculinity or norms when confronted with the migration process, their spatial and cultural dislocation, and the empowerment of women.

2. Traditional performances of masculinities in rural 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)[25]

Gender relationships, especially in rural Albania, have a complex grounding in a strong inter-generational patriarchal system.[26] 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, the changes to gender identities following the demise of the communist regime in Eastern Europe have been poorly addressed.[27] 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.[28] 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, in various historical European studies there is a common notion of 'Albanianism',[29] with Albanian men often referred to as 'violent, primitive, traditional and patriarchal'.[30]

In a traditional society with strong cultural norms, Albanian men hold a privileged and dominant position compared to women.[31] The complex variations of culture and tradition found in different regions of Albania are reflected in the variation in gender ideologies and traditional patriarchies.[32] The north and the rural areas in general are more conservative and are known to have a strong clan-based tradition.[33] Son preference 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 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.[34]

Northern Albania mainly functions on the basis of *Kanun*[35]—the assignment of 'rules, measures and norms' amounting to law.[36] These laws regulate all aspects of life in the north, including gender relationships and the role of men and women in society and the family. According to *Kanun*, a man is regarded as *Zot i* shtepië (God of the house)[37] and has complete authority over all members of the household.[38] Women must be subservient, endure their fate and bear children, while men receive inheritance, benefit through succession practices and control the society.[39]

According to Boeschoten, Albanian migrant men construct their narratives based on patriarchal values and a subjective sense of superior masculinity compared with the host society.[40] 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.[41] 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.

3. Situating the research: suburban Kamza

Albania's internal migration patterns indicate a distinctive regional trajectory, with people moving from rural areas in the north-east towards the peripheries of urban areas in the central region, mainly within and around the capital Tirana. Kamza, a new suburban area emerging on the outskirts of Tirana, represents a case of indiscriminate urbanization fuelled by large migration flows from the rural north, and is referred to as 'the most dynamic community' of Albania.[42] In the early 1990s, Kamza was an agricultural farm owned by the state

with approximately 6000 inhabitants.[43] 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,[44] increasing to an estimated 100,000 currently. The rapid transformation of Kamza from an agricultural area to an urban space generated an in-between space where urban and rural elements often overlap, also mirroring this intersection in the human relationships that develop in these in-between spaces, such as gender performances. The stand by (difficult to shift) position of traditional masculinities is also a result of such spaces.

Kamza has developed into a 'melting pot', where people of different backgrounds, traditions and cultures have come together and now cohabit.[45] Such characteristics qualify Kamza as a 'laboratory for internal migration studies in Albania'.[46]

4. The study

Exploring masculinities in the research context is a complex methodological issue that receives relatively little attention.[47] This study explores the adjustment strategies of rural-to-urban migrant men and their experiences of migration. The results are based on one year of field work 2008–2009 during which a series of personal interviews, participant observations and extensive field notes were carried out. The adoption of qualitative methods facilitated access to the lives of migrant men and the identification of change through extended observations and narratives by men. The in-depth interviews helped us to understand the performances of masculinities and migrants' ideas on gender schemas. The participant observation helped us visualise and situate the performance of masculinity in private and in public spaces, while the field diary developed an auto-ethnographic approach where the researcher could reflexively document gendered behaviour as encountered in different spaces.

Participant observation

In order to establish a rapport with the men it was necessary to undertake extensive participant observation with the women. According to Schensul et al. 'participant observation represents the starting point in ethnographic research'.[48] The research was carried out through daily visits and by residing temporarily in Kamza. I 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,[49] I took part in daily activities, rituals, interactions and life events to 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. 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 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.[50] During the fieldwork, 15 in-depth interviews were conducted with men and 25 with women.[51] 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 social centres (see table 1).

This wide range of backgrounds 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 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™ version 4. In the process of coding, an inductive approach was employed that allowed the generation of new hypotheses and theoretical considerations. Once the interviews were imported into the file and systematically coded, we started to group similar patterns and common categories among all the interviews. The themes that emerged became the research questions and the subjects of inquiry for this research. The same procedure was also followed for the field diary and participant observations. The analyses of the field notes were very useful in generating the contextual grounds of the fieldwork, the researcher's positionality and point of view. We have identified several code families and key themes. The main code families presented in this paper are: traditional masculinities, transition toward modern masculinities, generation and masculinity performances, and spaces of performing masculinities.

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.

Table 1. Characteristic of the informants.

Fictional name	Age	Year of migration	Education	Occupation in the origin region	Actual occupation
Arben	31	1996	High school	Student	Construction (freelancer)
Adi	34	1995	University degree	Student	Construction (his own team and worked both in Greece and Tirana)
Fatos	63	2001	Secondary school	Agriculture	Own business
Niku	24	2006	High school	Construction in Greece/farm	Construction
Ali	64	1994	Has completed three classes	State owned farm	Own business
Bato	46	2002	University degree	Accountant	Service sector in Greece
Adil	58	1996	High school	Agriculture	Unemployed (helped his son in his business)
Nasip	53	2003	Secondary school	Farming	Private guard (occasionally in construction)
Astrit	46	1998	Secondary school	Agriculture (village and Greece)	Construction and service sector in Greece
Miri	28	1995	High school	Student	Unemployed (occasionally in construction)
Soni	20	2002	Following university	Student	Student
Andi	22	1999	Following university	Student	Student
Genci	18	2004	Planned to follow university	Student	Student
Agron	49	1994	University degree	Teacher	Own business
Bledi	25	2007	Secondary school	Agriculture and construction	Construction

Field diary

Diary-based research, though little acknowledged within sociology, is widely used by feminist researchers.[52] Field diaries help to document certain social and cultural settings, making visible experiences which are often hidden.[53] 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.

Gendered encounters with men

An auto-ethnographic narrative approach[54] was employed to reflect my positionality while conducting the research, revealing how, as a woman, I experienced the performance of the masculinities of migrants in suburban Kamza. According to Falen, 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.[55] 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:[56]

> 'We often take for granted that a researcher's gender may be reason to question his or her findings.'[57]

In addition, in any study involving qualitative methods, results also depend on the willingness and availability of study participants. As a woman researcher, finding men willing to be interviewed proved to be a far bigger problem than expected, especially those who were middle-aged and older. 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 pool 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. 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 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 born in the north and then having 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 engender 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.

4. Performance of masculinities in the public space: the bar

Human geographers have elaborated on the idea that gender identities and performances are in continuous flux, not only in time but also in space.[58] Traditionally, women have been defined as belonging to the private space and men to the public.[59] Through our data we show that men perform their masculinity more in certain spaces that might be either public or domestic. We found that migrant men adjust their strategy of asserting their masculinity in spaces. In the following section we will focus on masculinity performances in public spaces.

According to Campbell, 'rendering masculinity visible is an important task for any sociological analysis of public sites', as one of the social sites in which 'gender power might be contested or secured'.[60] In our study, men expressed a strong preference to be interviewed in a bar because they perceived this as their space and as somewhere they could make visible their manly behaviours. In line with Campbell's work,[61] we show that the bar is a new space for visualizing the performances of masculinity after rural men moved to the city. The bar settings but also the drinking performances are central to the establishment of their masculinities.[62]

Indeed, 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.[63] 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.[64] Social community centres are also growing to be spaces where younger men socialise and pass their free time.[65] Migrant men use the bar to reproduce and maintain (traditional rural) masculine behaviours,[66] such as drinking alcohol, playing pool and betting on football, and the bar is perceived to be a

masculine space.[67] Almost all the men in this study emphasized that the activities under-taken in their spare time were traditionally masculine, generally referring to drinking and hanging around with other male friends.

I. 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*.[68] (Miri, 28)

Within the migrant community, the bar is perceived as a 'public-masculine domain'.[69] In Kamza, which is often referred to by the migrants as 'in-between space between rural and urban', unlike Tirana, it is uncommon for women to enter these designed to be masculine spaces, but not unthinkable as it might be in the rural areas of origin.

This [Kamza] is not Tirana, but also is not the village. I mean, in Tirana you find more women than men in bars while in the village there is only one bar and it is more believable to see there a dead man than a breathing women. Here there are some modern bars were young people hang out, there might be some girls also but not everywhere. (Miri, 28)

As you exit the bus at the crossroads in the centre of Kamza it is clear that the bars are full of men, drinking and discussing politics, economic issues and women passing by. The main reason for most of the interviews being conducted in bars, as opposed to the home or the social centre, was related to the men's performance of masculinity—the bar being regarded as a exclusively male space. 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 (mimicking) modern masculinity and an example at transitioning traditional masculinities.

The bars in Kamza are very basic constructions which mainly 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 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 men.

In the interview with Nasipi (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. Nasipi 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 women 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, myself included.[70]

Relationships between researcher, participants and others are regulated by the positionality of the researcher and the power relationships which develop.[71] As a modern woman from the city I was able to enter a bar used only by men and order an alcoholic drink (manly behav-iour). 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 (non-alcoholic) 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.

5.　Performance of masculinities in the domestic space: the house

> I am the 'God of the House' (Astriti, 46) and His (Astrit's) word is law in the house. (Maria, 35)

Gorman-Murray argues that masculinities and domestic spaces are interrelated and dependent.[72] In terms of traditional performance of 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 during the field work. As heads of the household and breadwinners the men'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, the urban and modern settings, and (often) women's emancipation through work,[73] disturbs this gender-based power relationship.[74] Men have to accept that women working is often the only strategy to overcome economic hardship, leading to a shifting of the traditional role of provider.[75] For Elmhirst, a growing body of literature identifies the shifting masculinities resulting from economic hardship threatening men's role as the sole providers.[76] In line with Silberschmidt, 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.[77] Violence (verbal and physical) is one of the resources left to migrant men to mirror their traditional masculinities in the urban context.[78] Among rural migrant men in Kamza, domestic violence is tolerated as a form of education and communication.[79] Among migrant men and women, the notion of verbal violence is not recognized. The narratives revealed that men regard violence as being a necessary means of teaching women 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, 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, 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 space.

> Today I meet Nada (27) 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. 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.[80]

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.[81] In Kamza, in contrast with rural areas, we found a prevalence of nuclear families, even though extended families were still present. Illegality and squatter settlements were the reasons for migrants to occupy as much land as possible, often shifting from extended families to nuclear families in the city.[82] Although the shift happens mainly for pragmatic reasons, this new form of private space gives women greater power in the house while in the extended families woman occupy a more subordinate position depending not only on their husbands but also on the in-laws. Moreover, in nuclear families we see that men become more concerned with household chores, 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)

One's performance of masculinity in extended families (a domestic yet semi-public space) is often contrasted to the performances of the other men, triggering the maintenance of traditional gender norms, while in nuclear settings this performance becomes redundant because they are not confronted with other traditional performances of masculinities and men do not have to show off their superiority and control over women within the domestic space.

6. Transitioning masculinities: the youth

'Masculinities are configurations of social practices produced not only in relation to femininities but also in relation to one another.'[83] In this respect, dominant, subordinate and marginalized masculinities have all been recognized.[84] A change of place often influences power relationships, not only between men and women,[85] but also among male migrants and urban men, placing the migrant men in a subordinate position.[86] 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,[87] and from mother to daughter.[88] 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.[89] The traditional performance of masculinity of the father, so strong in the village, is not always so dominant in the city. While

men attempt to preserve their traditional performance of masculinity in order to maintain their dominant role over women,[90] 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 youths 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…' Everybody started laughing.[91]

Young women in Tirana (the host society) are considered by young migrant men to be educated and potential friends with whom to have interesting conversations. Young women in Kamza were perceived to be lacking these skills and merely talking to or spending time with a girl from the migrant 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 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).

Having female friends is a sign of modernity and did become an objective for younger generation. The difficulty to have female friends is related to the traditional settings of the in-between space of Kamza impeding such modern masculine performances. However, as Soni articulates, there are double standards related to female friends or partners, mainly with regard to related and non-related females. The new forms of masculinity developed by young men achieve domination in different ways. According to Aboim, having sexual control over as many lovers as possible is a source of power over other men.[92] 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 perceived modern masculinity. Hence performances such as getting a tattoo, having *dashnore* (lovers), wearing fashionable garments, and playing the tough guy have become the new forms of performing masculinity.

> Today at a birthday party Andi arrived with his girlfriend from Tirana, 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. They 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.[93]

Traditional masculinities, in the urban context, are practised and performed differently in the public and private spaces.[94] Here it is apparent that young men are transitioning the traditional performances of masculinity and are adopting new and more modern methods of performing masculinity in the urban context. In this generational shift, new masculine values are gaining importance and gender relationships are changing. Although young men are becoming more modern in terms of performing masculinities in the public spaces, they are more traditional in the domestic spaces where they are confronted with the traditional masculinities of their fathers or older brothers.[95]

Conclusions

Migration generates significant changes for men and women.[96] 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, different environment where the authority and power of men is being increasingly questioned.[97] With the transitioning gender practices ('gender acts'),[98] performances of masculinity show higher resistance to change as they 'travel across and within different space and domains'.[99] This paper has attempted to depict the links between migration, changing livelihoods, generations, space and transitioning masculinities in the context of massive levels of migration from the rural and traditional north towards the near-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, 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. The performance of masculinities and femininities changes as migrants adapt to the new environment.[100] We investigated the spatial dislocation of traditional masculinities, examining the strategies rural migrant men use to retain their patriarchal position in the city through the performance of perceived traditional masculinities.

Based on an ethnographic approach, this paper reveals that when rural men migrate, their traditional 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 traditional masculinities in public and private spaces. Different spaces require different performances of masculinities. [101] Older men demonstrate diverse performances of (more traditional) masculinities as compared to younger men.[102] In relation to the broader migrant community, men employ perceived masculine behaviours in perceived masculine spaces.[103] While older men attempt to maintain the performances of traditional masculinities, in the new environment traditional

performances of masculinity are losing importance among youth. When theorizing on masculinity performance in different spaces we have shown that in the in-between spaces (Kamza) men struggle to maintain their traditional masculinities. Kamza, being neither urban nor rural, helps men in maintaining such traditional status as it does not offer more modern masculine models that men would perform in urban settings. We found that in the public settings, such as the bar (visited mostly by older men), men could maintain the traditional form of masculinity performance while in the community centres (visited mainly by younger men), which are a new public form of spaces (spaces which are not present in the rural areas), masculinity performance is reshaped.

We found that traditional performances of masculinities are in transition in the urban settings, stronger in the domestic space and weakening in the public space and across generations.[104] New masculine values are gaining importance in the context of changing gender relationships. Young men are transitioning 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 behaviour. 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.[105] In these in-between spaces between tradition and modernization, between patriarchal masculinities and emancipated femininities, gender identities are in continual flux and negotiation.

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