

# **GENDER PERSPECTIVES IN ALBANIA**

Population and Housing Census 2001

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The production of social research publications presents an important moment in the professional lifespan of INSTAT.

The Population and Housing Census of 2001, as well as the Living Standard Measurement Survey (LSMS) of 2002, were used as the main data sources of analysis during the last decade. The information collected in these two surveys pertained to such issues as internal and external migration, the state of the labor market, the impact that these issues have on the lives of women and men in Albania, their living conditions, and how the inequalities are distributed in the basic sectors of everyday life. This data was also used in the population projections for 2001-2002.

These research publications represent a significant instrument for policy makers and other stakeholders. The information collected can be used in mainstreaming poverty reduction, minimizing inequalities, guiding investment funds towards services and infrastructure, and helping local authorities in designing specific strategies in favor of vulnerable groups.

These publications will contribute to completing information concerning the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in Albania, and bringing in new elements to enable the continuous monitoring of the indicators.

Without the direct collaboration of Albanian and international experts, these publications would not have been accomplished. These research papers demonstrate the existence of a network composed of local researchers ranging from public administration agencies to Universities, that cooperate together in order to analyzing social phenomena in the country.

INSTAT would like to take this opportunity to extend its thanks to the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Italian Cooperation that supported and coordinated the preparation of these research publications.

**Milva Ekonomi**

General Director

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Rapid processes of transformation took place at all levels of Albanian society in early 90's. In describing these processes, we use the term "transformation" to indicating a period of change with the potential to arrive at one of a variety of possible outcomes. This is in contrast to the term "transition", which many have used to describe processes of greater finality, for example the transition from a socialist regime to a democracy, or from a state economy to a market economy (Saltmarshe 2001). As an example of the changes taking place in Albania, the country's predominantly rural population has been engaged in a marked process of urbanization, with the proportion of rural inhabitants decreasing by 13% in the span of eleven years. Internal migration is one of the most significant factors contributing to this transformation process. In developing countries, substantial internal migration is often associated with accelerated urbanization that has fallen out of control. Among the undesired effects that can appear in tandem with migration to the cities are the development of illegal settlements, the emergence of slums, the failure to maintain sufficient sanitary conditions for housing, the lack of schools, high unemployment rates, high instances of crime, the dissolution of family ties and social control, as well as increased levels of prostitution and domestic violence. The fact that one-fifth of the Albanian population has emigrated abroad since 1989 has supplied the country with an important pressure-valve, helping to combat the ill-effects of rapid urbanization. Nonetheless, various authors have documented the negative effects caused by internal migration in Albania (e.g. La Cava and Nanetti 2000), some of which are clearly visible in the district of Tirana.

Transformation is an appropriate term if the argument of de Gaay Fortman holds true. He writes that Albania has "not gone through the historic processes of Renaissance and Enlightenment that affected the larger part of Europe" and that Albania is a country "in which

### A Gendered Perspective in Statistics

#### Does Internal Migration Affect the Lives of Albanian Women and Men Differently?

"Gender is intrinsic to the analysis of urbanisation in developing countries. Not only does urban economic growth and development often provoke changes in gender roles, relations and inequalities, but the urbanisation process itself is frequently shaped by prevailing constructions of gender. In other words, the causes, nature and outcomes of urbanisation may be highly gendered. Recognition of this phenomenon is vital both for understanding urban evolution and its consequences, and for shaping policy interventions" (Chant 1996:1).

in later ages modernity never had another chance to becoming embedded in the country's culture" (de Gaay Fortman 2000:85).

In addition to migration, changes in the organizing principles of Albanian society, which have been taking place since the demise of the socialist regime (including political, economic, social, and cultural developments), are crucial to understanding of the country's transformation. In other states where similar transformations have taken place, the impact of change is known to affect the opportunities of various population groups in different ways. Women represent one such population group. Given the rather equitable situation of women and men in socialist regimes regarding their participation in the labor force and their levels of education and given the existence of facilities in these regimes that support women's special needs, such as child care and care for the elderly, a careful monitoring of changes in these domains appears necessary in order to assure women's access to similar or equal opportunities during the period of transformation. As it has been documented in other ex-socialist countries, gender relations are being reconfigured by the changes resulting from the fall of the socialist system, including formal changes in the national economy, as well as integration into the world economy (Gal

and Kligman 2000). This holds true in particular for Albania, a country that was isolated from the rest of the world for many years.

The focus of this essay is to combine and analyze two important characteristics of Albania's transformation process – the advent large-scale internal migration and the changing relative status of men and women in society. Our aim is to apply a gendered perspective in analyzing the internal migration process.

How does internal migration affect the relative situations of men and women migrants? How do the measurable standards of living change when people migrate as compared to when they do not? How do local economic and social opportunities vary according to regions that either lose or gain population? According to Chant's argument above, we expect internal migration to be a gendered process in which the opportunities and outcomes experienced by men and women will differ. We expect these to vary according to the basic division of labor usually found in the household, in the community, and in society at large. Differences in opportunity create, alter or reinforce commonly held values regarding male and female roles, which can also influence the relative status of men and women in general. Consequently, in this study we are concerned with the individual and structural situation of women and men, as reflected in data from the 2001 Albanian Census. We aim to understand which roles in Albania are clearly gendered, as well as to identify those changes that are most likely to affect men's and women's situations differently. In order to do so, we describe the actual circumstances of men and women in Albania, and we assess the possibility that current or future inequalities will affect their opportunities along gender lines. We therefore do not analyze how gender shapes relationships between men and women, nor are we concerned with the effect that gender has on a person's underlying identity. We sim-

ply describe the situation in Albania today using the 2001 Census data. This means that we consciously leave aside the imaginary and symbolic attributes of gender issues (i.e. public discourses about gender, representations of women in the media, etc.).

Thus our basic questions are: What forms of gender inequality are being shaped as a result of these drastic transformation processes? In which way do the situations of male and female migrants differ from those who did not migrate? Do such differences indicate that migration is a gendered process? And what consequences could do these differences entail for women and men?

With this approach we hope to fill a gap in the historical literature on post-socialist countries, a literature whose quantitative analysis of the transformation process in social terms and from a gendered perspective is often lacking. We also hope to give the 2001 Albanian Census data a historical dimension by including an overview of migration in Albania starting from the beginning of the last century, and by providing a description of Albanian social organization before, during and after socialism.

This paper is structured as follows: Section 1 is concerned with important conceptual issues for both gender roles and internal migration in Albania. In section 2 we provide the historical framework for our analyses by giving a statistical overview of the Albanian internal migration, as well as a corresponding description of gender roles. In section 3 we describe the data available and its limitations for our purposes. We also describe the operational definition of the indicators we use for our analysis. In section 4 we present the results. We formulate our hypotheses where they appear plausible despite the rapidly changing situation in Albania. We begin in section 4.1 by distinguishing regions in Albania according to whether they are (1) losing population, or (2) gaining population. Sections 4.2 to 4.5 look at domains in



which the material situation of men and women might systematically vary and, thus, have implications for the future development of Albania. Section 5 summarizes our findings and discusses their implications.



## Conceptual issues

### 1.1 GENDER<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.1.1 Gender as a Unit of Analysis

Gender is a central organizing principle of society. Gender, as the sociocultural dimension of sexual differences, is considered distinct from sex: gender refers to sociocultural constructions – ideas about what it means to be a ‘man’ or a ‘woman,’ to be ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine,’ – that are built around biological sexual differences. These meanings, which vary according to their cultural and historical circumstances, structure and justify inequalities between men and women in various ar-

Gender is a social construction of what women and men are, what they were, and what they should be (normative notions) at a given time and in a given context.

In this section we define the two most important conceptual issues for our study: gender and migration. We first focus on the concept gender as a unit of analysis and then describe possible indicators that allow us to identify its operational equivalents. We also briefly address the importance of the household for gendered analyses. In section 1.2 we focus on migration.

reas of social life. The term “gender relations” refers to power relationships between women and men that exist in a range of practices, ideas, and representations. These include the division of labor, the assignment of roles, the distribution of resources, and the common perception of female and male abilities, attitudes, desires, personal traits, behavioral patterns and so on (Bahsin 2000). Gender, therefore, plays a systematic role in daily life, producing different experiences and consequences for women and men across a multitude of domains.<sup>2</sup>

*The “invisibility” of gender:* Most people assume that gender (like race, ethnic group, or age) is embodied by all individuals; it is con-

<sup>1</sup> Many of the conceptual deliberations regarding gender were inspired and borrowed from Janet Saltzman Chafetz (1990).

<sup>2</sup> Although gender refers to men and women, much research has tended to apply the term solely in the context of women. This habit stems from the development of gender research - from its origins in women’s studies (approximately since the 1970s), passing through the phase of feminist oriented studies (approximately the 1980s) and leading to fully-fledged gender studies, where gender is viewed as an analytical category. Given its origins, it becomes clear why gender is often considered a “women’s perspective.” As men have typically been the more advantaged and those more engaged in scholarship itself, their situation has been analysed more often than women’s. Consequently, their definition of reality has been extended to define that of women’s reality as well (Visweswaran 1997). This has, among other things, led to the “invisibility” of gender. We thank Janine Dahinden for her input on this issue at the kick-off meeting to our topic, a gendered perspective in statistics, in May 2003.

sidered a natural, given, or inalterable characteristic of human beings. This produces long-lasting prejudices about what women and men are, what their needs may be, what their place in society is, what work they should perform, how one gender is more capable than the other, etc. Such prejudices are superficially legitimized by biological differences. Although, indeed, biological differences make gender visible, gender (being man; being woman) is actually determined by a much wider context. The meaning of being a man or a woman is socioculturally constructed. Social and, often, religious norms and values influence and legitimate this sociocultural construction. The construction is then reproduced by the institutionalized practices of society.

By shifting our definition of gender away from natural descriptions we call into question the common way of perceiving individual identity. This is crucial, since identity plays a central role in determining a person's status within the family, community, and society. Furthermore, the assignment of gender roles within the nuclear and extended family also substantially contributes to the sociocultural and symbolic orders that create ideas about gender in the first place. The process is cyclical and, thus, there is a strong resistance to change what is actually sanctioned in the sociocultural order. Such orders are reflected in daily life, in the different individual and structural opportunities available to women and men.<sup>3</sup>

**Gender as a stratifying principle of society:** Gender, like race, age, ethnicity and social position, is a stratifying principle of all societies.

It implies the unequal distribution of valuable goods, and is based on unequal power relationships grounded in both the material order (e.g. the political and economic system) and

the sociocultural order (religious or symbolic systems, and cultural norms and values). Most often gender inequality is a matter of scale, although it can be a matter of strict "dichotomy" as well: for example when legal systems reserve specific powers and possibilities for one gender or the other (e.g. opportunity to vote or to learn a certain profession). Finally, if gender is located in the personal, the structural, the imaginary, and the symbolic realms, then gender is present in a variety of analytical fields.

*Gender is a micro, meso, and macro phenomenon:* If gender is a stratifying principle of society, then gender inequalities should exist on all social levels: macro, meso, and micro. Along with age, gender is the most salient characteristic that differentiates human beings in all societies. It permeates all aspects of sociocultural, personal and intrapsychic life.

The micro level refers to the social and cultural factors that affect face-to-face interactions between individual people. The micro level refers to the norms and values experienced and negotiated by the individual, as well as to the parts of gender that constitute identity and help people come to terms with their physical surroundings (these may be reflected in observable living conditions). The macro level typically refers to the society, both on a national and an international scale, within a given historical context and geographical area (i.e. time and place). It is characterized by the legal, economic, and political order, and it comes from ideologies and belief systems (religions) that developed historically, were imposed, or are otherwise widely accepted. The often-mentioned meso level refers to organisations, institutions, communities, and racial or ethnic groups that link the individual to society. Indeed, it is this level that has perhaps the greatest influence in maintaining; reproducing, and enforcing gendered relationships (e.g. through socializing effects of the home, the educational system, the media, common administrative procedures or the functioning of

<sup>3</sup> This has been documented for gender issues in another country, for example Budowski (2002).

private enterprises). And although the actual distinction between various levels is not clear-cut they are nonetheless useful for analytical purposes.

Taking into account that gender is a sociocultural phenomenon occurring at a given time and place, applying a gendered perspective in statistics means:

*-Going beyond a disaggregation of society by sex.* Indeed a gendered perspective starts with methodological concerns about the indicators and questions that will be used for data collection. In gathering statistical information there is a risk of excluding data that are crucial for understanding how the lives of men and women are different. For example, if questions about the labor market motivate the process of data collection, then it is likely that the experience of the domestic sphere, often that of women, would be excluded. In other words, if one does not ask questions relevant to a gendered analysis, then a gendered perspective in statistics becomes very difficult or even impossible.

*-Identifying the important domains that characterize everyday life for men and women and determining where power is located.* Once identified, it is important to determine what type of information (if any) can be collected about these domains. In general, important domains characterized by a locus of power at the individual level are the household (including those issues related to reproduction and the care of dependents); the public sphere; the (formal and informal) labor market; religious institutions; health care systems; places of routine socialization; and the educational system. In society power is located within the political system, the community, the sociocultural order, religious institutions, the educational system, the legal system, etc.

*-Finally, if the data has already been collected and the instruments defined prior to the intro-*

*duction of a gendered perspective, then a disaggregation of the data according to sex is a most important (first) step.* Thus, all information is presented separately for men and for women, thereby allowing any differences in experience – should they exist - to become visible and offer themselves for gender-sensitive interpretations.

### 1.1.2 Possible Indicators for Assessing the Situations of Men and Women

Understanding gender as a stratifying principle of society or, in other words, as indicating an intrinsic set of unequal power relationships resulting from one's identity as a woman or man, we may seek indicators representing gendered situations in both the material circumstances of individuals and in the socio-cultural order.

We limit the Section 4 analysis to the socio-demographic characteristics, the material conditions, and human resources (social capital), insofar as such data is obtainable from the Albanian Census of 2001. We concentrate on indicators that might best serve to represent the material conditions and opportunities from a gendered perspective. Such indicators are those that enable an assessment of gendered opportunities, social and familial autonomy, and family bargaining power.

Causes of gender inequality have been located in the family, the community, the labor market and in society at large (Chafetz 1990). The division of labor along gender lines creates different burdens (measured in time and energy), degrees of acknowledgement (prestige), and decision-making powers for women and men. Gender inequality impacts negatively on the balance between opportunities, living conditions, and social status of women and men. In addition, gender is always intertwined with other stratifying principles of soci-

ety, and therefore may not have the same consequences for men and women belonging to a social stratum defined by another characteristic.

One limitation of the Albanian Census data is that we cannot distinguish the causes of gender inequality from the consequences of unequal status between women and men. However, the data do allow for a systematic comparison between the living situations of those people who migrated during the twelve-year period and those who did not.

What indicators point toward one's opportunity to control and influence one's own living situation and that of one's family? Dixon (1978) lists, as possible indicators, the degree of women's access to and control over material resources, such as food, income, land or other forms of wealth. Dixon also argues that social resources within the family, the community and society - such as education, power or prestige - are indicators of the autonomy that is necessary to control and influence one's living situation.<sup>4</sup> These indicators, however, must serve as proxies since they cannot be equated directly with decision-making power.<sup>5</sup> Even so, they are necessary proxies, as questions about the decision-making power were not asked when collecting the Census data. We interpret such indicators against the background of local knowledge about Albania stemming from our experiences and critical deliberations about life in the country.

We have categorized indicators of decision-making power as follows: Human (or social) capital, economic activity, income, land property, and household characteristics (a category that will be dealt with in a separate section).

*Human capital (or cultural capital):* In general human capital resources, such as education, are considered to be the most crucial for achieving equal opportunities between women and men: education is pivotal for one's entry into the labor market and serves to legitimize financial returns; it is also important for other strategies to improve one's living conditions, including the defence of personal rights and the participation in community institutions. Formal education has become an undisputed asset, and is considered a key resource for nations seeking economic development. Often migration is triggered by the desire of parents to obtain better educational opportunities for their children. This produces the large-scale movement of people toward places where better educational facilities exist (i.e. in cities or abroad). Furthermore, in the discourse on development, educational investment for women is shown to yield better "social" results than for men (World Bank 1995).<sup>6</sup>

*Economic activity:* Economic activity enables a person's independent survival. Economic activity takes place in everything from the production of subsistence foods to the sale of goods and services for cash. Subsistence farming allows some independence from the national economy, but cash money, as a result of its "intermediate" character, enables a more thorough integration into all levels of the public sphere. It is therefore important to note that in some countries where women pursue economic activities they do not necessarily have the control over their cash earnings.

Consequently, one must understand and interpret economic activity indicators within their immediate contexts, and according to their social value. Also, as mentioned above, it is

<sup>4</sup> Ruth Dixon derived these indicators from her study of rural women in South Asia and argued that autonomy is important for well-being and development (Dixon 1978)

<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, decision-making power does not necessarily consist in the power to *decide*, but to participate in the making of the decision.

<sup>6</sup> This almost "economic approach" to "investments in women" needs to be criticized in that it instrumentalises women. On the other hand, it has nonetheless led to greater advantages for women.

important to remember that these indicators are artificially constructed proxies for what is actually at issue: the gendered distribution of decision-making power. Finally, one must be wary that economic activity may not serve as a meaningful indicator if, for example, men and women work just as often. In that case the indicator would need to take into account the type of employment or the position of the employee.

*Income:* Income is the material return from economic activity. Although it is actually individuals that receive it, the Census generally aggregates income at the household level. Aggregate measures of household income may not be meaningful to describe women's economic condition and well-being.<sup>7</sup> Many studies show women do not benefit equally in the utilization of household income. Finally, if income is not available as an indicator, living conditions may serve as a proxy measurement of household earnings.

*Land property:* As mentioned above, land property can indicate a person's access to economic resources inside many countries. However, given the dramatic changes in Albanian agriculture over the last 12 years - including the privatization of land - and the lack of technical equipment to improve farming efficiency, at present, land property does not represent an important indicator, especially since other types of work have the potential to generate more income.

### 1.1.3 Household

One major reason for looking at gender in the context of the household is that the household produces, reinforces and reflects wider ideas about gender and the family. One may understand the household as a "basic unit of co-residence," and the family as a "set of nor-

mative relationships." Household membership is not always kin-based, yet the majority of households do comprise individuals related by blood or marriage. Most households provide a fundamental context for socialisation (the process by which ideas, values and/or behavior are learned and/or acquired). Consequently the household is a fundamental social unit. It is the place where age and sex roles are learned and expressed, kinship feelings are evoked, and where people cooperate economically for survival.

Indeed, although not all households contain adults of both sexes, many have stressed that households play a major role in fostering gendered socialization and also constitute "a primary site of women's oppression" (Kabeer and Joekes, 1991:1; see also Harris, 1981:139; Townsend and Momsen, 1987:40). Therefore it is not only necessary to consider gender in relation to household organisation, but also to look at the kinds of male-female inequalities that arise in the home (Chant 1996)

*Family and household situation:* In most societies and at most times in history, women have been held most responsible for the time-consuming task of child-care. Thus the presence of children, in particular pre-school and school-age children, is an important factor influencing a woman's ability to enter the labor market. Often women in western societies are also saddled with caring for the ill, disabled, or elderly, as well as for the general well-being of other household members. So, just as the number of pre-school and school-age children, may serve as an indicator of a woman's economic independence, so might the overall structure of the household. This includes, for example, the number of household members that could potentially care for the family's dependents.

<sup>7</sup> For the situation in developing countries see Chant (Chant 1997a; 1997b); for the situation in developed countries, see Pahl (Pahl 1983; 1989).

Research from developing countries – in particular from India and from Muslim countries

where arranged marriages prevail – shows that the age difference between spouses can also serve as an indicator of power: findings indicate that as the age difference between a husband and wife increases (the wife is usually the younger of the two), the wife's decision-making power decreases. Age at marriage may – in some contexts – therefore be considered an indicator of decision-making power within the household.

### 1.2 Migration

Without going into the details of migration theory or the precise analyses of migration in Albania (these issues are addressed by another group concerned with migration in Albania as reflected in the 2001 Census (INSTAT 2004a), we will state two important points: migration may be internal or external. Albania has experienced both types on a very large scale since the fall of the socialist regime: at that time about one sixth of the population of Albania migrated abroad, sometimes at great personal risk. The boxed text below gives an impression of the magnitude of Albanian migration and a look at the desperation of the people who chose to migrate.

In July 1990 nearly 5000 persons entered the Tirana embassies of countries such as Italy, Germany, and France to request visas. The majority obtained asylum with the help of the international organizations. Nearly twenty thousand Albanian nationals, at the end of 1990 and in the middle of 1991, went to neighboring countries seeking asylum. The main reason for this exodus was the difficult economic situation prevailing in Albania at the time. In March 1991, crowds of Albanian citizens boarded ships at Durres, the country's largest naval port, and after some days arrived in Southern Italy. The Italian authorities note that during this period twenty thousand Albanians disembarked in Italy. Another exodus toward the Italian coast happened in August of the same year. The number of the Albanians who left the country in this second wave was over eighteen thousand. The Italian government categorically refused them entry, and within a short period seventeen thousand people returned back to their homeland.<sup>8</sup>

There is no direct information about migration in either the Census returns or in the Living Standards Measurement Survey. So to find out which individuals became migrants we looked at the places of residence for people at two points in time: 1989 and 2001. If residence in a different location at each of the two dates is taken as a sign of migrant status, then at least 10% of the Albanian population migrated internally over the twelve-year period. The problems created and/or solved by this migration should differ according to whether migration was largely internal or external. Furthermore, we expect both types of migration to be gendered. It is known that young men migrated abroad in greater numbers than young women. In the beginning, women were often limited to particularly disadvantaged ways of migration (i.e. arranged marriages abroad, prostitution, human traffic and a highly organized criminal trade linked to the exploitation of women)(La Cava and Nanetti 2000).

The Albanian Census does not collect information about international migration, therefore we focus on internal migration in this study. Though the reasons are unclear, even information about internal migration is scant. In general push and pull factors can be discerned from the reasons given for migration. Push factors may be, for example, when one's economic situation is no longer stable in a region, or if local conflicts begin to threaten one's livelihood. Push factors can also refer to social pressures, including exclusion or discrimination (for example the prejudice directed against unmarried mothers). Pull factors, by contrast, are factors that cause the destination region to appear more attractive than the home region. These include, for example, the existence of more comfortable living conditions, more opportunities for paid jobs, better educational and health facilities, etc. Pull factors may also refer to social draws, such as the desire to join the family members who have already migrated.

<sup>8</sup> We would like to thank the members of the migration group for their support with this information (INSTAT 2004a).



During Albania's socialist past, internal migration did not exist as a matter of free choice, but rather as a necessity of national economic requirements and of political placing. Thus, push and pull factors did not play a strong role. The process of voluntary internal migration with which we are concerned, therefore, began when the socialist system collapsed. And even if the Census data do not allow us to clearly identify the reasons for people's migration, they do allow us to compare migrants and non-migrants, with special attention to human capital, employment status, and household configuration.





# *History of Internal Migration and Gender Relationships in Albania*

## 2.1 MIGRATION<sup>9</sup>

Migration is omnipresent in Albanian history. Its dimensions, intensity, direction, and motives have been determined by the economic, political, and social developments that have occurred in Albania over time. In general, migration in Albania has fuelled urbanization (UNDP 2000). The removal of barriers to the free movement of people in Albania in the early 1990s was accompanied by a huge wave of migration from villages and smaller towns to Tirana and other large cities. Thus, a strong sociocultural transformation began in Albania, with people from the rural areas moving to both the urban centers of their regions and also to the Capital, Tirana. People who were originally from the smaller cities often moved to Tirana or abroad. Different cultural traditions that were locally rooted are now being carried to different areas of the country where they are placed in dynamic confrontation.

Internal migration in Albania could be described by dividing it into several stages: the first stage in 1923–1945; the second stage in 1945–1990; and the third stage from 1990 to today.

In this section we first briefly review the history of internal migration in Albania and then present a description of the traditional family and the division of labor for different regions in Albania. We will then analyse the Census against this background information.

*First stage 1923–1945:* This period was marked by the large-scale migration of people from remote mountainous areas to the lowlands and, in particular, to the coastline. It coincided with the emergence of capitalism, the first steps towards the development of industry, communications, trade and services. It also corresponded with the first attempts to solve the agrarian problem and the creation of a favorable climate for foreign investment. These factors encouraged the growth of cities, which in turn encouraged migration toward the urban areas.

*Second stage 1945–1990:* This period was characterized by the absence of both internal and international migration flows. With the establishment of the socialist regime, after the end of the World War II, law prohibited emigration from Albania. At the same time internal migration was permitted, but controlled and guided by the state. The period until 1960 was characterized by the accelerated development of the secondary sector (industry and construction) and of the services sector (transport).

<sup>9</sup> This part was done with the much-appreciated help of the migration group (INSTAT 2004a).

During this time internal migration of the population was controlled but not totally forbidden, as became the case in later years. The average annual rates of increase for the urban population during this 10-years period were over 6%. After 1960 a strategy limiting internal migration from the rural to urban areas was implemented as the government tried, without success, to encourage increased population of the rural areas.

*After 1990:* The third phase began in 1991 and coincides with the transformation period. It is characterized by the lack of official policies governing internal migration. During this period, there was no control over the free movement of people. The movement that happened was accompanied by a massive, chaotic, and disproportional development of the urban zones in comparison to the rural areas. Internal migration toward the urban centers led to a decline of 13% in the rural population in the 2001 Census compared to the previous Census of 1989. In the previous period (1945-1990) the rural population had actually increased by 20%. Not only did the population move from the villages to the towns, but also from the mountainous regions to the hillside areas, from the more remote areas to urban countryside, and from rural areas with a cold climate and little arable land to villages with a milder climate and more cultivation opportunities.

Statistical trends that are especially reflective of social issues demonstrate the existence of large population movements toward urban centers. Associated with this migration is a transfer of subculture, mentality, traditions, lifestyle, etc. These come together in the towns and cities amid some chaos, and ultimately become integrated in ways that can be either peaceful or violent. The original identity of

towns often changes considerably due to different sociocultural norms and values of the newcomers from those of the town inhabitants. At the same time towns themselves lose part of their original population to more urban areas. Thus both the urban areas and the more provincial towns were, and continue to be, confronted with a massive turnover in their population (Fuga et al. 1998).

## 2.2 DESCRIPTION OF GENDER RELATIONS IN ALBANIA

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The description of family and household types is crucial for a gendered perspective. Albania's cultural traditions and social structures are similar to other Mediterranean societies (Çuli 2000). As mentioned earlier, northern Albania is known to have a strong clan-based tradition that was patrilineally and patrilocally organized; this tradition is/was somewhat less strong in the central and southern Albania. Patrilineality and patrilocality indicate patterns of descent and residence according to the father's family. It is important to note that in patrilineal and patrilocal families, inheritance and succession practices generally exclude women. In such family organizations men, as well as their male relatives from their father's family, have authority over the other members of the family. Usually male-oriented social orders like these produce gender relationships characterized by inequality; often women have little power over their lives, though the degree of powerlessness is dependent on the woman's stage in life (women at certain stages in life, and in certain contexts, may come to wield considerable power over themselves and the family).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Schlegel (1972) in turn shows for matrilineal societies that it is the particular division of labor and the degree of this division that influences women's positions in the household and in the social organization of the community. A rough summary of her findings about ethnic groups that are matrilineally organized and thus allow women a relative structural advantage is that if women do most of the work for subsistence or if they do very little, their status is inferior to that of men; on the other hand if both men and women perform an equal amount subsistence work, women have the most opportunity for equal status.

On other hand gender relationships depend on purely local institutions, such as the kinship system (Cohen 1969). In other instances, the state can legally prescribe the rights and duties of its citizens. As such the state can also advocate for equal rights between men and women. And since the state typically regulates only those relationships in the “public sphere” it is possible that different contexts influencing gender relationships might exist inside and outside the household.

In Albania, the patrilineal and patrilocal social organization dominated gender relationships in the private sphere. Meanwhile the socialist Albanian state imposed another structure for the public sphere, one that promoted equal opportunities for men and women in education and the labor market. Women were even given a number of key, high-level positions. As a result, literacy rates rose from low levels at the beginning of the socialist regime to nearly 100 per cent by 1989. Nonetheless, women in the socialist regime had a triple burden: at home they had complete responsibility for child-care and housework while men contributed much less; and women were expected to contribute at work as much time and effort as men.

Changes that are now occurring in the public sphere cannot turn back the process of gender equality initiated during the socialist regime completely. During the socialist period, individuals and families had virtually no freedom to choose where to live or how to work. It was the state that made these decisions according to its own needs and priorities. This meant that young couples were often separated from their families and moved to different regions, making spouses more dependent upon one another than on their extended

families. This does not mean that certain traditional institutions were extinguished or erased completely from people’s identities or social surroundings, but these contexts were often modified.

Depending upon the nature of state priorities and how effective the state is at imposing them on people’s daily lives, the consequences of state action on women and men can vary. In Albania today both traditional structures and state regulations interact differently in different regions. In areas where the patrilineal patrilocal traditions were very strong in the past (such as in the northern regions) we would expect a non-coersive state to have difficulties imposing its regulations. Consequently, if state regulations are weak or cannot be imposed legally, the opportunities for women in patrilineal, patrilocal contexts risk being more restricted than in regions where such traditions are weaker (i.e. urban areas).<sup>11</sup>

With regard to education, we see that Albania faces many paradoxes. According to most modern understandings, education is an undisputed asset. The same understanding holds that education should provide both economic and social returns, such as income, decision-making power, and prestige. Hence, in a modern context, education is valued for both boys and girls in hopes that it will provide them with the means to fend and provide for themselves.

In a patriarchal tradition, education is considered most important for boys, who are considered the traditional breadwinners. For girls (higher) education can be considered an investment not worthwhile, as the girls are expected to marry and enter into the protection of their husbands. Furthermore, from a patri-

<sup>11</sup> Cohen (1969) refers to weak nation-states as “inchoate incorporative states” and describes them as “one that has not yet completely subverted local sources of solidarity, allegiance, and authority” (Cohen 1969:661). A “successful incorporative state is one that has secured the transfer of loyalty and the exercise of authority from local nexuses to the state. Local boundaries continue to exist, but they are primarily for administrative purposes and for the distribution of the state’s bureaucratic representatives. ... In a nation with a successful incorporative state, the individual’s loyalties are only to the state; they are not divided between local groups and the state” (Cohen 1969:661-662).

archal point of view, sending daughters to a place of higher education risks exposing them to personal danger (kidnapping, trafficking, or rape), which can in turn damage family honor. Higher education for girls is further perceived as a threat to male authority since it encourages “critical” thinking and independent decision-making. When education for girls is valued from a patriarchal perspective, it is usually because of its indirect contribution to a girl’s married life: the argument is that if women are better educated then they will associate with men who are also better educated and therefore be more able to provide for their wives.

In Albania today, strong patriarchal attitudes co-exist and mix with modern attitudes. It is difficult to distinguish which logic is at work when trying to understand the reasons why girls are either encouraged to or discouraged or hindered from pursuing education. Albania’s transformation phase has challenged the unquestioned benefit of higher education for boys in particular, since the economic and social returns are not as substantial. Many boys wishing to pursue higher education have left the country for institutions abroad.

If education is valued for boys and girls, we expect high levels of school attendance, especially since education in Albania is generally available to everyone, albeit with some notable impediments to access in the rural areas.

Education was strongly emphasized during the socialist period. For most Albanian men and women today the education of their children is very important although, as discussed above, the reasons may vary. This is partially demonstrated in the many sacrifices that families now make for the education of their children. We expect differences in educational attainment to have a minimal impact on decision making power in patrilineal and patrilocal

settings (in particular in the northern areas), at least compared to other, more important factors (e.g. the age of a woman, whether she has sons, etc.). However in less patriarchal contexts, as in central and southern Albania, we expect education to have a greater impact on gender relationships. For these reasons the history of social organization with particular reference to family and household is indispensable.

Theoretically, family and household are not equivalent, but they often overlap. Social change has direct implications for the household structure and also affects decision-making processes within the household. For example, if women who were previously outside the labor market begin to work, then this will greatly affect the organization of the household, in particular of those with children. By contrast, in cases where the rapid process of transformation causes women to lose previous employment, households are forced to seek new economic solutions. Likewise if mass unemployment occurs, households will face intense pressures on a daily basis. Power among the members of a household is negotiated individually, and thus (usually) results in different opportunities for men and women according to the gender roles and to human capital.

Foreigners usually picture Albania as if the northern area, with its tribal history, is representative of the country as a whole. The character of this region was largely based in the Kanun, a compendium of laws and customs that served as the foundation for social behavior and self-government (the Ghegs).<sup>12</sup> Further elements of this social pattern are seen in arranged marriages, dowries, strong blood ties, and blood feuds. This social pattern clearly prescribed gender roles in society, and there are various suggestions in the

<sup>12</sup> This behavioral code was written down by Lekë Dukagjini (1410-1491) who fought together with Skanderberg, the Albanian National hero.

text that women were to serve, endure, and produce offsprings. Such behavioral codes codified and legitimated men's superiority over women, who were treated like objects more than as human beings with their own needs. It is this limited picture of Albanian families and gender relationships<sup>13</sup> that has passed abroad and attracted scholarly attention. Possibly this can be explained by the "exotic" nature of such tribal patterns within the boundaries of Europe. Indeed, in the central and southern regions of Albania the social structure was actually semi-feudal, and the Kanun much less influential. Meanwhile scholars have directed far less attention toward the rapidly changing structure of the household, family and gender relationships.

We emphasize that generalizing about Albania as a whole using this picture of Northern Albania obscures real circumstances, even as they existed by 1918. As early as 1918, when the country (with the exception of parts of the southern region) was occupied by the Austro-Hungarian army, the "first population Census" in Albania<sup>14</sup> (so termed by Gruber and Pichler (2002)) shows that although such patriarchal structures existed, they were not as uniform as later descriptions made them out to be. And indeed, neither are these patriarchal structures so dominant in the lives of Albanian men and women today. The "clear male majority of the population," as was suggested by censuses elsewhere in the Balkans, was not confirmed true for Albania. Gruber and Pichler thus conclude that "(a) apparently, female under-registration did not take place systematically or on a large scale" (in the first census) (Gruber and Pichler 2002:354).<sup>15</sup> The patrilocal and patrilineal patterns of house-

hold and family organization that were observed in the north according to the 1918 "first Census" were widespread in the northern most isolated areas. By contrast, in other areas of Albania, nuclear and extended family households, constitute a larger proportion of total households than the joint-family, patrilineal household.

Furthermore, the overall average age at marriage according to the 1918 Census was eighteen years for women and twenty-eight years for men (with rural-urban variations). Thus the average age difference between spouses was ten years, suggesting a cultural pattern of male dominance. Gruber and Pichler (2002: 360) argue that the differences between urban and rural marriage patterns were the result of differences in economic, social, and political organization. Using data from the 1918 Census, they conclude that it was not "... a diversified system of production, division of labor, and strongly differing social and legal conditions in urban and rural zones" that led to different patterns in household formation, but the diminishing "obligation for reproduction for cultural and economic reasons" (such as religious belief or economic dependency) (Gruber and Pichler 2002: 361) leading to a trend of decreasing complexity in households. They also highlight the limited housing space available in urban environments. These results suggest that women and men's situations varied more particularly in the central and southern regions of Albania and probably less dependent on the Kanun than has generally been assumed.

As mentioned above, the socialist period saw the modernization of Albanian society along

<sup>13</sup> Gruber and Pichler describe this northern and rural area as follows: "The northern Albanian upland was one zone isolated from the outside world with a subsistence economy, a traditional legal system of self-governance, and a specific social organization (...)" (Gruber and Pichler 2002:358).

<sup>14</sup> For details about the exact coverage of the districts, number of people, contents of the information, and dates, see Gruber and Pichler (2002).

<sup>15</sup> It is important to note that if the 1918 census is compared to a sample of 10 villages from the 1930 census, where the census "showed a ratio of 110 men to 100 women. The influence of under-registration of young women can be seen by the fact that within the adult population (age 20 or older) the ratio was 97 men to 100 women, while among the youngest ages, two-thirds were males in 1930" (Gruber and Pichler 2002: 354).

with the attempted improvement in women's status. The post second World War legislation formally sanctioned the equality between men and women. Under this legislation women won their rights to vote, speak freely, join the labor force, earn equal pay, etc. Paraphrasing Fullani, it is difficult to say and complicated to judge in which way the socialist state really affected women. New legal rights improved their situation on paper but it is not known whether women really could exercise their newfound freedoms. It is possible that these new rights were hampered by women's obligations in both the public and private spheres. Women may have worked night shifts along with men, enjoyed equal access to education, and had more routes to increased social status, but in general their situation at home did not change (Fullani 2000). Socialist policies helped women in terms of their economic potential and political representation, but it did not create parity in gender relationships. Academic literature reveals this phenomenon in various other ex-socialist states (Gal and Kligman 2000), and also in the memories of various women who experienced socialism at different stages in life (Pritchett Post 1998).

The socialist state never encouraged women to become aware of their inner freedom, or to question men's power within the household. Hence women's empowerment is crucially dependent on their understanding of relationships with their peers, their families and their husbands. However, as the situations of other ex-socialist states show, frequent efforts to address such gender disparities meet with great resistance (Gal and Kligman 2000). At times they may even encourage violence, as noted recently by the Vice-minister of Culture, Edmond Dragoti (Gjoka 2004). Again and again it is argued that to address these gender relations one must attack, undermine, and otherwise tamper with society, culture and tradition.

In the Albanian folk tradition, women have been seen as "brave," faithful supporters who replaced their fallen husbands or brothers in battle, and who worked hard in the fields to provide for their families. This picture was reinforced during the socialist period (as was also the case in other ex-socialist countries (e.g. Gal and Kligman 2000)). Normative expectations during the socialist period required women to be perfect housewives and mothers, to sacrifice for their families, and to be kind and polite to their husband's relatives. A woman's identity was further tied to her gender-specific roles. The socialist system in Albania did not prohibit femininity, but nor did it encourage feminine values. Moreover, it emphasized that women should become like the masculine model, something that could never be achieved and also caused women to deny some aspects their gender identity (Çuli 2000). As Occhipinti notes, with reference to Eastern European writers, "... the concept of women's emancipation in socialism was not linked to individualism, as it was in the West, but to collectivism and 'socialist patriarchy' (...). The official goal of gender inequality was to be measured not in terms of individual satisfaction and liberty, but of the collective good, the strengthening of the family, the benefits to the socialist whole" (Occhipinti 1996:14).

With the fall of socialism, Albanian society needed to find a new way of functioning both politically and economically. As in other countries, various agents in society began competing for legitimate authority upon the collapse of the socialist regime. Two main venues of competition can be identified in Albania: the discussions reinforcing the patriarchal functioning of society and those promoting a modern understanding of the new Albanian state. "The Albanian history of 'post-communist transition' was marked by the withdrawal of the totalitarian state presence in the farthest corners of the country, and by repeated processes of complete state disintegration" (Schwandner-Sievers 2001:108). Social



agents searched for models that had worked in the past in Albania or that were successful abroad. Albania, weakened by the fall of the socialist state, became a place where the authoritarian and patriarchal structure of traditional households had some appeal. As pointed out by Holland (1998) and mentioned above by Cohen (1969), loyalties found in the pre-socialist organization of family relationships might grow stronger than loyalties to a nation-state in which many had lost trust. As Holland states: "Disbelief in the power of the state to protect and defend Albanians' political and economic rights emanates from the country's history of foreign occupation and domination" (Holland 1998:67). Indeed, some authors go as far as to claim that with the fall of socialism in 1991, "Albanians returned not to the laws of the state but to their own ancient construction of social relations embodied in the Kanun of Lek Dukajini, a compendium of customs concerned with family and clan honor, passed down largely unchanged since the European Middle Ages and used by the tribal elders to regulate the mountains and control blood feuds ... In 1996, it was estimated, there were 2,000 active blood feuds in Albania, involving as many as 60,000 of Albania's 3 million people" (Holland 1998:67 quoting Pettifer 1996). These figures are to be taken with great caution, as data have never been collected (officially or unofficially) about the number of blood feuds active in Albania. We therefore see little basis for this figure. Nevertheless, it is likely that some aspects of this northern area traditional culture persist in Albania today, as shown by newspapers articles.<sup>16</sup> As mentioned earlier, the "first Albanian Census" in 1918 already testified that the social landscape was not as uniform as is presented in contemporary literature from abroad (Gruber and Pichler 2002). Forty-four years of socialism brought about new experiences, especially for

women: paid employment in "the public sphere" and, in particular, more access to education. That Albanian society would simply revert to a tribal organization with no modern influences is improbable, despite the fact that some social behavior belonging to that type of organization (such as blood feuds) has reappeared. In her analyses of the transformation process, Schwandner-Sievers (2001) describes such behavior but highlights its different guise and meaning nowadays.

After the fall of socialism, Albania largely succeeded in providing targeted assistance to the poor when compared with other low-income countries (Alderman 2002). And, despite strong turmoil, Albania has found its way to becoming a democratic nation-state with a commitment to gender equality. These can be seen in the approval of a democratic constitution in 1998 and the ratification of international agreements, like the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (Calloni 2002). One of the main gender concerns in Albania today seems to be the missing link between putative and real equality in terms of access to employment, businesses, credit institutions, health care and social services. There are also questions about gender equality in civic participation and political decision-making. Albanian law prohibits gender discrimination and job segregation in public and private employment. But despite this prohibition, and despite the high level of female education in male-dominated fields, employment opportunities for women are still scarce. In the current period of rapid transformation, women have been the first category of people to suffer (INSTAT 2004b). They were the first to become jobless as a result of factory closures, and in villages the situation for women was even worse. The disappearance of cooperatives eliminated an im-

<sup>16</sup> The authors of this paper do not deny or ignore the fact that some women in or from certain, locally restricted districts of north-eastern Albania still suffer the consequences of the "traditional" patriarchal, patrilocal, and patrilineal regime, but they challenge the generalizing view that all Albanian women are submitted to it as is often unfortunately the case in references from abroad about Albania.

portant venue where women could interact with their peers.<sup>17</sup> Consequently, many women became relegated back into the domestic sphere. The combination of decreased agricultural work, fewer available jobs, and the large-scale migration to urban areas caused a new image of women to appear in which they are seen taking care of the household in harsh conditions of total isolation and loneliness (Miria 2000). According to the UNDP, women are paid less on average when compared with men (UNDP 1999). However, a more careful inspection of the situation (Ekonomi et al. 1999) demonstrates that in Albania, the difference in remuneration is more a question of women's restricted access to managerial positions than one of unequal payment for same jobs.

In the public sphere, a strong decline in women's political participation has taken place, as has been documented in other Eastern European countries (Gal and Kligman 2000). The highest rates of political participation among women in Albania occurred in the period from 1970 to 1991, where between 20% and 33% of parliamentary representatives were women. In 1997 the rate fell to 7.1%, and in 2001 it was even less with 6.4%. Today female participation in politics remains low (INSTAT 2003:37). Interestingly women have become more involved in social participation at the local level, although this is seen to have little general impact on the political – the decision-making sphere.

Political turmoil in the years 1990 and 1991, as well as in 1997, particularly threatened the security of girls, something which helped to legitimate increased male control over women. However, despite the common image of women's inferior position in Albania the transformation process has not completely turned back the gains that women have made in re-

cent decades. Along with traditional household upbringings, women who grew up during the socialist period also experienced time away from their families, integration with extra-familial peer groups, and greater access to education. Indeed, education has become a highly valued asset in Albania, and many women receive professional training both within the country and abroad.

The era of transformation brought about an uncertainty with respect to behavioral rules. While pre-socialist ways of life have been more likely to reassert themselves in rural areas, the influx of Western culture (via the media and Albanians' experiences abroad) has opened up new opportunities particularly for young people. Indeed, given recent transformations in the experiences and education of Albanian women, we must expect some heterogeneity in social organization to exist, even in some areas where traditional attitudes persist. We expect young women in particular to take hold of new opportunities and promote change in gender relationships.

### 2.3 INTERSECTION BETWEEN MIGRATION AND GENDER

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The intersection between gender and migration is complex. Both may impact male and female roles, simply because of the demographic and economic structure of particular regions. We also think that gender and migration patterns combined with each other to create a wide range of opportunities and obstacles, particularly for women in urban areas.

From the conceptual deliberations about gender and migration we could propose some tentative hypotheses, however it is extremely difficult to consider every variable during peri-

<sup>17</sup> For a detailed description of the division of labour in agriculture between men and women, see Gjermani et al. (2003).

ods of such rapid and profound transformation. One problem, for example, is that the census data do not explicitly identify one's reasons for migrating and, therefore, these must be assessed indirectly. Migration can result from a number of factors: people might expect to find greater freedom or opportunities, such as better education for themselves and their children, better health care, better work opportunities, or because they see no positive future in their current location (either as a result of discrimination or the lack of an available livelihood). They might migrate to join family that has already re-settled in the destination region, or they may wish to return to homes that they left as a result of forced migration during the socialist period. For others, the fear of retribution arising from a blood feud might lead to an attempted escape from the violence.

A second problem is that the census registration is a process geared toward the collection of quantitative data. It therefore largely ignores the subjective norms and values that are crucial for understanding the nature of gender relationships. Hence, it does not take into account to a great extent the norms and subjective values essential towards the understanding of gender relations.

Thus hypotheses about the intersection of gender and migration are bound to exhibit some contradictions; and even when it appears that one hypothesis or the other is accurate, often one finds a preponderance of intervening factors. Another practical problem we face is the operational definition of migrants. For our study, migration is limited to an assessment of people's movement over a twelve-year period. Thus any information about the migrants with regard to their household or family circumstances prior to 1989 is not known.

For these reasons we have decided to carry out descriptive analyses according to our thoughts presented in Section 2. We base the

analyses on indicators of decision-making power and personal independence. We systematically describe the situation of migrants in comparison to non-migrants with regard to indicators of possible advantages or disadvantages.





## ***Methodological Considerations***

### **3.1 DATA**

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The Albanian Census is carried out, usually once every ten years, in order to document the demographic and socio-economic conditions that prevail in Albania at national and regional levels. The Census of April 2001 was the first Census in which information was collected by approaching individuals and not families. The government's effort to place the individual at center stage of the statistical instrument was part of its human rights and democratization agenda.

Census takers used the census guide prepared by the UN, the UNECE and EUROSTAT to facilitate the data collection. The aim of the population and housing census was to collect information on every person who was born before 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2001, (the date of the Census being the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2001), including those Albanians who had emigrated abroad. The information was collected on an individual and household basis. This information was combined with data on buildings and dwellings, as well on living conditions and properties owned by the households.

### **3.2 METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS**

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*Gender-aware questions:* In order to conduct gender-specific analyses it is necessary to avoid using paradigms and methodological instruments that are "gender-neutral." "Gender-neutral" usually refers to questions that are asked without regard to the distinct "life spheres" of men and women. Thus, "gender-neutral" questions tend to be centred around the "public sphere" (i.e. the labor market) as opposed to the private, or "domestic sphere".

We cannot say that the Albanian Census of 2001 was particularly concerned at the beginning with collecting data that would allow for gender-sensitive analysis. The Albanian Census must be considered a typical national census. Typical national censuses are usually considered "gender-neutral." This represents the most significant limitation to the data. Although some of the authors were involved in the elaboration of the census instruments, it was not until the data came under scrutiny that this shortcoming became obvious. This leads us to conclude that gender awareness must be taken into account in all domains, even in those where it has traditionally been absent (i.e. in the national censuses). Over-

coming gender-blindness, in other words, is a process in which everyone must become engaged. This holds true in particular for a society in which men and women were commonly considered to be equal. However, even if it were true that equality was achieved between men and women during the socialist period, recent transformations have modified the previous social order and have shaped new social relationships to which gender-sensitive instruments must be applied.

*Household headship:* In addition to the household being a central place for gender disparities in decision-making power, different types of households are also known to have different levels of vulnerability to poverty or to “role overload.” Thus we expect different household types to experience and cope with migration in different ways. We expect the trajectories to be particularly dependent upon the “head of household,” since this person is usually responsible for creating opportunities for the household as a whole. Consequently, the gender of the household head is important. The household head is the reference person, the person who administers over each household member. In processing the results of the census it became clear that the definition of the reference person was too restrictive, so that only very few households ended up with a woman head. However, this is not a problem specific to Albania. The issue of identifying the household head has been discussed at large both by Buvinic and Rao Gupta (1997) as by Varley (1996). As Buvinic and Rao Gupta demonstrate, the most serious limitation is that the term “head of household” is not neutral. “It carries additional meanings that reflect a traditional emphasis on households as undifferentiated units with a patriarchal system of governance and no internal conflicts in the allocation of resources” (Buvinic and Gupta 1997: 260).

In the Albanian version of the Enumerator Handbook, written by the Institute of Statistics

used for the collection of the data in the 2001 Census, the definition of the reference person or “household head” is as follows: “the reference person is defined as the person in charge of the main responsibilities in the process of taking decisions related to the household economic unit, and whose position would have to be agreed upon by all members of the unit” (the authors’ free translation).

In Albanian society the reference person or household head is typically male, since this is the position that men have traditionally held. Generally speaking, women served as “head of household” only under particular circumstances, for instance when a family is without an adult male. In such cases, decision-making power automatically passes to the woman. In other words a woman will generally assume this role only when she becomes the sole “potential breadwinner” in the family.

Due to this bias, we looked at the head of household where it made sense, and otherwise disaggregated the respondents by sex. We also took the household structure into account. This approach is justified insofar as the household is one major social space in which opportunities for men and women differ considerably.

As mentioned earlier, not all members of a household have the same access to resources, services, or opportunities. Gender inequalities are pervasive, persisting in many aspects of daily life. Because of these inequalities, many social scientists have argued that the family is a place of bargaining and contestation for power. The well known economist Amartya Sen calls this a model of co-operation and conflict. According to Bina Agarwal, a feminist economist who has developed this concept further, the household/ family is a complex matrix of relationships in which there is ongoing negotiation, subject to constraints set by gender, age, type of relationship and “undisputed traditions.” Gender interactions

within the family as well as in the community, marketplace, and society at large contain both elements of co-operation and conflict (Bahsin 2000).

There are different types of male-headed households. For a woman living with her husband in a family cell with the husband as the household head, life presents far different options than for a woman living among her husband's family with her father-in-law as the household head. An unmarried woman living with her parents, or a widow living with her husband's family under the influence of her brother-in-law will also experience different possibilities and constraints. The family structure affects how a woman's needs are targeted and addressed while they are members of a household. Planners must be cognizant of the potential invisibility of women living in households headed by men, whether in a nuclear or extended family structure. They must also be aware of the power relations within families that directly impact women's access to resources. The tendency observed in Albania today toward life in the family and the appearance of recent laws have had an important impact on inheritance and other practices shaped by patrilineality. In nuclear families, for example, a greater degree of joint decision-making exists, as well as joint control of savings/incomes and the possibility for women to inherit land.

But what about the women headed households? The significance of this phenomenon in a patrilineal society in terms of women's residence, inheritance, freedom of movement and education - to name just a few factors, merits greater attention. This is particularly true in the case of widows, as their situation has

attracted much scholarly discussion.

When we speak about women headed households the image is of a single woman (divorced, widowed, separated or abandoned) living on her own with her children (if they are not yet grown). In a wider patrilineal context, there are numerous factors that affect a woman's living situation as a female head-of-household. Does she live with her husband's family? What sort of restrictions do they place on her mobility, individual choices, responsibility/care of the children, etc.? Is she free to sell her husband's portion of the land or must it stay with the family and pass it only to his children? If she lives alone, on whose property does she subsist? Has she legally inherited it and does she have rights to make decisions about its use and sale? Are children in her custody or are they absorbed into the husband's family? Do divorced women have priority in child custody matters or does priority fall to her husband's family?

Economically, women headed households may be extremely vulnerable or relatively comfortable. A woman headed household may be in a better position financially than a woman with an unemployed husband and large family to care for. It is possible that she would have more freedom of movement, as well as more decision-making power than her counterpart in a household cell headed by a man. She may have more property than a married woman in an extended family. But on the other hand she may be very poor.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, it is important to avoid assumptions based on this one variable alone, and to resist the assumption that a lack of male labor causes poverty and vulnerability.

<sup>18</sup> None of the above discussion should be read as a dismissal of female poverty. Indeed the feminisation of poverty is a global trend of which planners, policy-makers and citizens alike are aware. Further, there can be no question that female-headed households experience poverty on a prolific scale. A number of factors explain the correlation between female-headed households and poverty. These include (i) the larger number of persons to care for per worker (ii) that women earn on average a lower income and have less access to and opportunities for lucrative employment, as well as fewer resources like credit and land and 3) female household heads must seek jobs which do not interfere with family responsibilities. These tend to be lower paid (ILO, 1995a: 2). However, poverty and female-headed households cannot be seen as automatically correlative (Chant 2003).

Each of these variables impacts the power and position of the woman household-head and impacts her living conditions. Thus, we will sometimes disaggregate families according to sex in the respective household types they commented on.



### 3.3 INDICATORS

In what follows we summarize the indicators and the variables used to compare situations of migrants and non-migrants. Table 1 summarizes how we transform the deliberations carried out in previous sections to possibilities of statistical analyses and will not be further commented on.

**Table 1:** Indicators Used to Apply a Gender Perspective in Statistics for the Albanian Census

Indicator	Variable	Concept	Operational definition
Migration	Regional strata	Regions characterized according to whether they receive more population than they lose or vice versa.	Positive net migration: regions gaining more than 20 percent population between 1989 to 1991.
			Negative net migration region with loss of more than 20 percent population between 1989 to 1991.
Gender	Reference person, head of household	See section 4.2. for a discussion and definition of household head.	Person designated as household head.
Household and family characteristics	Family type	Family type allocates unequal opportunities for its members according to gender roles.	Six family types: - One-person household - Extended household (nuclear family with other relatives) - Couple without children - Couple with children - One parent family - Other types of families
	Age	For descriptive purposes, cohort	
	Sociodemographic dependency ratio	Structure of household, ratio of school and retirement age to household members of active age: proxy for burden of household work, proxy for structural hindrances to enter the labor force (for women).	Socio demographic dependency ratio= $((age=0-14)+(65 \text{ and older}))/((15-64 \text{ year olds}))$
	Age at marriage	The larger the average age difference of men and women at marriage the less bargaining power for women. The older the woman at marriage, the better prospects for household bargaining power.	Age at (last) marriage for men and women
Household structure	Household characteristics	Opportunities as a result of household structure.	- Dependency ratio - Percentage households with pre-school children - Percentage with children
Human capital	Education	Higher education as a resource for bargaining power.	- Level of education, primary, secondary, upper secondary, tertiary  - Number of years  - Literacy: yes or no
		Education as a resource for the labor market.	
		Education as a tool for empowerment, emancipation and defence of personal and other rights	
		"Value" of education for children.	
Economic activity	Characteristics of paid work	Independence/autonomy through paid employment.	- Employed, employer, family worker, own account worker
		Working status: paid work allows for better bargaining positions.	- Mean work hours per week
		Amount of work (hours weekly).	- Mean paid work hours passed week
Living standard		Structure of goods as indicator for well-being or for consumption patterns.	- Ratio of luxury goods to basic household goods.



## Results

### 4.1 DESCRIPTION OF MIGRATION REGIONS AND HOUSEHOLDS

In April 2001, Albania had 726,859 economic household units. These were mainly concentrated in the coastal region. The location of the households depends largely on the pattern of migrations that the country experienced over the past 12 years. If we compare the data from the last two censuses in Albania (1989 and 2001) we notice that throughout there are fluctuations in total population at the district level. Taking these fluctuations into account, we found it helpful in our analysis to divide the country into two regions characterized by: (1) the positive net migration to the region, or (2) the negative net migration from the region.

(1) Positive net migration region is defined as a regional gain in population of more than 20 percent between 1989 and 1991. Positive net migration was observable in the following districts: Tirana, Lezhe, Durres, Kruje, Lushnje, Peqin, Kurbin, Elbasan, Librazhd.

In this section we make a descriptive comparison between the living situations of migrants and non-migrants using the indicators outlined in section 3.3. As mentioned above, household structure is crucial for this comparison. We begin by a comparison of men and women in different household types and also by looking at the living situations of various migrants. We also look at whether regions with different migration “patterns” have different distributions of household types.

In a second step, socio-demographic characteristics, economic activity, particularities of household structure and living standard are presented and systematically compared for household heads.

These descriptions allow us to go into greater detail about some aspects of daily life in which the whole of the population plays a role, not just the heads of household. We also focus on problems resulting from trends in the relationship between migration and, for example, education (e.g. brain drain).

(2) Negative net migration region is defined as a regional loss in population of more than 20 percent between 1989 and 1991. Negative net migration was observable in the following districts: Berat, Bulqize, Devoll, Diber, Gramsh, Gjirokaster, Has, Kucove, Malesi e Madhe, Vlore, Shkoder, Kavaje, Fier, Mallakaster, Pogradec, Delvine, Kolonje, Kukes, Korce, Mat, Mirdite, Permet, Puke, Sarande, Skrapar, Tepelene, Tropoje.

People migrate for various reasons, but most are fundamentally in search of a better way of life. Therefore we want to examine whether people who migrated during the past 10 years now experience living conditions that are comparatively better than those of non-migrants. Unfortunately the census data does not allow us to determine whether migrants themselves are better off than before the period under study. Given our view that migration is a gendered process, we pay special attention to those indicators that may suggest an improvement in women's bargaining power vis-à-vis men within the household and with regard to society in general.

We have labeled household types according to the sex of the household head in order to characterize the gender of the household. The Albanian census shows evidence of various household types, and we have categorized them as follows:

- One-person household;
- Extended household: a nuclear family along with other household members who do not constitute a second family;
- Couple without children: couple without children living in the household;
- Couple with children: couple with children living in the household;

-Other household types: for example households with two or more family cells living together.

Our assumptions regarding the socio-demographic characteristics of households are as follows: in general we expect men headed households to migrate more often than do women headed households. This is because, insofar as public space is understood as a predominantly male arena, it is more difficult for women to adjust to areas with which they are not familiar. Security fears for women, in particular when they have children, become an even greater obstacle to migration.

We also expect the heads of migrant households to be, on average, relatively young (of working age) in comparison to non-migrant households; young people are usually more able to adapt to new situations and often have smaller families to care for. Hence we would expect to find a preponderance of young families among the migrant community.

As Table 2 shows, the heads of the migrant households are younger on average than the heads of non-migrant households (three years younger for men and nine years younger for women, see panel "Total" for men and women respectively). Caution is necessary when comparing male and female heads of households as well as the household types due to census' intrinsic biases in defining the household head.

Table 2: Household Heads According to Age and Migrants Versus Non-migrants

Heads of Households:	Men		Women	
	Non-migrant	Migrant	Non-migrant	Migrant
	Mean age	Mean age	Mean age	Mean age
One person household	51	39	66	57
Extended household	43	34	62	47
Couple with no children	59	51	62	55
Couple with children	45	43	65	58
One parent family	50	45	50	44
Other multifamily	61	57	61	57
Total	49	46	59	50

Sample: Head of households.

Source: INSTAT Census 2001

*Household and family characteristics:* As Table 3 shows, the pattern of distribution in household types between male and female heads of households differs considerably. There are considerably more female household heads in one-person households (24.7% women versus 2.2% men) and in one-parent households (40.1% women versus 1.3% men). Likewise, there are fewer female heads in households consisting of a couple (3.5% versus 12.2% in households with children, and 21.1% versus 71.1% in households without children).

It is not surprising that women are found more often at the head of one-parent households. The large difference can be explained by the fact that in cases of divorce, it is the mother who receives legal custody over her children. Furthermore, in Albania divorced or widowed mothers typically do not remarry, whereas their male counterparts often do.

It is also not surprising to see that the proportion of male heads in one-person households is much lower than the proportion of female heads of the same variety. We explain this partly by the fact that Albanian society is still largely based on patrilineal and patrilocal social structures – as in other Mediterranean countries –, even though these influences have been changing rapidly since the fall of the socialist regime in particular in urban areas. Part of the explanation has also to do with socio-demographic factors influencing behavior (in other European countries, for example, men tend to remarry more often and die earlier than women). On balance, men gain access to families in old age with greater success than do women. Indeed, the age distribution among men and women in one-person households clearly shows that one-person households among men are in large part due to younger men living on their own, whereas among women it appears to be the result of divorce or death of a husband. Only a very few young women live in one-person households (see Figure 1).

Table 3: Distribution of Household Types by Head of Household

	Men		Women	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
One person household	14025	2.2	20571	24.7
Extended household	3015	0.5	2694	3.2
Couple with no children	78701	12.2	2878	3.5
Couple with children	457361	71.1	17562	21.1
One-parent household	8238	1.3	33354	40.1
Other multifamily	82360	12.8	6136	7.4
Total	643700	100	83195	100

Sample: Head of households.  
Source: INSTAT Census 2001

Given the tradition of extended families in Albania, we would expect migrants to live on their own more often than non-migrants, or in more limited, nuclear families. Given weaker social control migrants experience in their new areas of residence, it is also possible that divorces and separations occur at a greater rate in the migrant community. This would produce more one-parent households with young children in the migrant community (due to the younger age of migrant parents) as compared to non-migrant one-parent households (whose heads tend to be older or widowed). Or in the case of Albania, where many men have migrated, it indicates the case of married women on their own, so-called “defacto” heads of household).

Figure 1: Age Distribution One-Person Household By Sex (in % of group total)



Sample: Population: all aged 14 and older.  
Source: INSTAT Census 2001.

A further consequence of migration could be the greater diversity of household types, such as unmarried cohabitation, which has been rare in the past. In regions losing population we expect a larger proportion of one-parent households compared to other household types, in particular those with women as heads.

Table 4 shows that the extended household type, though unusual, is a slightly more common living arrangement in households headed by women than in households headed by men. A comparison of family types according a household's migrant or non-migrant status demonstrates that migrant households with a male head are more likely to consist of couples with no children. As expected, the proportion of migrant one-parent households with female heads is more than ten percent higher than non-migrant households; meanwhile the proportion of female migrant one-person households is more than ten percent lower than non-migrant one-person households. This is an important fact for the future development of household types, given that female household

families rather than among the non-migrant ones.

Table 3 and Table 4 suggest that we should take a more detailed look at one-parent households. Table 5 shows that nearly two-thirds of women heads in one-parent households are widowed, somewhat less than one-third are married, and the rest are divorced. It is not common for Albanian women to have children outside of marriage, as is the case in many other European countries. Put more precisely, women do not become heads of households as unmarried mothers (only one percent of the women declared being heads of households in a one-parent family). There may however, be a greater number of unmarried mothers in other types of households.

As was expected, the proportion of widowed women is larger among non-migrant one-parent households than among those in the migrant community (60% versus 53%). Unexpectedly however, the proportion of migrant married women is higher than the proportion of non-migrant married women (39% versus 29%). This suggests that married men, after migrating within the country, continue to migrate abroad, leaving their spouses and children behind. It could also be the result of loosening ties to the nuclear family, which, combined with the absence of a migrant husband, encourage women to migrate in a different direction, for example toward their own families. Unfortunately the census data cannot confirm any possible explanations.

The difference in civil status among one-parent households headed by women is minimal when comparing regions that have gained or lost population. The only salient result from such a comparison is that women in regions losing population are more likely to be married than their counterparts in regions gaining population. At the same time a slightly greater proportion of women are divorced in regions gaining population as compared to those regions

Table 4: Distribution of Household Types by Head of Household and By Migrant Status

	Men		Women	
	non-migrants	migrants	non-migrants	migrants
One person household	2.2	1.7	25.7	13.8
Extended household	0.5	0.6	3.1	4.3
Couple with no children	12.6	9.2	3.5	3.5
Couple with children	70.6	74.9	21.2	19.6
One-parent family	1.3	1.2	39.2	50.5
Other multifamily	12.8	12.5	7.3	8.3
Total	100	100	100	100

Sample: Head of households.

Source: INSTAT Census 2001

heads in general are known to be more vulnerable to economic disadvantage and stress. There are no differences in the distribution of household types with respect to head of household if we compare regions that are gaining or losing population. Furthermore, and contrary to our expectation, we find more married women heads among the migrant one-parent

loosing population. This result is to be expected, since the regions gaining population are more urban in character than those losing population.

Household size plays a role in the magnitude of a woman's domestic burden: the higher the socio-demographic dependency ratio, the more people there are to both care and provide for. This is true in particular now that the socialist regime, with its provisions for the care of children and the elderly, has collapsed.<sup>19</sup> With regard to the relationship between household size and migration there are two oppo-

Table 5: Marital Status of Women Heads in One-parent Households

	non migrant	migrant
single	1%	1%
married	29%	39%
widowed	60%	53%
divorced	10%	7%

Sample: Head of Households.

Source: INSTAT Census 2001

site hypotheses that appear equally valid: (i) both male and female-headed migrant households will have fewer members and a better dependency ratio, with more working-aged people in the household to support dependants when compared with non-migrant households. This is likely since (comparatively young) migrants leave their original household and, those members less capable of insertion into the labor market remain behind (with the possible exception of small children). We expect the male migrant households to fare somewhat better as they are usually made up of couples. (ii) Since migration is most often caused by the search for better opportunities, people in the process of migrating will attempt to save investment costs by living in large family units, usually with extended family that have already migrated. Finally, it is important to note that children younger than 14 living in a household will necessitate child care, thereby making it difficult for women to access the labor market, in

particular if they are the only parent. Table 6 shows how an average household is structured with regard to the age of its household members.

Table 6 shows evidence that supports our first assumption about small migrant households: the socio-demographic dependency ratio is generally more favorable for male heads of households than for female heads, and more favorable for migrants than for non-migrants. Contrary to our expectation though is that the dependency ratio for migrant female heads of one-parent households is higher than that of their non-migrant counterparts. In addition to the higher dependency ratio, the number of members in migrant one-parent households is, on average, greater than the members of non-migrant one-parent households. Moreover, migrant one-parent households have a greater proportion of young children than non-migrant one-family households (e.g. 1.49 children in the household younger than 18 as compared to 1.13). Hence the structure of woman-headed one-parent households varies according to whether the household has migrated or stayed in place. This suggests that migrant women who are now the heads of one-parent households are disadvantaged when compared to non-migrant counterparts with regard to household structure and dependency ratio. Women heads of one-parent households are also at a disadvantage in comparison with their male counterparts.

The results in terms of household size suggest that migration is influencing a process of change in gender relations. In contrast to what previous studies in particular from abroad have told us, the most prevalent household type is the nuclear family with between four and five members. Indeed, this is in line with observations made in 1918. Non-nuclear household types (extended households and other multi-

<sup>19</sup> There still are such provisions but fewer than during the socialist period and their quality is considered to have decreased when compared to the situation.

family households) constitute less than one-sixth of all households in Albania. As expected the extended household types have men as heads more often than women. That Albanian families live more commonly in nuclear family households does not necessarily mean that they live far from their families or origin. Indeed it is possible that larger family groups simply split into nuclear units that continue to live near to each other. Whether residence is still patrilocal or changing towards neolocal patterns (characterized by the couple living far from both the man's and the woman's families) cannot be determined by means of the Census data. Migrant households are, on average, slightly larger in size than non-migrant households. Non-migrant households with female heads tend to be slightly larger than their male-headed

counterparts, whereas almost no difference is observable in size between migrant households. Thus there is also evidence in support of our second argument above regarding the large size of migrant households. Mean household size varies across household types, but it does not vary substantially according to the sex of the household head, or according to the household's migrant or non-migrant status. Nevertheless, migrant one-parent households with female heads typically have different structures than their non-migrant counterparts, especially where children and elderly are concerned. In migrant households the number of children aged 6 and younger is about twice as high as in non-migrant households (.53 for migrants compared to .27 for non-migrants). The migrant one-parent households

Table 6: Dependency Ratio, Size and Composition of Household According to Gender and Migrant Status

	Dependency ratio <sup>(1)</sup>	Age					Mean household size	Children <18
		0-6	Jul-14	15-17	18-64	over 64		
<b>NONMIGRANT – Male heads of households</b>								
Extended household	0.38	0.13	0.22	0.15	1.82	0.39	2.71	0.5
Couple with no children	0.54	0.02	0.02	0.02	1.38	0.71	2.15	0.06
Couple with children	0.57	0.58	0.91	0.33	2.53	0.15	4.5	1.82
One parent family	0.46	0.21	0.47	0.25	2.01	0.37	3.31	0.93
Other multifamily	0.59	0.99	0.54	0.2	3.74	0.81	6.28	1.73
<b>NONMIGRANT – Female Heads of Household</b>								
Extended household	0.73	0.11	0.22	0.11	1.3	0.7	2.44	0.44
Couple with no children	0.35	0.05	0.08	0.06	1.94	0.57	2.7	0.19
Couple with children	0.84	0.8	0.87	0.24	2.5	0.64	5.05	1.91
One parent family	0.55	0.27	0.61	0.25	1.75	0.22	3.1	1.13
Other multifamily	0.5	1.02	0.52	0.2	3.81	0.48	6.03	1.74
<b>MIGRANT – Male heads of households</b>								
Extended household	0.24	0.12	0.22	0.24	2.06	0.22	2.86	0.58
Couple with no children	0.31	0.02	0.02	0.03	1.63	0.48	2.18	0.07
Couple with children	0.62	0.73	0.94	0.32	2.54	0.11	4.64	1.99
One parent family	0.4	0.24	0.46	0.3	2.23	0.31	3.54	1
Other multifamily	0.54	1.04	0.58	0.25	4.05	0.69	6.61	1.87
<b>MIGRANT - Female heads of households</b>								
Extended household	0.5	0.19	0.37	0.16	1.73	0.38	2.83	0.72
Couple with no children	0.28	0.08	0.09	0.06	2.01	0.41	2.65	0.23
Couple with children	0.83	0.88	0.89	0.23	2.49	0.5	4.99	2
One parent family	0.69	0.53	0.71	0.25	1.71	0.12	3.32	1.49
Other multifamily	0.44	1.05	0.52	0.23	4.11	0.36	6.27	1.8

Remarks: <sup>(1)</sup>((age=0-14)+(65 and older))/15-64 year olds in household).

Sample: All household members aggregated to household level.

Source: INSTAT Census 2001.



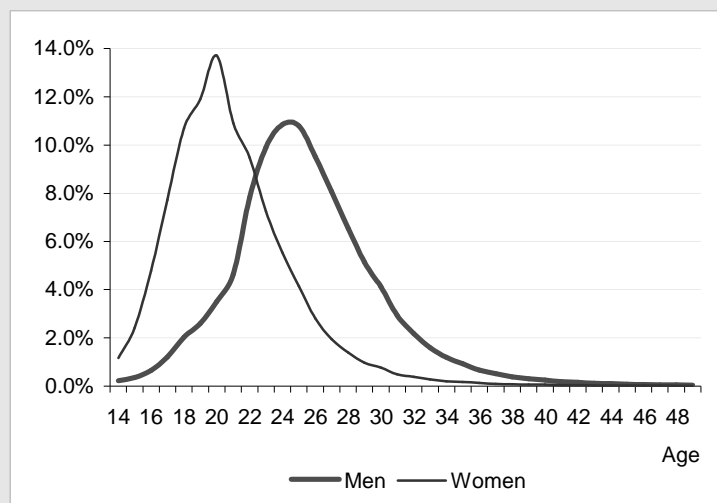
with female heads also have fewer elderly members than their non-migrant counterparts (.12 in comparison to .22), suggesting that there is less available help in the provision of care or that less care is required for the elderly (in the case they need to be cared for). This suggests that, in particular, one-parent households with female heads are confronted with many of the same challenges that one-parent households experience in other countries: the difficulty of providing care for young children while attempting to enter the labor market.

As we saw in section 1.1.3, age at marriage may, in certain contexts, be considered an indicator of a person's decision-making power in the household. We expect marriage age to be higher for those who married after the socialist period, in part due to general uncertainty. We also expect marriage age to be higher among migrants than among non-migrants, because usually young men without any family responsibilities yet are the ones that migrate. However, because our perspective focuses on internal migration we can also observe that young couples migrate together. Figure 2 and 3 show the marriage ages for those couples who married before 1991 and those that married 1991 or later.

In the two figures below (Figure 2 and 3), we see that marriages from 1991 onwards have a somewhat broader distribution in terms of marriage age than those marriages that took place before 1991. The peak age for women to marry is 20 years in both graphs (almost 14% for those having married before 1991, almost 12% for those having married 1991 or later). The peak age for men to marry is 26 years for both periods (approximately 11% of the marriages before 1991 and approximately 10.5% of the marriages from 1991 onwards). For women in particular, the marriage age tends to be higher for those having married in 1991 or later as compared to the time before 1991. The difference for men is not as obvi-

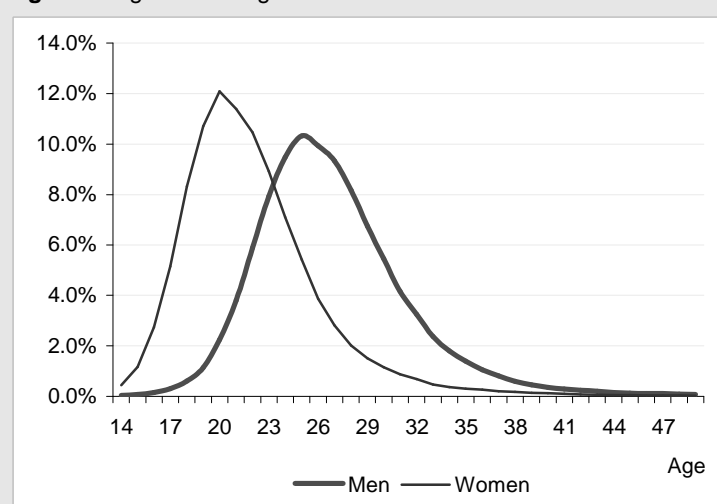
ous as it is for women. Changes in these trends are not expected soon, which is important considering that a woman's decision-making power may – depending on the context – increase substantially if she marries at an older age. This holds especially true if men's age at marriage, as the data suggest, does not decrease substantially, which is the only other option for diminishing the usual age gap between spouses.

**Figure 2: Age at Marriage if Married Before 1991**



Sample: Men and women who married before 1991, age 14 to age 50.  
Source: INSTAT Census 2001

**Figure 3: Age at Marriage if Married 1991 or Later**



Sample: Men and women who married before 1991, age 14 to age 50.  
Source: INSTAT Census 2001

#### 4.1.1 Conclusions Regarding Household and Family Characteristics as They Relate to Gender and Changes in Gender-relations

What do the observed differences mean for men and women's opportunities?

We observe that female heads of households are, generally disadvantaged regarding the dependency ratio when living in a one-parent or couplehousehold with children. Migrant women are considerably disadvantaged in this respect. Female heads of migrant households live in families with more young children and fewer elderly members. Thus, migrant women who are heads of households appear to have a greater domestic burden when compared with their non-migrant counterparts. As a result of the average household configuration, we conclude that migrant women who are heads of one-parent households face the problem of combining paid work and domestic labor.

The data suggest that women appear to be marrying at an older age, whereas the average age for men at the time of marriage has not kept up at an equal pace. This hints at a diminishing gap in spousal age difference and hence at an increased potential for decision-making power within the household.

A general comment that cannot be examined with the available data, but that is worth mentioning, concerns the consequences of the above observations: (i) on the one hand, if migration has led migrants into newcomer status, women living with a partner might be faced with domestic responsibilities at a time in which they cannot necessarily count on help from others. As it is known from women's experience in other countries, being a householder, and therefore isolated from a large social network, can be an obstacle to the attainment of decision-making power. (ii) On the

other hand, migration often causes household members to become more dependent on each other precisely because other support networks in their vicinity are lacking. This can trigger a greater interaction among household members, in particular on the part of men, who are traditionally less involved in the domestic sphere. Such interaction has the potential to foster a more equable environment in the domestic sphere between men and women. Which of these outcomes is more likely cannot be evaluated by the Census data. What the data do indicate, however, is that changes in household structure have direct consequences on existing gender relationships.

The most disadvantaged in this picture are migrant women heads of one-parent households with children younger than the age of 18. Usually these women face the necessity to satisfying both domestic and workplace demands. This population group is especially vulnerable to economic deprivation and role overload. Indeed, as data from the Living Standards Measurement Survey show, the average monthly consumption of households with female heads and children under the age of 18 is lower than that of households with male heads; women heads have consumption expenditures of 89 percent of those of their male counterparts when standardized for the average Albanian family with 4.3 members. If all female households are included then the monthly consumption expenditures drop to 80 percent of that of male households. As was the case for other European countries, this vulnerable population of women is likely to grow in Albania in the future. The government should therefore consider policies that would minimize this vulnerability and its consequences for women and their children.

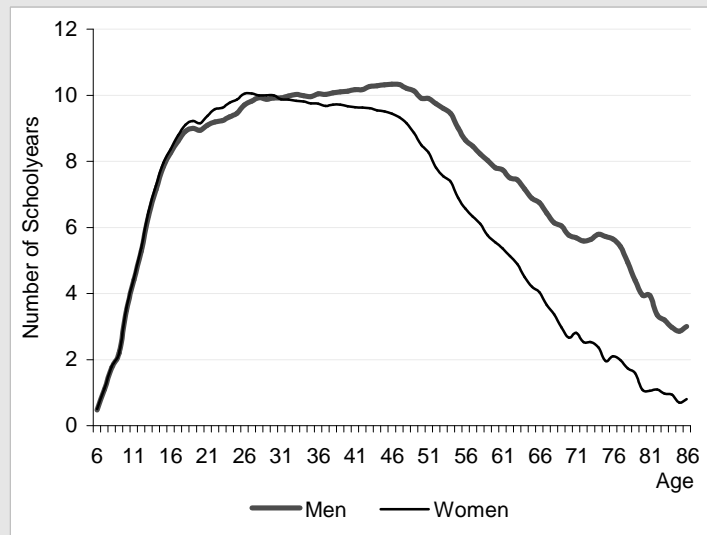
## 4.2 EDUCATION

By the end of 1990, Albania had achieved a high literacy rate, especially compared to the rates found in countries far wealthier than Albania. The illiteracy rate based on the 1989 Census was 7.3 per hundred people aged 6 years and older. This was a remarkable achievement given the situation immediately following the Second World War, when illiteracy was at 80 percent; in rural areas the illiteracy rate dropped as far as 90 to 95 percent. Improvements in education continued during the 1990s. Data from the 2001 Census show a reduction in illiteracy to below 2 percent (INSTAT 2002).

During the socialist period a high value was placed on achieving equal opportunity for men and women. At the same time the government actively relocated many Albanians to parts of the country where their abilities were most suited to state needs. As a result the education level for men and women of both urban and rural areas was nearly equal. We expect that this situation has changed due to the effects of both internal and external migration. As Figure 4 shows, no marked differences in educational attainment are visible up to about the age of 18. Thereafter, young women fare better than young men until the age of 30, when the situation changes in favor of men.

This means that among the youth who were in school during the transition phase (aged 10 to 20 at that time), girls appear to have benefited more than boys. When comparing regions that either lost or gained population, we note that people in regions experiencing positive migration attain a higher level of education. These regional differences, however, do not begin to until about the age of 18. The graph for women suffices to show this comparison, as the educational pattern was similar for both women and men (Figure 5). The same graph was plotted for men and woman separately

**Figure 4:** Number of School Years Completed by Age According to Sex

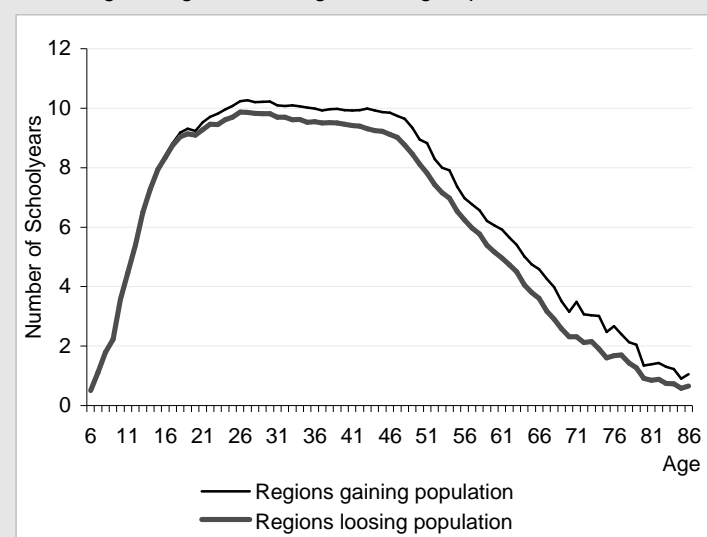


Sample: Whole population.

Source: INSTAT Census 2001

according to their migrant or non-migrant status. The pattern was the same as for the graphs we have already shown, and therefore we do not include the other graphs here. In sum both men *and* women who migrate are better educated. Young women – either migrants or non-migrants – generally achieve or have achieved higher degrees of education than men who have not migrated. Migrant

**Figure 5:** Women: Number of School Years Completed by Age According to Regions Gaining or Losing Population



Sample: Women: whole population.

Source: INSTAT Census 2001.

men, however, tend to have the highest level of education.

We suppose that fewer resources have been invested in education among the more remote regions in Albania since 1990. This is indeed a concern identified by the Ministry of Education. In addition, as girls face more threats to their personal security from traffickers and others, we might expect female enrolment at schools to decline. We might also expect that girls in secondary school would be kept at home, perhaps to continue their studies at a later age. This, we assume, would occur especially in the more remote regions where the journey to school is longer than in the cities (in other words, in the regions that lost population). A detailed study carried out by the UNICEF reveals discrimination against the girls' education among rural families, but also among those who have made their way from remote areas to settle in cities. Some parents, mostly fathers, prevent their daughters from continuing with institutionalized education after reaching puberty. The patriarchal denial of the value of girls' education that is found in remote regions is reinforced by the risk girls face when they are exposed to violence and deception (UNICEF 2003). Indeed, with the fall of the socialist regime, patriarchal gender norms and values have fuelled the debate over the value of equal education for men and women.

This makes it even more important to carefully record what has happened during the transformation phase with respect to girls' education, and to continue monitoring educational achievements for different cohorts of the population. Due to the reasons outlined above, we would expect the enrolment of girls to have dropped in regions that lost population during the transformation phase.

The concern, however, that girls might enroll less frequently or at an older age can be discarded at present. Indeed, at the age of 8, 94

percent of all children have completed at least one year of schooling, at the age of 10, 98 percent of all children have done so. There are no noteworthy differences among boys and girls, a proud result for a country that has experienced such turmoil in the last ten years.

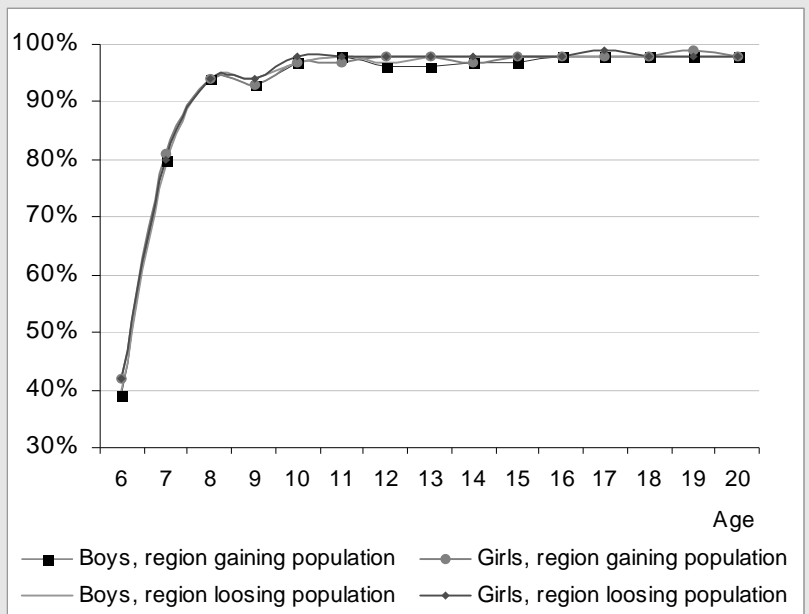
Nevertheless, given the security problem as well as the problem of access in some regions, a more detailed analysis at the level of individual regions is necessary in order to confidently put aside these concerns.

According to the Ministry of Education there are six districts in which a strong concern exists about the available opportunities in education. In these districts the concern is focused on two very remote communes. We carried out exploratory analyses for these two districts: the District of Puke and the District of Tropoje. We compared the average school years achieved in the communes deemed most critical with the school years achieved in other rural communes in the district, as well as with the district's center. In order to determine whether the problem was largely unique to the twelve years since the fall of socialism, we selected our samples according to ten-year age groups (cohorts of 20 year olds, 30 year olds, etc.). We make two observations: (i) education among the inhabitants of the two highlighted districts has increased for all ages among both men and women. However, (ii) in the district center we observe a decrease in the average number of school years achieved for 30 to 20 year-olds by approximately one year (again, the same was true for both men and women). This result probably reflects national or international migration of better-educated individuals. A smaller decrease in average achieved school years is evident for the rural communes and for the most remote communes among the 30 and 20 year-old cohorts. This result suggests that, indeed, the youngest cohort (aged 20 in 2001) have been negatively affected by the transformation process with respect to

schooling. This, however, would concern both men and women equally. We have deliberately chosen not to show Tables or Graphs, as we feel that the issue still requires more detailed analysis. In particular, an analysis of the distribution of total achieved school years among other districts is necessary. Furthermore, some of the more privileged districts should also be considered in order to see whether the pattern found there is similar to the one found for the two districts of concern. The UNICEF publication argues that the issue of girls' education is not related to the region of residence but to the region of descent (UNICEF 2003). If this is the case, then the Census data does not offer the necessary data for such analyses. Furthermore, we have limited our scope to an analysis of simply those regions that either gained or lost population.

Having observed earlier that there are few differences in enrolment between boys and girls, we might nevertheless expect that girls at the secondary level are kept away from school more often than boys. We also expect that people who migrated did so in order to find better educational opportunities for their children. This assumption would lead us to expect higher enrolment rates among migrant children, with little difference between girls and boys.<sup>20</sup> However, if people have migrated to escape impoverished circumstances, they might encourage children, and in particular their young men, to contribute to the maintenance of the household. This would result in a greater proportion of migrant girls being enrolled in secondary and tertiary education than the proportion of migrant boys. In particular the phenomenon would prevent young men from obtaining higher educational levels.

**Figure 6:** Percent and Age of Children With at Least One Schoolyear Completed According to Sex and Regions Gaining or Losing Population



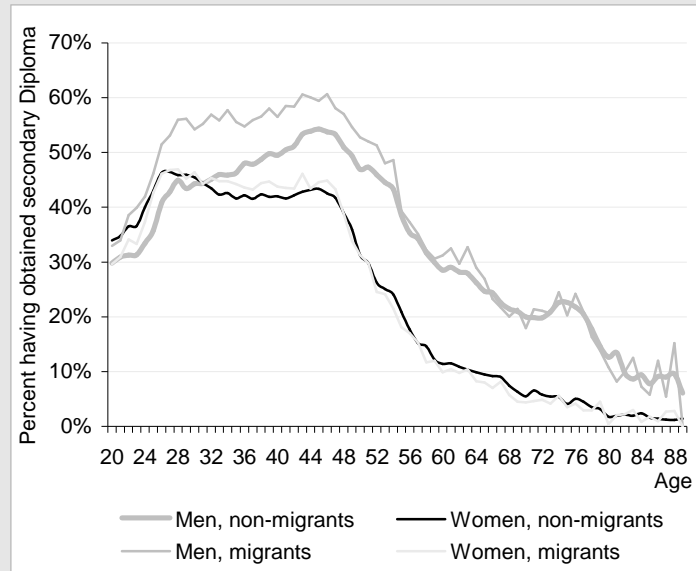
Sample: All children age 6 to 20.

Source: Instat Census 2001

As Figure 7 shows, a greater proportion of women than men among the 20 to 30 year-olds have obtained secondary-level diplomas, both in the regions that gained and lost population (this phenomenon can be observed in various other ex-socialist countries). However, the proportion of women with secondary school diplomas declines after the age of thirty. Those women in regions gaining population appear to have had better educational opportunities than their counterparts in regions with decreasing population. Apparently this also held true during the socialist regime. This suggests that young men may actually have been the losers during the transformation, in particular for regions that lost population. These are the same men who were better off than their female counterparts in earlier years. In general, women in regions that lost population were among the losers in education dur-

<sup>20</sup> Whether migrants find better educational opportunities or not, however, is another question we will not address. Indeed, as people migrating often move into the outskirts of the communities and cities gaining population, there might also be negative consequences on the education of both boys and girls. Such negative consequences would be the lack of schooling facilities in the destination area. More thorough analyses on the level of these local units however, are beyond the scope of this essay.

**Figure 7: Percent Who Obtained Upper Secondary Diploma According to Sex and Migrant or Non-migrant Status**



Sample: Population aged 20 and older.

Source: INSTAT Census 2001.

ing the socialist period, with the exception of the youngest among them.

The data show that a greater proportion of migrants obtain secondary diplomas than non-migrants, particularly when comparing the men of both groups. Young migrant men between the ages of 20 and 29 constitute the population group with the lowest rate of secondary education. Furthermore, it is probable that these young men will not catch up to their better-educated counterparts. Indeed, even the proportion of young non-migrant women having obtained a secondary education is higher.

Given that tertiary educational opportunities are concentrated in urban areas, we expect the education rates to be highest in those regions that gained population. However, migration is often characterized by a bipolar distribution of educational attainment among migrants between those who have a higher-than-average level of education and those whose level of education is lower than average. If such a distribution exists for Albanian migration, then we could talk about both an “internal”

Albanian “brain drain” and about a situation in which the poorest individuals in a region migrate to escape destitution. However, in the Albanian context, where the educational levels are about equal throughout the country, we cannot expect a bipolar distribution among migrants. Rather, if differences are visible, we expect these to be one-sided in their contribution to rural “brain-drain.”

With regards to gender, we might further expect that women with more schooling years would tend to migrate away from areas where traditional attitudes, norms and values would hinder or constrain them from leading a more independent lifestyle. However, such women usually prefer to emigrate abroad, since they often expect to find more opportunities overseas than in Albanian cities. Interestingly, as Figure 9 shows, the average educational level of migrant and non-migrant women is almost the same; only a slightly greater proportion of migrant women obtain secondary educations than their non-migrant counterparts. The phenomenon, however, appears limited to the 30 to 50 year-old cohort. Thus, with regards to women in general, there does not appear to be much evidence supporting the expectation that educated women would migrate more frequently. Among men (Table not shown), again it is the non-migrants who appear to be disadvantaged in terms of their level of education. In fact the gap between male migrants and non-migrants exists all the way to age 56, albeit most distinctly among the younger men.

Given little evidence in general about migrant women’s higher education rates, we tested to see whether a bipolar distribution in marriage ages could be discerned, given that marriage at a young age is usually associated with lower educational attainment. But as Figure 9 suggests, it is not age at marriage that serves as the most important indicator of educational attainment, but regional background.

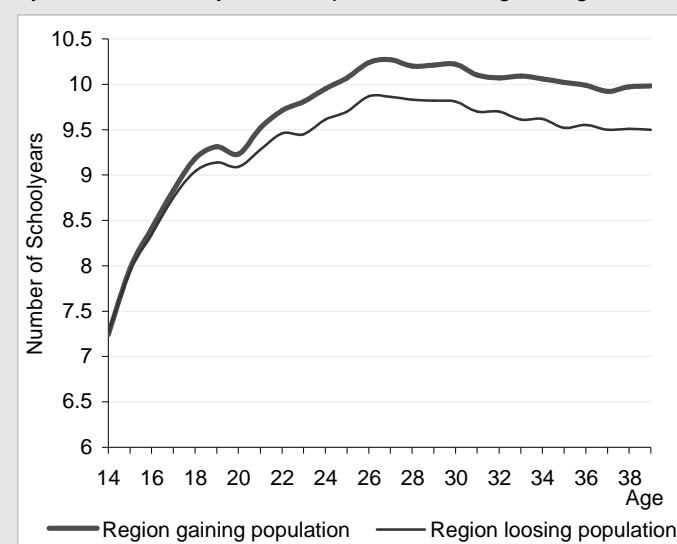
As Figure 8 shows, marriage age for women is similar in regions that gained and lost population, although women in regions that gained population have a higher level of education than those in regions that lost population. This result suggests that marriage age for women in Albania is not directly associated with number of school years achieved.

Among migrant women we notice two groups, illustrated in Figure 9: (i) those women marrying early with low educational attainment (compared to non-migrant women who also marry early) and (ii) those marrying later with high educational attainment (compared to non-migrant women who also marry late).

#### 4.2.1 Conclusions Regarding Human Capital Indicators and Gender

Depending on how it occurs, migration can have various effects on the human capital available for individuals in regions that experience a change in population. From the areas losing population we observe a pattern of inner-Albanian “brain-drain”. People who are better educated willingly resettle in urban areas that gain population. We observe this pattern for men and women alike. This means that for areas losing population the potential for future development is lost. This causes greater educational inequality between regions and simultaneously makes it difficult for regions lagging behind to catch up in the future. Indeed, as shown in the analysis of those districts considered at-risk by the Ministry of Education, we observe that among 20 year-olds living in the regional centre, the decline in average school years attended does not differ significantly from the average school years attended in the most remote communes; nor is it different from the decline in other rural communes in the region. Furthermore, a slight depression in average years of attendance is observable for 20 year-olds in

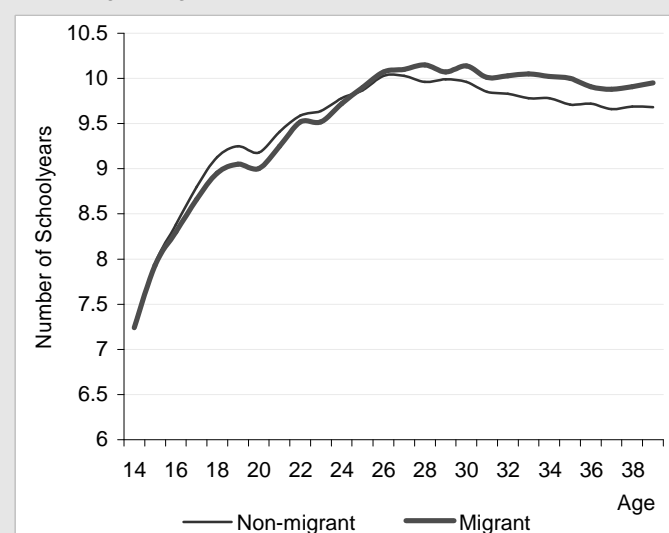
**Figure 8:** Women: Age At Last Marriage by Mean of Schoolyears Completed According to Regions



Sample: Population: Women aged 14 to 40.

Source: INSTAT Census 2001.

**Figure 9:** Women: Age At Last Marriage by Mean of Schoolyears Completed According to Migration Status



Sample: Population: Women aged 14 to 40.

Source: INSTAT Census 2001.

the communes when compared to 30 year-olds. This suggests that there has been a negative impact on rural education during Albania’s twelve years of transformation. However, these are merely first analyses that require more detailed proof. Fortunately, the differences in educational attainment between migrants and non-migrants, as well as between men and women, have not filtered

down to the primary level. They are found only on secondary and tertiary levels of education. It may be expected that differences in the acquisition of tertiary education are associated with migrants' newfound access to higher education in the regional centers and urban metropolises. Exactly what causes differences in terms of gender is not clear. The population group that appears to have lost the most in terms of education was not women or girls as we expected, but young non-migrant men. One possible explanation is that during the first years of transformation, it was this group of young men that was especially able to generate needed household income, and who therefore missed out on secondary education.

The question now is whether the well-educated young women have been able to transform their educational advantage into an economic advantage. Unfortunately, we do not have data to help us answer this question definitively, as the census does not contain information regarding personal income. We might approximate explicit data about salaries by looking at high-prestige professions as indicators of economic well-being. But even this is complicated by the fact that most professions mentioned by the respondents in the census refer to agricultural occupations, and hence this does not allow for much distinction between men and women. Another way to approximate women's ability to convert their educational advantage into a financial one is to see whether and how women are able to enter the labor market.

### 4.3 The Labor Market<sup>21</sup>

During the socialist period, men and women were more or less equally integrated into the labor market. "Figures belonging to 1985 show that the level of participation of women in the labor market was nearly equal to that of

men" (Ekonomi et al. 1999:60). But women's participation decreased in the years that followed. "In 1989 the rate of participation in the labor force for women was 77.5 percent while in 1998 it was 43.8 percent" (Ekonomi et al. 1999:60). Nowadays there are not enough social or legal protections for women, especially in the private sector. "According to the data, 70 percent of women and girls working in the private sector do not have a legal contract and as a result not even a social insurance" (Ekonomi et al. 1999:58). Hence, gender inequalities with regard to participation in the labor market, and in the conditions of such participation, have widened in the post-socialist period.

The Labor Code mandates equal pay for equal work; however, no data are available on how well the Labor Code is implemented in practice. In reality, women in Albania suffer from unequal access to jobs, and some say also wage inequality. Women also suffer more from unemployment (INSTAT 2004b). It seems that although women enjoy equal access to higher education, their education does not assure them equal opportunity in the labor market.<sup>22</sup>

Patterns of such inequalities are visible in most post-socialist states and include the loss of employment, larger work loads, less political representation, a low Gender Development Index, and an overemphasis on the women's domestic role (Holzner 2000; Çuli 2000). But the situation of Albanian women is even worse than that for women in other post-socialist countries. In Albania, over the past decade, the transition from a centralized economy emphasizing full employment to a free market governed by the laws of supply and demand has caused the unemployment rate to rise dramatically. We expect these changes to have impacted differently on women and men, as

<sup>21</sup> Much information on this topic can be found in the labour group's publication (INSTAT 2004b)

<sup>22</sup> Area Studies/South Central Europe-Albania, <http://www.wrc.lingnet.org/albw.htm>.



has been the case in other ex-socialist economies where a similar economic transition is taking place.

We therefore expect that, in general, more women are unemployed in the labor market than men. An alternative hypothesis is that more non-migrants (both men and women) are unemployed than migrants, especially if we assume that people who migrate do so in part to search for employment opportunities. But it could also be that there is no difference, since non-migrants often choose to stay behind because they already have sufficient employment.

Women face many obstacles in attempting to integrate into the labor market, especially when they move to a new location. For single women, it is often difficult to find accommodation and feel secure away from the protection of their families. Married women, furthermore, must attend to their domestic obligations, often with little structural support (day care, etc.). In addition, issues of social security, and the influence of parochial attitudes may also be reasons contributing to the low representation of women in the labor force. Still, the main reason for women's low frequency of labor market participation is the lack of employment opportunities. Interestingly, unmarried women often begin working at the same time as married men, even though the proportion of women who work is much lower and the pattern of employment is similar to that of married men.

One of the main reasons people migrate is to search for better economic opportunities. Unfortunately, and as we noted before, we do not have information about individual income from the census. We therefore content ourselves with various proxies to measure this.

(i) One is to see whether the migrants are employed or unemployed, both at the level of

the household head and with regard to all household members. Because people who possess their own means of production (i.e. productive land, small businesses, or personal clients if working independently) are less likely to migrate, we expect a higher proportion of migrant heads of households than non-migrant heads to have an employment status in the labor market. Given that it is easier to expect regular income from an employed status and to benefit from contractual agreements, we expect a greater proportion of women heads of households in general to be employed.

Table 7 validates our expectation that migrant household heads will be employed at a greater rate than non-migrant household heads (e.g. 48.5 percent compared to 35.6 percent) and that a greater proportion of female household heads will be employed than male household heads (56.3 percent compared to 48.5 percent). This suggests that the migrants were largely able to improve their situation by moving. By contrast, fewer female household heads are found among the self-employed than male household heads. Interestingly, however, the data show a similar proportion of men and women household who are employers. Among the non-migrants we find slightly more female heads of households engaged as workers for the family enterprise than male heads; this is not so among the migrants, where men and women heads work for the family enterprise about equally often.

(ii) Another way to determine engagement in the labor market is to compare the number of hours of paid work in the past week by the working household members and to compare it with the number of hours usually worked by all adult household members. Because of higher socio-demographic dependency ratios, along with the assumption that people migrate in search of jobs, we would expect migrants

(both men and women) to work more hours per week, both in the labor market and in the household. We also assume that their average workweek will be longer because we expect that more working opportunities are available in regions gaining population.

Among those working for pay, Table 8 shows that men and women work about equally. However if we look at the household and combine the hours worked by all able adults, we observe that more hours are worked altogether in men headed households than in women headed households (14.4 hours per week for non-migrant male headed households compared to 9.4 hours for female headed households; 18.5 hours per week for migrant male headed households compared to 11.6 hours for migrant female headed households). Hence also the proportion of worked hours in migrant households compared to non-migrant households is greater for female headed than for male-headed households. More detailed analysis according to age groups, however, might reveal yet a different pattern.

If we look at the household configuration for women in greater detail, as is shown in Figure 10, we see that three of the four categories of migrant women are more likely to work, and for more hours weekly, than non-migrants. The exceptions are employed, non-migrant women who are married and have no child younger than 15. All women with a child younger than 15 (with the exception of married migrant women) work fewer hours. The pattern is not the same when the regions that gained population are compared with regions that lost population. Women in regions that lost population worked the greatest number of hours, with the exception of non-migrant unmarried women with a child younger than 15 (i.e. a single mother). The largest difference in working hours between categories of women defined by both the age of the youngest child and migration status occurs among unmarried migrants (meaning those who are single, separated, divorced or widowed) who have a child younger than 15 and live in the regions that gained population. The contrast

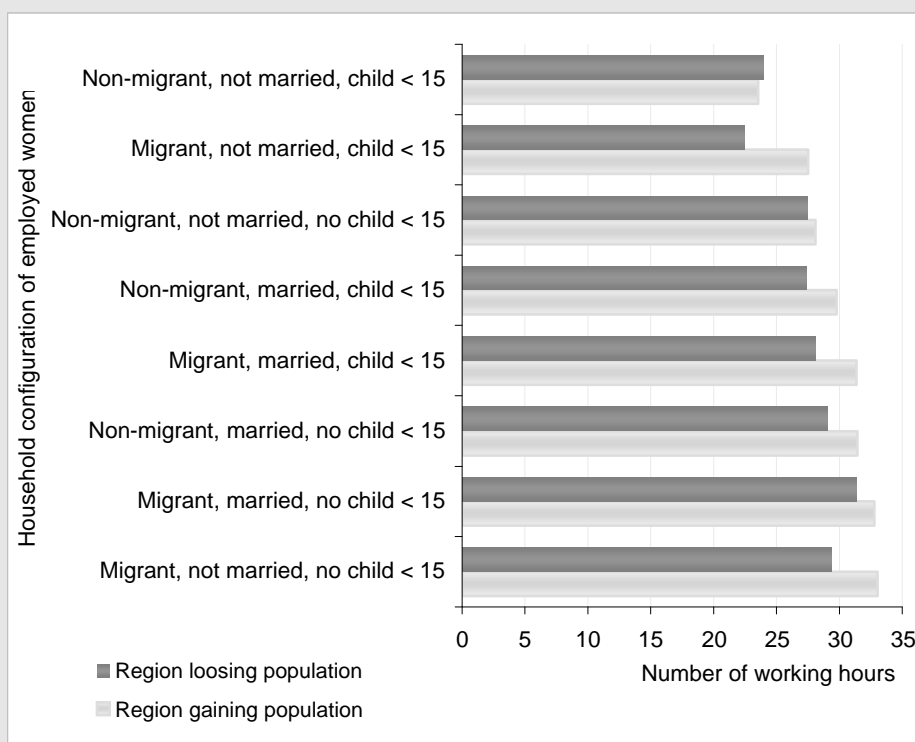
Table 7: Percentage of Migrant and Not-migrant Household Heads in Type of Working Status

HEAD OF HOUSEHOLDS	Working status: employee %		Working status: employer		Working status: self-employed		Working status: family worker	
	Man	Woman	Man	Woman	Man	Woman	Man	Woman
<b>NONMIGRANT</b>								
One person household	31.6	51.3	8.6	9.4	41.8	24.1	18	15.3
Extended household	27.5	42.7	5.9	7.1	48.4	31.9	18.2	18.2
Couple with no children	32.9	31.9	6.9	5.2	46.7	41.3	13.5	21.6
Couple with children	30.2	32.1	6.2	3.7	50	46.8	13.5	17.5
One parent family	30.3	41.5	5.4	7.3	49.6	36.5	14.6	14.7
Other multifamily	25.3	25.9	4.8	3.5	58.8	50	11.1	20.6
Total	35.6	45.1	7.6	7.3	59	46.1	17.8	21.6
<b>MIGRANT</b>								
One person household	37.2	59.3	8	10.8	33.6	16	21.1	13.9
Extended household	46.1	61.7	7.9	7.4	27.7	18.1	18.4	12.9
Couple with no children	42.4	42.6	9.7	7.9	30.8	29.9	17.1	19.6
Couple with children	39.9	41.8	8.7	5.3	33.8	36.1	17.6	16.8
One parent family	38.6	42.8	6.7	8.7	35.6	30.5	19.1	18
Other multifamily	38.5	33.1	8.4	4.9	39.3	42.7	13.8	19.3
Total	48.5	56.3	9.9	9	40.2	34.7	21.4	20.1

Sample: Heads of households

Source: INSTAT, Census 2001

**Figure 10: Average Weekly Working Hours of Employed Women**



*Sample:* All adult employed women, according to civil status (married vs. not married, i.e. single, divorced, separated or widowed), age of youngest child in household, migration status and region where living at present.

*Source:* INSTAT Census 2001

**Table 8: Percentage of Migrant and Non-migrant Household Heads According to Work-hours**

HEAD OF HOUSEHOLDS	Number of work-hours previous week, (able adults only)		Number work-hours usually, whole household	
	Man	Woman	Man	Woman
<b>NONMIGRANT</b>				
One person household	34.7	33.6	15.5	5
Extended household	35.8	34.6	15.4	9.3
Couple with no children	35.6	33.9	11	8.7
Couple with children	36.4	34.6	19.5	10.8
One parent family	35.9	33.7	12.7	12.9
Other multifamily	37.4	34	12.3	9.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>34.1</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>9.4</b>
<b>MIGRANT</b>				
One person household	35	36.5	23.4	10.1
Extended household	36.5	37.1	19.1	16.4
Couple with no children	35.6	33.7	17.1	10.1
Couple with children	36.1	35.1	23.6	9.8
One parent family	35.5	34	14.8	14.3
Other multifamily	37.6	34.4	13.2	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>35.1</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>11.6</b>

*Sample:* All adult members, aggregated to household level for mean hours according to head of household.

*Source:* INSTAT Census 2001

takes place, in other words, between migrant single mothers with young children in urban areas, and migrant single mothers in more rural areas. This demonstrates that more opportunities exist for lone mothers with young children in regions that gained population.

#### 4.3.1 Conclusions Regarding Migration, Gender, and the Labor Market

Members of migrant households have indeed had greater opportunities to become employed when compared to their non-migrant counterparts. In general they worked more hours in the week preceding the Census, and migrant families as a whole also worked more hours than able members of non-migrant families. The situation for regions that gained population appears slightly more favorable for women: the data show that in populated regions, women are able to work more hours than their counterparts living in areas losing population. A favorable socio-demographic dependency ratio is also easier to maintain among migrant families than among non-migrant families, possibly as a direct consequence of migration. Despite improvements, when comparing migrants with non-migrants, we must conclude that women – if we assume full female employment ten years ago – have lost substantial ground in the labor market, a situation that might impact strongly on young girls' confidence, as well as on the decision-making power that comes with economic independence. Above all, this exclusion from the labor market has hurt women's economic autonomy, especially following the decrease of financial support in post-socialist Albania.

## 4.4 LIVING CONDITIONS

Because the period of transformation has brought about changes in all parts of daily life, the analysis of housing and living conditions as indicators of economic well-being are crucial for the Albanian context. More specifically we ask: Do living conditions differ according to household types?

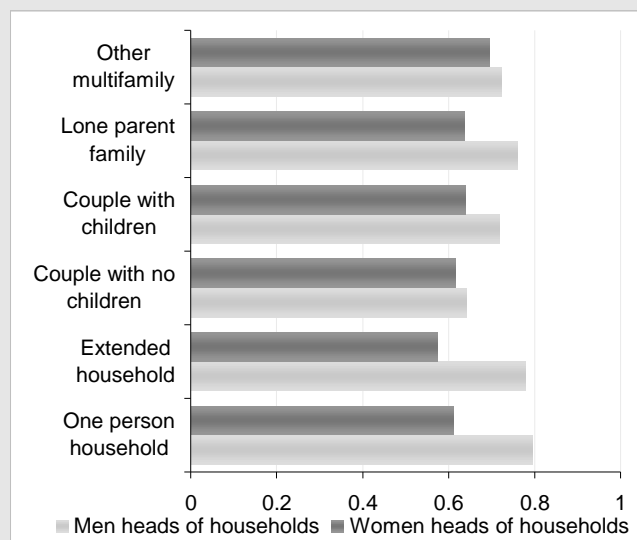
As Fernandez Kelly puts it in her article (ernández Kelly 1981), development cannot be defined in purely economic terms; generally it should signify more equal access to resources and greater participation for all people. According to the literature reviewed in section 1, it is quite possible that priorities within households are set differently according to whether the household head is a man or a woman. Our hypothesis is that certain goods will exist more frequently in male-headed households (as a proportion of households possessing the good) than in female-headed households. As an initial test we compared the distribution of various goods as separate phenomena. The various goods are: TV, parabolic antenna, refrigerator, washing machine, electric cooking stove, gas cooking stove, microwave oven, air-conditioner, computer, and car. Put succinctly, the results were as follows: we found almost no differences in the possession of goods according to household type or according to the households' migrant status. This suggests that the distribution of such goods is rather equal for a majority of households. If we assume that households first opt to acquire basic household goods, and then expand into luxury items, then a good indicator of economic well-being should be the ratio of luxury items to basic household goods. To facilitate analysis we therefore defined "luxury items" and "basic goods" as follows: basic goods are those that enable or simplify household work, and therefore usually make women's tasks less strenuous (i.e. a refrigerator, washing machine, electric cooking

stove and gas cooking stove). We considered luxury items to be TVs, parabolic antennas, microwave ovens, the air-conditioners, computers, and cars. The ratio of the number of luxury items to the number of basic goods allows for standardization across households of various sizes. Our hypothesis is that in men headed households we would observe more luxury goods per basic household good than in women headed households. This is because of male-headed households' greater purchasing power and priorities set by household heads. Figure 11 shows this to be true. Indeed, the graph shows that the ratio of luxury items to basic household goods is always greater in male-headed households. Furthermore, it is highest among one person and extended households. If we take into account the different age structure of the one-person households (women are in general older; men are rather young), then the large difference in ratios is easy to explain. The ratio is also high among male one-parent households. This case may be explained by the fact that often, adult sons are considered the heads of households when living with single mothers. (Here again we are confronted with the problem of the Census' (biased) definition of household head.)

When comparing migrants with non-migrants (Tables not shown), we observe that migrants generally have slightly lower ratios of luxury goods than non-migrants. We also observe that the difference in ratios is slightly greater for male-headed households than for female-headed households. However it is important to remember that the ratio standardizes various household sizes, and so it does not give an indication of the number of household goods. If we assume that households first obtain basic household goods and only afterward acquire luxury items, then this finding suggests that non-migrants have been able to accumulate goods in general, and luxury goods in particular, more readily than migrants, especially in male headed house-

holds. The data suggest that acquiring luxury items is a higher priority for male-headed households than for female-headed households. The difference between migrant and non-migrant women headed households, as mentioned, is not as large as that between their male counterparts (see Figure 12). If male and female household heads were to have the same consumption priorities, then this would suggest that the differences pertain to the economic health of the household head in general, and as such one would conclude that men fare better than women in almost all household types. By contrast, if one assumes that different consumption priorities exist between male and female-headed households, then the data suggest that men prioritize luxury goods, and that non-migrant male headed households have the most opportunities to acquire them. By contrast, female heads of households appear to set the

**Figure 11: Ratio of Luxury to Basic Household Goods by Head of Household**



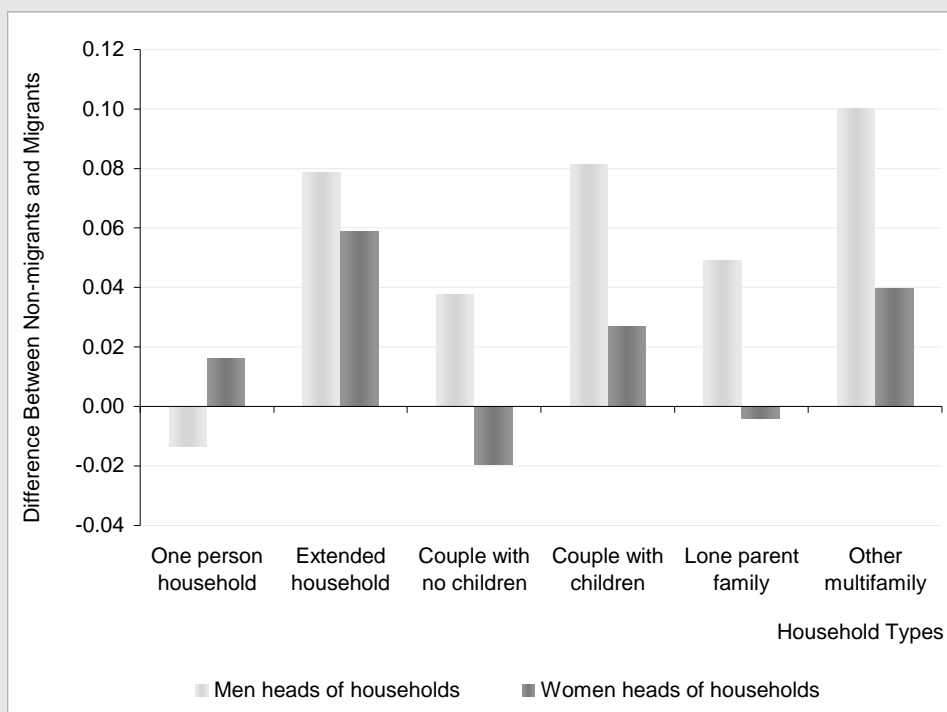
Sample: All household heads.  
Source: INSTAT Census 2001.

same priorities regardless of their migrant status, as the difference in ratio between the two types of households is smaller. The only group "improving" its situation in this respect is migrant female households in couples without children. However, due to limitations in the

calculation of the luxury item to household good ratio, further study of the topic would be useful.

counterparts. Meanwhile the group that is most privileged overall appears to be that of young migrant men living on their own. Thus it appears that the transformation process has

**Figure 12:** Difference of Ratio of Luxury to Basic Household Goods According to Migrant Status\*



**Remarks:** \* The difference in luxury to basic household goods for non-migrants and migrants is calculated by subtracting the ratio of luxury to basic household goods of the migrants from that of the non-migrants. A positive value indicates that the non-migrants have more luxury to basic household goods than migrants; a negative value indicates that the migrants have more luxury to basic household goods than non-migrants.

**Sample:** All household heads.

**Source:** INSTAT Census 2001

#### 4.4.1 Conclusions Regarding the Living Conditions of Various Households

Analysis of the Census data allows a first glimpse of the living conditions of households. Although women head of households appear to be at a material disadvantage in general, certain groups of women who migrated in the last ten years have been able to improve their situation as compared to their non-migrant

not affected all households equally. Certainly more studies are necessary to better identify the processes behind these changes.

## *Discussion and Conclusion*

We chose to speculate about the impacts of internal mass migration on men and women because migration has been an omnipresent phenomenon in the Albanian society for almost a decade. Migration significantly affects the living conditions of all Albanians. At the same time, while speaking about internal migration, we must note also that large-scale emigration abroad has contributed to mitigate the impact of rapid economic and social transformations. Such profound changes in society are bound to impact on men and women differently. Of course there are a whole host of population groups that experience change differently from one another, but in this paper we have chosen to limit our perspective to the experiences of women and men. In other eastern European countries research has shown that women, more often than men, are the losers in periods in transformation. Therefore, we attempted to answer some crucial socio-economic questions using data collected by the Albanian 2001 Census (INSTAT), and by using historical accounts, published arguments and narrative details about daily life in Albania. The questions were as follows: What forms of gender inequality are being shaped as a result of rapid transformation processes in Albania? In which way do the situations of Socialism had positive impacts on women's education, employment experience and po-

migrants differ from those who did not migrate? Do such differences hint at migration being a gendered process and, if so, what consequences could they imply for women and men?

It was rather difficult to exploit the Census data to find answers to our questions. The daily-lives of women are rarely penetrated by census questionnaires. We also faced, as others have faced previously, the census' problematic definition of "household head." Because we consider gender to be unit of analysis that can only be understood in terms of relations between men and women in specific cultural, economic, political, and social context, we chose to place the household at the center of our study (the household being a social and economic unit in which power relationships between men and women can be explored best). Therefore, in order to apply a gendered perspective, we thought it useful to focus on the household head, as it is this person who contributes most substantially to decision-making within the household, and consequently to the opportunities available to household members. Analysis of female-headed households, as well as analysis of the structure of households in general, has been used for many years to understand how opportunities are formed in Western families (for example, McLanahan 1983; 1985;

litical participation. Women and men were defined in terms of their roles within the private and public sphere and not necessarily as individuals, which lifted the burden of women's traditional roles in patriarchal environments.

The transformation out of socialism in Albania has brought about profound changes for men and women. Different opportunities have presented themselves, advantaging men in some cases and disadvantaging them in others. In the preponderance of instance, however, the changes favor men or households where a man is the household head. Living conditions as measured by the ratio of luxury goods to basic household goods are more favorable for male households. On the individual level, despite a high unemployment, men are nonetheless more often employed than women. In addition, the literature points toward the fact that men have better access to higher positions and better paying jobs than women (Ekonomi et al. 1999). Also, older men are found to have greater access to family support than older women. Consequently, older women live alone more often than older men, a strain that is exacerbated by the post-socialist withdrawal of state support. Nonetheless we also observe some situations in which men face a disadvantage compared to women. It appears that women are marrying at a somewhat older age, whereas the age at marriage has remained constant for men. This means that the spousal age difference will decrease over time and, in theory, improve women's position with regards to intra-household bargaining power. This potential advantage is reinforced by women's growing levels of education, since education is crucial for the defence of rights, empowerment, and independence. But as the data also reveals, women have difficulty converting their educational attainment into labor market benefits, social participation, or decision-making power. Changed circumstances (in particular the reduction in governmental child care facilities)

make it more difficult for women to become part of the labor force, especially in the private sector. Wherever possible, childcare from other family members has become preferred to the governmental childcare facilities, as they have decreased in quality. Also in this respect new opportunities have made place to traditional ways of functioning, and as such, women's range of action has increased, if not always providing higher income – sometimes grandfathers take care of their grandchildren, while grandmothers work and herewith enable young women to pursue careers, even if they are not (yet) well paid.

Indeed, the data suggest some differences in household structure between migrants and non-migrants; however, their impact for men and women can be assessed only speculatively. The 2001 Census data show that young non-migrant men who live in regions with population loss have been among the losers in educational terms over the past ten years. Although women head of households appear to be at a material disadvantage in general, certain groups of women who migrated in the last ten years have been able to improve their situation as compared to their non-migrant counterparts.

In sum, the picture in Albania is complex and contradictory. Women have in general lost footing in the labor market but they have gained some improvements in education. The question is whether these women will be able to convert their education into well-paying jobs on a regular basis despite their domestic responsibilities. Unfortunately there is little cause for optimism if the developments in other eastern European countries are taken as a guide.

Finally, it is essential to note that a gendered perspective should not begin with answers but with questions. Studies on gender issues in Albania are few, and in the wider literature it is the famous but misleading Kanun of Leke



Dukagjini that comes to represent social reality as the 'Bible of the country.' In much foreign literature, Albanian society is portrayed as a strongly patriarchal one, and the woman as a slave of men. We have argued throughout this study that this image is much too simplistic to characterize the situation of women and men in Albania of today but also of the past.

Three important facts have not yet been taken into consideration: in 1918 already, the "first Albanian Census" showed that the "invisibility of women" was not as pronounced as in other countries in the same region; this suggests that, even in those early days, Albanians may have enjoyed more equality in gender relationships than other countries in the same region. Second, the household types in Albania are far more heterogeneous than was assumed, especially with regard to various types of nuclear households. Third, the "first Albanian Census" clearly showed that the northern region differed considerably from the larger part of Albania in its more precise adherence to the rules of the Kanun. This means that the image of Albania as a whole was already misleading in 1918.

The Kanun and its impacts on living conditions and gender relationships is even less representative of daily life in the country today. Again unfortunately, foreign scholars have paid little attention to the fact that socialism has provided women with education, with a socially recognized position in the labor market and effective institutional support (for child care for example). This allowed women to increase their range of activity, their degree of and their exposure to other influences on identity. That all this simply went away after the fall of socialism should be questioned. Even if women have experienced an important setback in the labor market and in the political arena, it does not mean that society has turned back to the patriarchal way of living embodied in the Kanun. Moreover, foreign ingendered questions regarding people's

influences in Albania - the result of emigration, (Nicholson 2002), the media, and the influx of international agencies (Sampson 1996), - have profoundly changed local perspectives. Many young women go abroad to study in hopes of pursuing professional careers. Many women are engaged in community civic organization, although female access to political decision-making positions has drastically decreased. This situation is likely to remain the same if no proactive and affirmative political strategies are implemented to encourage women to become politically active. The rapid changes of the past decade have created new perspectives and new ways of thinking, even if they have not created new opportunities in economic terms. These changes will significantly impact the lives of women and men, especially among the younger generation, which is usually most open to cultural changes. Even if women have not found entry into the more "powerful" positions of society, such as those in politics or economics, we do not see reason to believe that they will revert to the subordinate domestic position that was partly upheld by the socialist regime. Indeed, as qualitative studies in Albania show (for example Sampson 1996), there are gradual changes taking place in the division of labor between men and women at the community level. A gendered split is also becoming visible between the private and the public sectors of the economy: a high proportion of women work in state institutions, particularly in the areas of health-care, education, social services, and statistics. Young women, for their part, are often recruited for "front-stage" work ("front-stage" is understood as work in which representation and contact with the clients are important). It is important to remember in this context that public-sector employment is, in general, lower paid than work in the private sector. Men, on the other hand, are much more likely to work in the private sector, especially inside the booming construction industry. Although it is yet too early to focus on

quality-of-life, they should nonetheless be kept in mind given the rapid pace of change in Albania. What this might mean for gender relationships still remains an open question and should be monitored by the Census and other surveys in the future.

As a general conclusion we find that more research is needed concerning the effect of Albania's recent transformations on social and gender issues. Historical relationships between men and women in Albanian society provide an important context for these issues, but they are not so important as to take center stage. As we have argued throughout, ongoing changes in daily life have been reforming patriarchal elements in Albanian society. Although strong patriarchal attitudes do exist in Albania today, Albanian society is far more heterogeneous than its image abroad would suggest.

The approach of social scientists as research goes forward should not be gender-blind. Implicit assumptions about the living conditions of men and women in the household should be questioned, and the progress of recent transformations should be investigated for their gendered impact. In practice, we propose that future censuses in Albania include precise questions about the division of labor within the household in order to determine which members are responsible for specific tasks. These should include questions about income generation, household chores, and caring activities. Monitoring changes in division of household labor is crucial, as changes in women's positions often entail changes in men's positions as well, which can have a transformative effect on more universalized social structures. We also suggest that future censuses gather specific information about relationships in migrant families. They should, for example, include questions about individual economic contributions to the household as well as about individual decisionmaking influence. -

Exactly how these findings might translate into specific policies is complex, in particular given the high rate of unemployment. However, one implication is clear: gender must be brought to the foreground of the policymaking context. As Caroline Moser argues: "... as long as research on women remains an 'add-on,' the results remain outside of mainstream urban policy and fail to influence important policy agendas ... For many researchers the first priority is the mainstreaming of what is still a separate specialist concern, and its translation unto policy and practice" (quoted in Chant 1996:47).

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